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Brothers-in-Arms seems a most appropriate description for the relationship between Yves R. Simon and Jacques Maritain. Theirs was an intensely personal friendship and collaboration of forty years. As Maritain says, it was but a short time before his pupil was a master in philosophy. The sharing involved political activities and philosophical endeavors but above all it was spiritual in inspiration. Maritain was the one man to whom my father confided everything.

The similarities of their thought are well known. It is the dissimilarities which make their published work complementary. Man and the State and Philosophy of Democratic Government, though dealing with many of the same problems of political philosophy within a common perception, and as uniquely different treatments of those problems in approach and style. Unspoken in their relationship was the awareness of fulfilling their calling. Their publications, correspondence and political activities are of considerable biographic interest and will hopefully be explored elsewhere.

The intention of this issue is to present a few essays on the thought and relationship of both philosophers. I am very thankful to Professor Roberto Papini and the Institut International « Jacques Maritain » as well as Giancarlo Galeazzi, Editor of Notes et Documents, for affording me the opportunity of serving as editor for this special issue.

Anthony O. Simon
Secretary
American Maritain Association
I knew Yves Simon over some forty years. He was one of my best and dearest students in France. In subsequent and now distant years, we took part together in many intellectual and political encounters. I thus had the privilege of following first the development of his philosophical calling, then later his career as a teacher, his human and spiritual interests, his life as a husband and a father. From his remarkable *Ontologie du Comité* (1) on all his books, whether in French or in English, have been fraternal companions for me.

He was not long in becoming a master in the field of philosophy. Yet with that sense of courtesy, humility and fidelity so exceptionally characteristic of him, he always persisted in speaking of me as his "master", long after this had ceased to be true, for I had soon become but a friend and his *brother-in-arms*. Up till the very end, he evinced this same incomparable steadiness of heart and mind. The last public lecture he gave — despite the illness from which he was suffering intensely — at the University of Notre Dame, was thus a unique testimony of faithful affection, and one which I was told, extraordinarily moved his audience. His elation was such, in its generosity, that at the end of the lecture he felt for a moment completely and happily freed from the physical torments in which he had begun it. He was so close to me, he was a friend so profoundly loved, his affectionate confidence admitted me so deeply both into his endeavors and into his sufferings, his death was for me so great a grief, that I find it almost impossible to set down the terribly inadequate words of the tribute I wish to pay here to his memory.

** * * *

Yves Simon's devotion to philosophy, and his thirst for philosophical wisdom, were truly exemplary. As Father Leo Ward has rightly pointed out, his grasp of all the demands of intellectual work, and the patience, energy, courage, perseverance and self-effacement with which he toiled all his life, are models for us all.

In the midst of the most cruel, sometimes intolerable, physical pain, he continued, up to the very last days of his earthly pilgrimage, to dictate admirably lucid pages discussing and scrutinizing certain philosophical problems which he wished to elucidate. When he was struck a few years ago by the implacable sickness which, alas! was to carry him off, he had just begun to plan a very comprehensive, even encyclopedic, task which, fully prepared as he had meanwhile made himself, would have been the crowning of his efforts and the masterwork of his mature years. He accepted the non-fulfillment of these lofty hopes, with keen regret, to be sure, but unshaken peace of soul; his passion for work had, in truth, the very quality of a religious offering, in that, with great personal disinterestedness, he regarded

* This tribute on Yves R. Simon first appeared in *Jubilee* (New York), Vol. 9, No. 4, August, 1963, pp. 33. It is reprinted here with permission. In French it was issued as *Yves R. Simon: mon frère partage*, *Nova et Vetera* (Geneva), XLIII anneé, No. 1, Janvier-mars, 1973, pp. 45-45. (Editor).
it all as a way of answering the call of God and making the talents he had received from Him fruitful — as He pleased! To quote Father Ward again, "in his work and in his life he stood in fear and trembling before God." (2).

Totally penetrating his entire make-up were an absolute honesty of mind and that primary quality of the philosopher, an uncompromising zeal for truth. He cherished Thomas Aquinas because he cherished truth, and he cherished truth more than he did Aquinas; and because he cherished truth more than he cherished Aquinas, his very progress in truth made him cherish Aquinas with greater and greater awareness and determination. The more he sought to secure for himself the strongest possible Thomistic equipment, the more he mastered that equipment so as to pursue his own personal and creative quest for truth with an entire freedom of spirit.

He cultivated friendship with veneration. No joy was greater for him than those long conversations where two friends enlighten one another and advance together into the mystery of intelligible being. As I write these lines I feel the thinking of the walks we once took in the Jura countryside in France, the memories of which, he later told me, was very dear to him — and is now still dearer to me.

Yves Simon's many books and articles covering an astonishing variety of fields — logic, metaphysics, the theory of knowledge, the philosophy of nature, moral and political philosophy — have been a great and original and illuminating contribution to the progress of personal philosophy, and will, I am certain, be more and more recognized as a lasting part of that philosophy. And how eminent and inspiring a truth was his (first at the University of Notre Dame, then with the Committee on Social Thought of the University of Chicago)! How attentive he was to the intellectual personality of his students, how eager to help them and cooperate with them! They loved him in return. May they always keep alive the memory of his example.

Since the early days when he studied Froude, he nurtured a special interest in matters social. Masterly works like Nature and Functions of Authority (3) and Philosophy of Democratic Government (4) were thus the fruit of a long meditation, enriched by historical experience and rationally elaborated in the light of Thomistic principles. Nor did he ever hesitate to speak his mind in the field of the practical or to take a stand on the grave political issues of our time. He supported de Gaulle from the start. He was a staunch defender of freedom and democracy, a strong adversary of any kind of totalitarianism.

Throughout all the ordeals of human existence, he was fortified by an ardent faith and a life of prayer which made him cling more and more to the will of God and the mysterious ways of His providence. The dreadful and unceasing physical sufferings with which he was visited by God's unfathomable love prepared him to approach the shores of eternal life with an admirably purified soul.

His untiring philosophical work never distracted him from his human duties and responsibilities, especially those towards his family whom he loved with an immensely devoted, sometimes almost over-scrupulous, love.


PHILOSOPHY AND FAITH

(Extract from the Memoirs of a French Philosopher)

by Yves R. Simon

The Department of Philosophy at the Catholic Institute in Paris, where I did most of my studies, was and remains a distinguished center of Thomist thought. This is in no small measure due to the efforts of its dean, Emile Pellingue, a totally dedicated man, who did so much to improve the quality and coherency of the school's program. Year after year, he introduced new professors, invited to hold new series of public conferences, and guided his colleagues to new fields of research. Those who have followed the development of the Department will always cherish his memory.

Among our teachers, all of whom were excellent, there was nevertheless one who stood out and whose reputation grew very rapidly. At that time, Maritain was not yet forty. He was known as the author of a famous book on the philosophy of Bergson, which no one read, because it was out of print, and a small book that everyone was reading, Art and Scholasticism (1). People were also talking about a forthcoming book with a provocative title: Antimoderne (2). Around his name and his person there was an atmosphere of young glory. The tone both of the eulogies of his friends and of the criticism of his adversaries let us all believe that he had begun something truly important. Everyone inquired about Maritain's projects, about his work in progress. And even those who by habit or profession found it amusing that anyone would even think of returning "scholasticism", appeared quite impatient to read his next publication. Great hopes filled the air.

But what did we hope for? About twenty-five years earlier, speaking of Time and Free Will, (3) Georges Sorel had declared that Bergson's work "rises like a high mountain chain over the desolate plains of contemporary philosophy." Other signs of a philosophical renaissance were also present. And, of course, many historical precedents encouraged expectations that the dark ordeal of the world war would be followed by a period of spiritual recovery and achievement. Maritain was definitely one of the principal contributors to this renewal. But why, then, should one of his books carry this strange title, Antimoderne? What a fascinating paradox. Standing out among the brightest lights who seemed destined to usher a new era of intellectual conquests, Maritain was stubbornly attached to the teachings of Saint Thomas and showed intransigent hostility to all modern philosophies. They accused him of dismissing three centuries of philosophical speculation as of no value whatsoever, which was, of course, false and absurd. And yet, Maritain did reject totally the principles of all modern schools, starting with the first and most important of them all, Cartesianism. With a reformer's ardor, he adamantly defended tradition.

* This essay originally appeared as "La philosophie dans la foi: Extrait des mémoires d'un philosophe français" in La Nouvelle Revue (Montreal), Vol. I, No. 6, March, 1942, pp. 334-342. This translation by Prof. V. Kilic is published with permission. (Editor)
In a sense, the path Maritain was following was tried before, but he went so much farther. While confronting modern problems with as intransigent a Thomism as anyone else, he also managed to find solutions for them. Even in Antinomadere, Maritain insisted that no sooner had he said no, that the Thomist must devote himself to the task of assimilation of what was rejected. This was not an entirely new idea, but with Maritain the proof that it could be done changed character. Immersed as he was in the secular life of his time, friend of artists and art critics, student of positive science, former disciple of Bergson, passionate observer of all that was new, and always ready to acknowledge what was good and true in intellectual tendencies, the author of Antinomadere was, no doubt about it, the most modern of Thomists. It was up to him to show finally whether Thomism can hold its own in the open air and in the public place.

This was the challenge, and in order to meet it Maritain had first of all to renounce the advantages of specialization. Bombarded by questions coming from all points on the intellectual horizon, his vocation would be to reply to each with a kind of summary Communiqués. His books would thus be little more than collections of messages thrown at the four winds like handfuls of seeds. And over the years, Maritain has remained faithful to this vocation. As his work grew and developed, his interests multiplied; but far from replacing them, his new interests merely seemed to stimulate the old.

The oldest and the deepest center of interest in Maritain is the theory of being and of knowing: that is where all the light comes from. Yet this light is by no means confined to the field of pure philosophy. The development of positive science poses important philosophical problems, and many literary gentlemen were betting that these problems would prove a real stumbling block for Thomism. The development of art and poetry poses important philosophical problems, and few ever suspected that a scholastic approach could make a contribution to the theory of art which he be received favorably by many artists. Political and social development likewise poses philosophical problems, and even people sympathetic to Thomist metaphysics doubted that the revolutionary modern political and social experiences could even be illuminated by scholastic teaching. Finally, religious life, too, poses a large number of problems which cannot be solved except through employment of philosophical instruments. Whether these questions belong to philosophy or to theology, is not so important in the present context. What is important is that Maritain's books on the mystery of religious life have a message for those who know what he is writing about.

The twenty years or so which have passed since I began my studies in philosophy cover roughly the period between the two world wars. Despite the anguish that hung over our youth, and the economic difficulties, this was an exciting period in the history of philosophy. In fact, especially as far as Catholic philosophy is concerned, I see it as one of the most fruitful in modern history. It is comforting during the present ordeal to reflect that during those years of crises that gave us a taste of even worse catastrophies, there were nevertheless also periods of enlightenment which make it possible to anticipate exciting possibilities of liberation and reconciliation when this nightmare will be over. After all, if modern societies have suffered so terribly on account of errors committed by philosophers, why can't we hope that the restoration of certain old philosophical truths and the discovery of new ones will one day have a beneficial effect on the life of societies? We are beginning to realize that it was largely because of the poverty of its philosophical equipment that religious thought in the last few centuries had been so inept in resisting error. Nothing, therefore, should prevent us from truths outside of philosophy. We must never underestimate the support that philosophical truth can contribute to the progress of religion.

Indeed, the men of our generation, in full agreement with the teaching of the masters they had chosen, had from the very beginning paid special attention to the complex relationship between religious belief and philosophical science. That is precisely the reason why when Etienne Gilson published his exposition of the notion of Christian philosophy, it was so enthusiastically received; without being fully aware of it, we had been Christian philosophers in the sense of Gilson for at least the last ten years.

Some people may think that the tendency to confuse faith and rational knowledge, which had been typical of modern quarrels, has only assumed a new form in this great discussion on Christian philosophy (starting about 1920). But that is not at all the case. The temptation to mix these orders and to ignore the distinction between the work of reason and the expression of faith had been effectively checked during the preceding years. Reduced to its essentials, Gilson's exposition is but a brilliant historical commentary on a few simple remarks of Thomas Aquinas. When reason reaches the highest levels in its order of knowledge, its further progress faces two kinds of possibilities: de jure and de facto. In principle, nothing prevents reason from establishing by its own natural lights an entirely true theory of God as long as all history stands witness to the fact that the light of faith, reason cannot recognize even the God of reason without falling into grave errors. At the very summit of rational speculation, there are fully demonstrable truths which, however, have no chance of being demonstrated unless they are accepted, prior to the intervention of reason, as objects of faith. If we want to know the best that reason can know, we must begin by believing.

People have too often been content to hold simply that the unity of truth itself guarantees the agreement between rational and revealed truth. Thus a philosopher arriving at a conclusion contrary to revealed truth would simply acknowledge his error and start over again. But while that is indeed the right thing to do, this position misses completely the historical conditions of human intelligence. This rule approaches intelligence strictly from the point of view of its de jure possibilities, completely ignoring its existential conditions in this world of contingency and in this state of fallen nature. It took a historian and a philosopher to supplement the consideration of the objective potential of human reason with its historical possibilities and to show at which point the history of the progress of the human spirit, in the philosophical order, is linked to the mystery of the supernatural relations of man to God.

By understanding better the real conditions of philosophical life dedicated to truth, by understanding what these conditions mean under the objective laws of philosophical thought, contemporary Christian philosophers have been able to take a clearer and more open attitude toward non-believers, which supports friendly and fruitful exchanges. Having a better sense of the direction which supernatural faith promotes in philosophical research, they are now better able to see what all philosophical systems have to contribute. But finally and above all, having understood that philosophy needs the light of faith, the Christian philosopher is saved from entertaining two kinds of truths
and risking the divorce of his intellectual from his spiritual life. In my opinion, it is this union of philosophical intelligence and Christian faith, brought about by the labor of a few great minds, that makes this period one of the brightest in the history of philosophy.


JACQUES MARITAIN AND YVES R. SIMON ON TRUTH, LIBERTY, AND THE ROLE OF THE PHILOSOPHER IN SOCIETY *

Jacques Maritain and Yves R. Simon were not only great philosophers. They were also good men who spent their lives in defense of human rights. We cherish their examples, because they are not too frequent in the history of philosophy. Indeed, Maritain and Simon would be the first to warn us against assuming any necessary connection between even brilliant achievement in philosophy, on the one hand, and moral integrity and responsible politics on the other. No matter what Socrates might have thought, Aristotle, and have always maintained that to know the truth and to do the right thing is not one and the same. The central topic of the discussion that follows, therefore, is the relation between philosophical habitus and moral virtue, which Maritain and Simon distinguished so clearly in their teaching even if only to combine in an unbreakable unity in their lives.

My own reflections on their examples and their teaching has led me to speculate that when it comes to dealing with the political problem of the relation between truth and liberty, both Plato and Marx badly miss the point. Far from being solved by philosophers becoming kings, or by philosophers changing the world, this problem admits only of gradual improvement to the extent that society is made safe for philosophy. But in shall not indulge here in much speculation of my own. Maritain's and Simon's message is loud and clear: the philosopher must defend liberty as well as truth, and he cannot do either unless he possesses moral virtues in addition to philosophical habitus.

Before I begin my exposition of their teaching, however, I would like to recall a few things Maritain and Simon had to say about each other both as men and as philosophers. Such reminiscing not only seems to fit the occasion, but it will also serve to authenticate, so to speak, my premises that in these men we have two examples of philosophers quite out of the ordinary, whose theories moreover cannot be separated from their moral personalities.

* An earlier version of this essay especially written for this issue was delivered at the Jacques Maritain Congress on Human Rights, sponsored by the American Maritain Association. Washington, D.C., April 21, 1978.

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In his lecture, Simon said things about Maritain that few others could or would dare say. Thus he called him the only man of genius among Thomists since John of St. Thomas, who died in 1664. He also called him a city child with a soul of a contemplative and the gifts of an artist. He called him the first non-scholastic in the history of Thomism, and he insisted that the most outstanding feature of Maritain's philosophy was its modernity. Simon praised Maritain's intuitive familiarity with object and metaphysics, his methodological experience, but he also noted that the warmth of that familiarity, so helpful to readers, was somewhat less in Maritain's writings on mathematics, physics, and politics. Moreover, while denying that Maritain ever mixed theological and philosophical premises, it was clear to Simon that, contrary to his own preference for the method of isolation which furnished special guarantees of epistemological purity, Maritain generally treated philosophical issues in the particular state that they assume by reason of their relation to Christian faith and theology. Similarly, most of Maritain's writings on political and social subjects were composed under circumstances calling for an extensive rather than minimal exercise of historical intelligence and prudential judgment, which the political philosopher, if he can help it, should avoid. Nevertheless, in all of this, according to Simon, Maritain was doing no more than following the callings of a Christian philosopher. Several years earlier, Simon had described Maritain as a philosopher who taught, in the most existential fashion, that philosophy, in order to remain love of truth, had to be totally subordinated to charity. What Maritain's works made plain, he said, was that they were written by a philosopher always ready to suspend his philosophical pursuits in order to help a fellow in need of a job, an outlaw in need of a refuge, a soul in need of God. To his last audience, Simon was reluctant to express admiration for a man to whom he was well known to owe so much. Instead, drawing a distinction between a person's choice and his calling, he concluded his talk by suggesting that remote ages might find it relevant to know that Maritain was the philosopher who, in case of conflict, never hesitated to fulfill his calling rather than to follow his choice (5).

To Frank Keegan, who was in the audience, Simon's presentation was nothing less than a philosophic life itself, incarnated in the fruitful exchange between Yves Simon and Jacques Maritain — as philosophers and friends — over the past four decades. Because young philosophers sometimes speak too enthusiastically, and perhaps too sentimentally, of their masters, Keegan noted some people think that personal testimony should not appear in the writings of mature philosophers. Simon's address proved that there was much need for personal testimony in philosophy not only at the beginning and in the middle of one's work, but also at the end and beyond the end. After all, Keegan recalled, such intertwining of affection for a person and of love of truth has marked the careers of great philosophers from the time of Plato until Socrates to the time of Maritain under Bergson. And that is how it happened that at the end of Simon's lecture everyone present realized that although Yves Simon came to give testimony to a philosophical truth by giving testimony to Jacques Maritain, he inevitably gave clear testimony also to the life work of Yves R. Simon (6).
II.

So much for the memories, then. We turn now to Maritain's and Simon's teaching. And to show that I am aware of possible questions on this point, let me say in passing that any differences between Maritain and Simon besides attesting to the openness of Thomism, serve to prove mainly their approximately equal skills as philosophers. At any rate, here we are interested not so much in their separate contributions to Thomism as in their joint achievement in explaining the philosopher's duty to defend human rights as an integral requirement of the perennial philosophy. The following statement by Simon will help us approach this achievement from the right perspective. «Whoever has understood the ideas of St. Thomas on liberty as a mastery enjoyed by rational beings, on the ground of their rational nature itself, over the means that lead to their ends; whoever has understood the meaning of the Thomistic thesis that liberty is an attribute of the divine nature, a divine name, should conclude that the general philosophy of St. Thomas involves a philosophy of political liberty that is both very orderly and very radical.» (7)

If there is a secret in Maritain's and Simon's being at the same time good philosophers and good men, this statement is the key to it. Liberty is mastery. The role of the philosopher in society and his own character are both ultimately determined by the acceptance or rejection of this notion. The philosopher, Maritain says, is to the principles of society what the statesman is to its government. This may have both good and bad results, depending on whether or not they are on the right road. If they are on the right road, however, while the statesman tends to the common good including liberty, the philosopher clearly must tend to truth. And that is where his own struggle for mastery begins.

But we must leap ahead in my exposition. The trouble with saying that the role of the philosopher in society should be to defend truth is that philosophers have never agreed among themselves what truth is. And if they remain so divided, is not their involvement in common life more likely to disrupt than help society? To meet this objection, Maritain conceives that perhaps as many crimes have been committed in the name of truth as in the name of liberty and that a zeal for truth has often cloaked the most revolting human passions. Clearly, this is the main reason why so many people have come to believe that not to adhere to any assertion as unshakeably true is a primary requirement of democratic citizenship. But such skepticism, which necessarily extends to human rights, does not, in fact, help democracy. Free government, especially, needs firm, reasoned-out convictions about its moral tenets, and loosing intellectual grasp of the intrinsic value of right, law, authority, or freedom, would soon spell its doom. So skepticism is not the answer.

According to Maritain, the disagreement among philosophers should be approached with humility but also with faith in truth. His rule is that even though we must love and respect both, we must love truth more than our fellow philosophers. But with the right kind of attitude, it is precisely truth that will make us see agreement as well as disagreement even among the most widely opposed schools of thought. For instance, Maritain notes, despite their failures and successes, it is not too hard to recognize that, after all, Comte seeks the realization of a rational, social order, Kant the restoration of the activity of the subject in knowledge, and Bergson recognition of the reality of the spiritual. It is a poor philosopher who misses the truth, and especially the desire for truth, in systems of human thought whose interpretations he cannot accept in their entirety. Philosophy by its nature cannot tolerate error; but there can be intellectual justice between philosophical systems (9).

Along somewhat different lines of reasoning, Simon's explanation of the disagreement among philosophers not only complements Maritain's but also lands us back to the notion of liberty as mastery in the life of thought, as well as of action. First of all, Simon reminds us, philosophical subjects are very difficult. They are located at the very limits of human thought, which makes disagreement on them practically normal. Moreover, it is simply a fact of life that no philosopher can ever completely transcend either his social environment or his own personality. But despite of what Simon says, this situation is not too much different from what we find in other sciences, where de facto disagreements at the highest level of theory seldom shake the scientists' conviction that consensus among them is de jure possible. In philosophy, however, there is also a third source of disagreement, which adds greatly to its problems in society. This, according to Simon, is «the strange fact that people who have no real understanding of philosophical issues can be socially successful as writers on philosophy» (10). Other sciences exist almost exclusively in a technically elaborated state, and laymen thus tend to stay away from discussion of their fundamental principles. But philosophy exists in several states, including a popular state which admits all to its discussion. Consequently, the philosopher, in contrast to other scientists, has to struggle against error on two fronts, so to speak, the popular as well as the professional. No wonder philosophers sometimes feel discouraged, are tempted to withdraw at least from the discussion of questions of philosophical debates. But not Simon and Maritain and for two very good reasons. First, for them the search for truth and wisdom is a fundamental human right from which no one must be excluded. But secondly, they also insist that the philosophical effort be carried on the daily life of communities because, as Simon puts it bluntly, «all our real freedom is contained within limits of our knowledge of truth» (11). In other words, the truth that overshadows the disagreement among the philosophers is that without truth there can be no freedom for men.

Whether they know it or not, this is, in fact, what most philosophers have always assumed, regardless of the differences in their interpretations of truth. One cannot be in error and still be free, no matter what one believes truth or freedom to be. So that is not really the issue at the heart of the problem of the role of the philosopher in society. The real question, once we recognize that philosophical truth is a necessary condition of human freedom, is whether it is also a sufficient condition for it. Notice that both Socrates and Marx, each in his own way, think that it is, as does Comte, and scores of others. But not Maritain and Simon. The philosopher can do much for society, but he cannot do it all. The idea that philosophy can deal with contingent matters that make up the lives of individuals and societies, without being supplemented by the virtue of prudence, Simon writes, «is a silly illusion that should not have survived the criticism of Socrates by Aristotle» (12). But the illusion has survived, and in our times it thrives under the guise of science. It is posed as the basis for natural science, the natural sciences. Under these circumstances, the philosopher of liberty has once again no more pressing task than to expose this illusion. Indeed, to say that philosophy is not enough may well be the most important truth.
that the philosophy of human freedom has to contribute to the proper ordering of the lives of individuals as well as of society.

This insistence on the inadequacy of philosophy, including moral philosophy, to bring order into our existence may at first glance appear out of place in Thomism, which as a philosophical system puts so much emphasis on the primacy of the speculative intellect. Actually, however, it is understandable consistent position, once we understand that the universe is made up of many natures and that in the human world things can be otherwise than they are. These are the ontological conditions of our freedom, recognized in the epistemological distinction between the theoretical and the practical truth. Remember that in Thomism freedom is not indetermination but mastery. And so, when the question is what to do here and now, it is only natural that the will should take over, as it were, from the intellect. The answer to this kind of question does not depend on things; it depends on the person. And if the person possesses prudence, his answer will be not only true but also free.

In the ultimate practical judgment which determines our action, it is love, according to John of St. Thomas, that takes over the role of object (13). There is simply no other way, and whoever says differently does not know what he is talking about. As long as we accept, What is to be done? as a real question, we assume that we have a choice to shape our existence. Maritain recognizes here a point of similarity between Thomism and modern existentialism, but he also quickly draws the distinction between them. Ethical universalism and moral essences, all of which are rejected by modern atheistic existentialism, are the very foundation of Thomism. But teaching on freedom. Our world is indeed one of adventure, but we also have to face the fact that all natures have their laws, including free natures (14). And that is why, while we shall never want to replace love in action, we must never stop trying to understand better the ways of love.

It is this obligation to penetrate the mysteries of human life in common with philosophy, that brings to the philosopher of liberty most of his problems. Society is interested in actual fulfillment of rules of conduct first, their explanation second. In fact, society is suspicious of attempts at explanation, because their inevitable incompleteness seems continuously to threaten its necessary operation. This, Simon suggests, may well be what, beyond all historical incidents, the trial of Socrates perennially means: "The Athenians seem to have thought that a keen interest in the understanding of ethical subjects causes perplexity and impedes the most indispensable resolutions (15). But if we grasp the nature of practical knowledge as explained in Aristotle, and in Thomism, we come to understand that the need for explanation as part of integral fulfillment for rational agents does not stand in the way of fulfillment in action. If it is made clear that judgment by commutability, by prudence, and by the heart of the just, is the only kind of judgment available not only in contingent situations but also at the beginning of any inquiry into moral essences, theoretical interest in the nature of ethics or politics becomes much less of a threat to fulfillment in action in which society is interested in the first place. In fact, if liberty is understood as mastery enjoyed by rational beings over the means that lead to their ends, it becomes clear then that a free society has a vital stake in stressing explanation of its working, including the part played in it by love. For ethical and political theory is certainly no exception to the rule that it is truth which sets us free. But even if society acknowledges that it needs philosophy because society needs truth to survive, what is society to do about all those errors small and great that philosophers produce along with a few strands of truth? Even the most liberal societies have had to protect themselves by repressing or trying to prevent the production and distribution of at least the most destructive untruths springing from the unlimited imagination of man. Such need for it, however, does not make censorship any less clumsy as an instrument to be used on behalf of such a lofty and delicate subject as truth, epistemologically, we must recognize that such practices will never cease, because first things come first. But that does not mean, again, that we must not forever try to devise better ways of keeping social order while promoting truth at the same time. As a possible alternative, Simon suggests taking another look at inspiration, which though less conspicuous than coercion or repression, is after all the main instrument used by society to achieve its purposes. The real question here is whether this kind of instrument can be effective also at the level of transcendent as distinguished from practical truth. It is one thing to agree that there is a need for laws, or for schools, but quite another to agree on the grounds of legal obligations of the moral foundations of education. Simon knows that his answer lies at a rather frightful level of profundity: It may or it may not work. But whether or not society is or is not able to serve transcendent truth by way of inspiration, be says, will depend entirely on the virtue of those dedicated to the service of transcendent truth (16).

This message which is found loud and clear also in the Maritain's work brings us back to the proposition that the philosopher indeed stands to truth as the statesman stands to liberty, and I would like to show with a little variation on a famous theme by Aristotle, how the two positions may respect each other's characteristics. A good man, according to Aristotle, is one who is both a good citizen, Aristotle holds, only in a constitutional state. There, government is exercised over freemen and equals, and the ruler himself knows not only how to rule like a freeman but also how to obey like a freeman (17). Now to find an equivalent potential coincidence in the theoretical order, we may argue as follows. Not every philosopher necessarily has true knowledge, at least not in the same degree. But a philosopher who can teach independently of minds and learn from others seems certainly closer to truth than either a mere student who knows nothing but what he has been taught or the professor of philosophy who is famous because he has a system all his own. We may thus see a great teacher as a kind of statesman of theory, his fellow philosophers as citizens of the community of intellects, and their joint and free pursuit of truth as not unlike the pursuit of liberty by the citizens in the constitutional state. The philosopher, if he may be no more than a metaphorical analogy. But insofar as philosophy is after all a human thing, as Maritain never tires of repeating (18), it should be clear that the requirements for success in philosophical enterprise and those necessary to secure the blessings of liberty in political life cannot be entirely different.
a good philosopher and a good man. Against this most tragic of human
failures, Maritain and Simon give us plenty of warnings to recognize the
symptoms of falling away not from any particular doctrine but from the
work of philosophy itself. Here is how Maritain explains it: «The act of
philosophizing involves the character of the philosopher. Pride, envy, vanity,
gluttony and intellectual avarice, the preference of dialectical virtuosity and
the false security of academicism to the mystery of being, the spirit of
sectarianism and zealous bitterness, a taste for what is fashionable, self-
satisfaction or satisfaction with a group or circle, the duplicity which turns
against known truth, are all fatal to the rectitude of the philosophical act» (19).

Similarly, Simon notes that «not a few intellectuals pursue knowledge
as if it were a form designed to achieve that universally admired compound,
the learned man. But this is like pursuing honors, power, or money. Such
desire for learning covets the idea rather than its object, and instead of
truth leads to preoccupation with the intellectual self. And so, instead of
being set free — to teach truth and, if need be, help his fellow man —
the intellectual remains confined in a prison of his own making. «He whose
calling was to become a universe», Simon writes, «has succeeded only in
producing another system» (20).

The philosopher, then, to sum up, cannot withdraw from society, because
true philosophy involves a philosophy of political liberty. At the same
time, however, the philosopher cannot aspire, as philosopher, to be King, because,
he is not trained to deal with things that can be otherwise than they are.
Moreover, in order to promote truth by way of inspiration, which is what
he is supposed to do, he must be free himself, especially from himself.
But I think that there is one more thing that the philosopher must do for
truth, for liberty, and for society. He must encourage the optimism and
ever give the impression that philosophers can easily change the world,
or that either truth or liberty are ours just for the asking. Now both
Maritain and Simon have written eloquently on this subject. But there
is a passage in Simon that I especially like, and which seems a perfect
conclusion to this review of their teaching on the duties of the philosophers.

«All that is essentially implied by moral pessimism is a profound feeling
of the wretchedness of our condition; a perfectly sincere disposition to see
evil wherever it shows itself, together with its frequency and its extent;
will and resolution to knock down the protective screens our fear and our
laziness manufactures to spare us the sight of evil; a thorough sense of the
innumerable difficulties which the accomplishment of good presents. One could
say that pessimism is nothing but depth of moral intelligence. In the life
of study, what distinguishes really intelligent people from those who have
only a brilliant appearance of intelligence is an ability to understand that
the most trifling questions, once examined, will always turn out to be
incomparably more difficult than one could have foreseen; to understand
that any progress in the exploration of a question necessarily has the effect
of making new difficulties apparent, difficulties greater than those already
surmounted. Only shallow minds believe that there are such things as
easy questions in the sciences, in philosophy and history. Profound minds
know that there are no easy questions. Yet they are not morose minds;
they have accepted the law of difficulty which is the law of our intelligence;
and to the cheap satisfaction obtained by brilliant and shallow minds they
prefer the austere joys which accompany familiarity with mystery. Optimists
are men who believe that one can easily be good, become better, improve
mankind's lot; they are the shallow minds, the idiots, of the practical order.

Just as a profound scientific mind is not necessarily a morose mind,
so a pessimist has no reason to be a sullen person. It is the disillusioned
optimist who has good reasons for losing sight of the possibility of progress
and the exigency of progress which are written in our nature; for him the
practical solution is to let things go. But to the true pessimist this is an
admissible solution. An exact knowledge of evil reveals the power of
good and arouses in our souls an uncompromising will to act and to struggle
for the better world whose realization our nature, from the depth of its
wretchedness, demands» (21).

(1) Ibid., August, 1961, pp. 2-3.
(2) Commonweal, March 19, 1954.
(3) Ibid., p. 2.
(8) In the Use of Philosophy, Athenium, New York, 1960, p. 22.
(9) Ibid., p. 28.
(10) A. the Community of Intellects », Cap and Gown, Notre Dame, Indiana, December, 1957, pp. 66.
(15) Practical Wisdom, p. 37.
(17) Politics, p. 54.
(20) To Be and To Know, Chicago Review, 14, 4, Spring 1961, pp. 100.
(21) Freedom and Community, pp. 177-178.
DEMOCRACY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF JACQUES MARITAIN AND YVES R. SIMON

by Charles P. O'Donnell

In the grand tradition of philosophers from Plato and Aristotle onwards, Jacques Maritain and Yves R. Simon contributed a democratic political philosophy suited to our times. Maritain notably in *True Humanism* (Humanisme integral) and *Man and the State* (L'Homme et l'Etat) and Simon in *Philosophy of Democratic Government* challenged the scholasticism of social and political scientists which questions the basis of political philosophy and identifies politics with the manipulation of power conflicts.

They restored respectability to Thomism in the world of philosophy, which turned its back on Christian and realistic thought. By showing how indispensable religious beliefs and moral principles are to the practical politics of our day, their democratic philosophy belied the allegation that Thomism and Catholic Christianity are enemies of democracy.

They explored the origins, meaning, and implications of the political philosophies which have influenced the upheavals of the century. Simultaneously they witnessed the decline of individualism and the emergence of Communist power. They saw that what often goes wrong in political thought occurs not only when false ideas win adherents but also when moral and political truths, torn away from their philosophical moorings, mingle with falsehoods. They perceived that Marx's intuition of social justice, embedded in materialism and hostility to religion could not help but produce a savage secularist state under Stalin. They feared that if democratic freedom is translated by modernist thinking into selfishness and indifference to religious values, democracy itself could be treacherous.

Maritain and Simon, gravely concerned about the impact of the human condition on political life, shared a sense of moral pessimism. Simon described that insight as a "profound feeling of the wretchedness of our condition... a sense of the immense difficulties which the accomplishment of good presents." They were nonetheless persuaded that an exact knowledge of evil reveals the power of good and arouses in our souls an uncompromising will to act and struggle for the better world whose realization our nature... demands." (1)

Their discernment of the human condition and its lessons spurred them to study political affairs. They quickly proceeded to do much more: they launched a revolution in social and political thought. Their philosophy of democracy is the framework of that revolution. It explains the fundamental principles of political action in a democratic society. It offers governments and people the guidance of reasoned convictions about the moral and political premises of democracy. Because their political philosophy is a practical one rather than an idealistic exercise in concepts, they also proposed a reconstruction of the patterns of political life that might move men more readily toward the democratic ideal embodied in a charter of human rights.

Since they were not armchair political philosophers, they participated in major events of their times. Their collaboration began in France during the thirties and progressed while they were in the United States during the war and the following decade. It was in America that they wrote most extensively in political philosophy: their American experience confirmed them in the democratic faith.

Jacques Maritain, socialist in his teens, soon thereafter embarked on a spiritual and intellectual odyssey during which he was converted to Catholicism and pursued his study of St. Thomas and of European culture. His arms length association with Japanese intellectuals of *L'Action Française* during several years after the first World War culminated in his support of the papal condemnation of its *politique d'abord* (politics first) policy which threatened to weld the Church to the faith of a political party.

The *Action Française* crisis (1926) revealed to Maritain the immense philosophical problems implicated in the relationships of religion and politics. He studied the modern and political ideas of Aristotle, St. Thomas, Kant, Hegel and others, and undertook to put together a practical philosophy which realistically appraised political life that a Christian could accept and defend. During the late twenties and the early thirties his *Religion and Culture* (Religion et culture), 1930, *Freedom in the Modern World* (Du régime national et de la Liberté), 1933, and *True Humanism* (Humanisme total), 1934, charted the essentials of his Christian democratic political philosophy.

Yves R. Simon, junior to Maritain by 20 years, initiated his study of St. Thomas under the direction of Maritain at the Institut Catholique of Paris. From his youth Simon, born into the Catholic faith, leaned to the politics of the Christian democratic movement. Medical and philosophical studies occupied his time and attention during the twenties. In 1934 his *Critique de la connaissances morale* initiated his writings in moral and political philosophy. During the thirties he criticized the French right for its support of Mussolini's "mission civilisatrice" in Ethiopia, its opposition to the efforts of the League of Nations to end the conflict, and its defiance of "values without which life is not worth living—love of truth, justice and peace." (2)

The events of the decade from 1926 to 1936 forced French Catholics into the arena of public debate. Fearful that the riots of February 1934 between left and right political parties would endanger the nation and democracy by splitting the country into armed camps, Maritain, Simon and other leading Catholic intellectuals, such as Emmanuel Mounier, Etienne Borne and Olivier Lacombe published a declaration entitled *Pour le bien commun*. The message of the manifesto was clear and simple: Christians had political responsibilities which engaged them to say "no" to political violence. It reminded the nation and the world of "the moral conditions required to organize an international community respectful of the rights of the human person and justice." (3) The political writings of Maritain and Simon elaborated on the nature and scope of man's freedom and responsibilities in the political life of democracy.

Maritain's long preface to Alfred Mendizabal's *Aux origines d'une tragédie: La politique Espagnole de 1923 à 1936* denied the claim of Franco...
supporters that the civil war was a holy war. In cooperation with Catholic intellectuals in France, Spain, and England he led La Paix Civile, an organization which called on Western governments to find ways to mediate between the contending parties in the civil war. Maritain's views were highly unpopular among conservatives in the United States and Latin America.

In 1942 Maritain and Simon jointly with a distinguished group of European thinkers in the United States and Canada published a Manifesto on the War. The declaration affirmed that "the issue at stake in the war is civilization itself and the Christian values therein involved."

Pour le bien commun it contended that the crisis of our civilization called for a recasting of its principles in terms of "the rights and liberties of the human person" and "the necessity for the organization of those liberties at all levels of social life with an eye to the common good." This restatement of the 1938 declaration signaled the internationalization of the European crisis of the thirties which made the rethinking of political life and democracy more urgent than ever.

During the war Maritain and Simon turned to political action. Each wrote books and gave lectures addressed to their countrymen and other audiences in which they explained their views of the war and the reasons they supported the allied cause. They expressed the hope that the post-war world would bring fresh opportunities to realize democratic ideals.

Immediately after the war Maritain pursued his active political life as French Ambassador to the Vatican and, on leaving that post, as head of the French delegation to the UNESCO conference held in Mexico City in 1947. From there he went to Princeton University to teach philosophy. He remained at the university until 1961. During his last years spent with the Little Brothers in Toulouse, he wrote little about politics, save to reaffirm his political philosophy in The Peasant of the Garonne, (Le paysan de la Garonne).

Simon after he left France taught philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. Later he became a member of the Committee on Social Thought headed by John U. Nef at the University of Chicago Graduate School. During these years he produced a number of political works including his highly regarded Philosophy of Democratic Government and political writings published posthumously increased his reputation as a thinker and a political philosopher.

* * *

Over a quarter of a century the two philosophers reexamined, clarified, and gave new significance to the traditional moral and political principles on which democracy is grounded. They explained the meaning of the person and society, freedom and authority, equality, justice and fraternity, human rights and the common good. They explored the import of these principles for the structures of democracy as they relate to the people, the economy, technology, the international order and to the rappor of religion and politics.

The fundamental premise of their democratic philosophy centers around the concept of the person in his relation to society. Man as an individual person is more than a part of society, he is a whole being capable of achieving a good political life in association with fellow persons because all of them endowed with intelligence and free will can know, love and communicate with one another. Man as a person also transcends society because he has an eternal destiny.

The principle of pluralism championed by Maritain and Simon reconciles the unity of political society with man's multiplicity and social diversity. It takes into account the natural disposition of man to live in families, and in political and religious societies and to join others in voluntary associations of a social, economic and cultural character.

Political society in this pluralist world holds the highest place among mundane societies because as a work of nature and reason, it is the most general, of all non-religious societies and has ultimate responsibility for the well being of persons and their communities.

The fact that persons possess freedom of choice and use this endowment in political and other societies which assert authority over them is at the heart of the political problem of the day. Liberalism greatly troubled by the relation of political authority to political freedom has compounded the difficulties of the problem by offering so many contradictory explanations of it that it seems ready to bow to authority and disaster. The far left and far right have a much simpler answer; they prefer authority over freedom. The left describes its position as democratic centralism; the right 'law and order'.

One of the tasks Maritain and Simon set for themselves was to show that freedom and authority far from being inimical are essential to one another. At least in democracies freedom and authority do cooperate. The degree of cooperation they achieve hinges in part on the understanding that people and governments have of their meaning and on their determination to make them work in tandem.

Maritain and Simon held that the intelligence and freedom of choice characteristic of man as a person is only a means by which he is able to make himself more independent and more useful to society. Provided he uses his intelligence to work for the common good, his freedom coincides with the obligations of authority. It is the responsibility of authority to help him reach the term of his freedom. In this sense authority, as Maritain remarked, is the pedagogue of freedom.

Authority in democracies and other legitimate forms of government, Simon explained, must meet two criteria, that is, it must direct political society to common action and it must move its citizens to participation in the common good. He reminded us that the more definitely a political society is directed toward the common good and the better protected from disunity, the more perfect and more free it is.

The issue of freedom and authority is intimately related to the problem of power and authority. Maritain and Simon were agreed that authority is not equivalent to power—the illusion of «practical politics». Power for them is purely instrumental to authority and in consequence is primarily subject to the moral order and to the common good of political society.

In contemporary politics human equality is as much a subject of debate as is political freedom. Political philosophers are inclined to deny that persons are individually differentiated or that they possess essential equality. The history of mankind clearly records that socially wrought inequalities have taken the form of slavery, class distinctions, paternalism, imperialism and arbitrary rule. The democratic philosophy of Maritain and Simon maintained that persons are essentially equal but that individual persons differ from one another in the degree of their successes in employing their talents. Maritain observed that in democratic societies differences of individual abilities can be employed to help society as a whole by recognizing their contributions...
to the division of labor. On the other hand social discrimination because of race, color, sex or religion cannot be tolerated because they inhibit individual talents and obstruct social development.

The relation of equality to freedom, Simon remarked, points to the historical fact that for the common man «the will to be free and the claim of equality» presents «two aspects of the same enthusiasm» (5). The success of that enthusiasm, if it is to lead to the democracy of the common man, depends on the fair application of the principle of the equality of opportunity. While that kind of equality may rule out many privileges of entrenched social groups, Simon observed, that some degrees of the equality of opportunity can help the common man and too much of it can hurt him. What could hurt him is the degree of equality which threatens to dissolve the freedom of nongovernmental communities. Still democratic societies must look to the justice of equal opportunity to reduce and eventually to eliminate, especially those needed to redress racial and other discriminatory practices in social and economic life (6).

Maritain frequently said that more than justice is required to achieve personal freedom, equality and dignity. Democratic society also needs to foster political amity, to generate a readiness on the part of its citizens to cooperate in social actions which limit excessive violence and propaganda. Walter Lippman eloquently expressed the importance of civic amity in this process: «It is a fraternity which holds men together against anything that could divide them. It cools their fevers, subdues their appetites and restrains them from believing and saying and doing those irreconcilable, irreparable things which burst asunder the bonds of affection and trust» (7).

Maritain and Simon gave a new authenticity to the idea of the common goods, which sums up and emphasizes the principles of political society: its freedom, majority, equality and justice. On their reading the common good cannot be equated with the political goal of modern nationalist politics—political power and its management.

For them the common good includes all the good material things, material and cultural which are done in common by persons and their associations. It is something morally good aiming at advancing the freedom and development of persons in the context of a just society. It is the good which is common to society as a whole and the persons that constitute the society. As such it implies the recognition of the fundamental rights of persons and of their communities and demands the redistribution of the benefits of the common good to all persons. It requires each citizen to contribute his share to the well being of society. Individuals and social groups, Simon insisted, can only contribute to the common good if their autonomy, their right to participate fully in the governing process is recognized. The freedom of autonomy also restrains the absolutist tendencies of political and economic power. Drawn by the dynamism of the common good so understood, political freedom can be perfected, the authority of the government and the people realized, equality and justice served.

* * *

The participation of Maritain and Simon in the political crises of their times, their studies of political philosophy, and their sensitivity to the history of ideas and of political movements caused them to turn to the practical concerns of the century. Among the problems they addressed themselves to were: popular participation in government and autonomous groups, modern economies and technologies, international political society and the reconciliation of religion and politics. Maritain viewed these problematics in the context of a practical historical ideal — a political society guided by a democratic charter. This ideal outlined in True Humanism and developed in Man and the State, he explained, responded to the deep seated aspirations of a people to a free and orderly life. Simon’s acute historical insights and his command of practical philosophic principles complemented and amplified the patterns of Maritain’s prophetic ideal.

The «people» Maritain held to be the highest and most noble purely political concept. The people he identified with the living substance of the body politic of political society and with the most numerous of them the underprivileged, among them manual workers. The people substantially participate in the heritage, moral ideas, and vocation of the society to which they belong.

Moreover, those in authority receive their mandate from the people; it is to them government is responsible. Because the government is elected by the people it has genuine authority, the right to command what is just, and the right to be obeyed as long as its authority is not revoked.

Maritain loved people but he also knew they are not infallible and are often indifferent to their capacity for good. To arouse them and to encourage their political participation, the people need prophets close to the people. His expression was to «exist with the people» (8). He also envisaged the formation of «communities or minorities» to serve as the critics of social, economic, and political injustices. Although he acknowledged there are false as well as true political prophets, he believed the risk of mistaken identity could reasonably be taken if public discussions and criticism are open and free. Furthermore, prophets are especially needed in times of crisis and of renewal in democratic societies (9).

For his part Simon argued that the integrity of democratic government depends on the existence of autonomous groups, such as, trade unions, capable of limiting the excesses of political authority and of energizing participation in society. «The progress of society and freedom», he wrote, «requires that at every given moment in a community the greatest possible number of tasks should be directly managed by individuals and smaller units, the smallest number possible by the greater units» (10).

Simon also examined popular government in the light of historical theories of the consent of the governed. He concluded that political association is not brought about by instinct and infra-rational forces but by the good use of reason and freedom and by «the qualities of wisdom, justice and friendship which render such use steady» (10).

The idea of a political economy was always present in the writings of Maritain and Simon. They were united in their dissatisfaction with statist doctrine and with liberal capitalism and its dedication to the privileges of money and the market.

In accord with St. Thomas’s philosophy of property Maritain remarked that while man has a general right to appropriate material goods and to administer those goods, the control of property is best left to individual persons and individual appropriations subject to political authority. Work, he commented, is societies’ closest approximation to individual appropriation since it is a human and intelligent act. Laws governing private property, moreover, should be based on the obligation of each person to cooperate fully in the work of civilization.

He objected to state monopoly of property on the ground it would
make government a transcendent authority, alone in a position to ensure that the law of common use is honored. Government by resort to social pressures or political fiat could readily prevent individual persons from participating in economic processes.

In his Reflections on America, he pictured the non-communist world moving away from capitalism and socialism. Although individual profits remain an indispensable human stimulus, he believed, to be losing its absolute primacy. The principle of the "secularity of money," likewise is being replaced by the principle of participation in profits within contractual associations. He sensed that the United States would gradually accept the economic ideals he set forth in True Humanism where he demanded that economic institutions respect peoples’ rights, treat work as a social good, and insist on the fair distribution of economic wealth so that all people might share in the well being of society.

Simón’s extensive commentaries on economic life also criticized socialism and capitalism. He elaborated a philosophy of work, exchange, production and distribution which bears the humanist traits of Maritain’s observations. The exchange of goods, he said, is just only if the partners treat each other as equals. Just prices based on the equality of exchanged values amount to more than the costs of production; they must also provide for two essential social needs — investment capital and "free distribution.

Free distribution calls for the distribution of wealth by private organizations responsible for providing funds for relief, scientific research, art, education and religion. Investments and free distribution costs should be administered by socially responsible persons and groups rather than governments. To prevent wealth from "leaking out", the private sector, to assure that everyone's surplus is used socially and to make sure that a better estimate of human needs may be obtained, he proposed that social and political devices such as trade union, cooperatives, price controls, and taxation be employed (11).

Misconceptions and misapplications of the significance of work and of the meaning of just exchanges provoked the alienation of the working man. Alienation he defined as worker’s deprivation of social functions and of property necessary to develop his social responsibilities. In a society where alienation plays a major role, the worker becomes a commodity and the distribution system neglects or ignores the workers’ needs. Simón in consequence concludes that economic goods and services must be evaluated by human and social standards rather than by the market (12).

Maritain and Simón, well aware that today’s economic, social and political world is increasingly a technocratic one, rejected the Luddite philosophy which regards technological change as a menace to civilization. Nor did they believe that technological benefits would be beneficently employed if left in the hands of highly qualified technicians. They proposed that society should seek out ways to make good use of technologies and to restrain or eliminate their wrong uses. They recorded their staunch support for technological advances which properly used can make work more productive and less onerous, and increase our understanding of the universe and the values of our environment.

Unceasingly unsettling international economic problems are a constant reminder that relations among nations are a matter of growing urgency. The arms race, the over-hanging threat of nuclear exchanges, the persistent conflict between the Soviet Union and the West make the organization of an international society a first degree political problem which in the long run will require more than skillful diplomacy.

Maritain saw the myth of nation state sovereignty as the prime mover of world trouble making. The demythologizing action exerted by economic, technological and cultural interdependence has so far only served to confuse the issue. Maritain concluded that the nation state is not a workable political unit for the future. Because it is essentially a socio-biological entity, efforts to give it an adequate political form have failed. Nation states have historically provided the means for human growth in peace.

The United Nations, he regarded as useful and necessary under present world conditions but basically inadequate to meet the needs of an international order. The United Nations, he noted, depends on the very national sovereign states that it is expected to direct. Given the relationships of nation states pledged to the ideal of national sovereignty, there is nothing to counterbalance their penchant for domination or amorality.

One of the ways of rivaling the European Community, Maritain esteemed to be an historical gain because it mirrors a force at work in a society which has already assisted man to move from tribe to village, from village to city and from city state to nation state.

Maritain rejected the idea of a world government which is simply a super-state. International order he said must be founded on the awareness of free men of the reasons they wish to live together in peace. These reasons do not include the fear of war which in the past never compelled men to form a political society. Men in fact created political associations because they understood they are given tasks which must be undertaken in common. Simón’s discussion of political authority and common action is highly relevant here. Maritain concluded that when men have the will to live together in a world political society, probably after a very long time, it will be because they are determined to accomplish common tasks globally, because they have become aware of the nature of these tasks and because they believe they are worth the sacrifices they entail.

Neither force nor the delegation of powers by sovereign governments to a world political society can serve as its foundation. Its emergence will come only from the free consent of people, for it is the people themselves in all their diversities that constitute a global body politic. In sum the world order will be a society linked by civic unity, its end will be temporal and its common good perishable, and its common work a human affair, its government entrusted with the administration of justice assisted by the resources of its diverse social groups. Obviously such an historical ideal requires a change in the structures of modern morality and in man’s social and political awareness (13).

The moral and political revolution proposed by Maritain is unlikely to occur as long as one of the most intransient modern political problems — those in which religious differences are commingled with social, economic and political controversies — goes unanswered. Liberal thinkers seek to ignore or to work around the problem of religion and politics; Marxists prefer to smother it. Nevertheless, it persists in all nations whether it has to do with taxes on religious institutions, moral positions concerning life, the role of the churches in social and educational matters, or the quarrels of nations in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Maritain and Simon were in agreement on the proposition that religion and politics are distinct but cannot be separated. Political society ought therefore to recognize the freedom, existence and nature of religious institutions and cooperate with them. In modern democracies, especially, religion needs its freedom to inspire the best things in political life. Governments...
should never be the instruments of the spiritual for political society is as
the means by which eternal life is attained. Furthermore the unity and
integrity of political society does not presuppose the unity of religious faith.

* * *

The political philosophies of Maritain and Simon were often criticized
by the political right and left, fellow philosophers and others. Maritain in
On The Use of Philosophy responded to one of his critics who charged
that anyone claiming to know absolute truth and justice cannot be a true
democrat - because he cannot be expected to admit the possibility of a view
different from his own and will impose his view on others. If this were true,
Maritain agreed « man would be the most dangerous of beasts ». But, he
went on, « it is through persuasion not coercion that man as a rational animal
is bound to try to convince his fellows to share in what he knows or claims
to know what is true and just ». No doubt there are absolutists who seek
the truth by coercion but his position was not theirs. Besides « relativism
and doubt which are proposed as a necessary condition for tolerance would
deprive man of his right to adhere to the truth. Genuine tolerance exists only
when a man is firmly and absolutely convinced of a truth and at the same
time recognizes the right of others who deny this truth to contradict him
and speak their own minds. In that case his opponents would not be free of
the truth because they seek the truth in their own way and out of respect for
freedom, intelligence and dignity ». Simon similarly asserted the
primacy of reason and freedom over coercion. Every government, he
wrote, « has a duty to seek the maximum voluntary cooperation, to explain
its purposes and methods, to appeal indefatigably to whatever element of
good will can be found in them (the people) » and never to resort to coercion
unless « its persuasive powers are unable to accomplish a necessary pur-
pose ».

Stated in its simplest terms the democratic philosophy of Maritain and
Simon is an ultra-modern politics of Christian inspiration. It calls upon
men and nations to put their faith in man as a person and in a political society
where people can resolve their differences amicably and work together to
realize the fullness of a practical historical ideal mirrored in a democratic
charter of rights and obligations.

It is a modernist and revolutionary politics because it is an integral part
of an ethical (normative) philosophy which outlines what man and
societies ought to do because they are capable of a better life; modernist
because it takes into account the social structures and technological char-
acteristics of contemporary society. The revolution presupposes that
human conflicts are not metaphysical necessities but humanly reconceivable;
that man as a person is a religious animal as much as he is a political one;
that each historical period has its own inner structure and direction reflected
in the moral and ideological character of its political society; that democracy
is the hope of the world. If the revolution is to come off, the obligations of
people and their governments will have to increase in order that reason and
freedom can enter into a lasting and intimate partnership with justice and
peace.

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MYSTICAL CONTEMPLATION IN THE THOUGHT OF YVES R. SIMON AND JACQUES MARITAIN

by Brooke Williams

Many modern ears tend to tune out the non-rationalist mode of knowing called « mysticism », because this mysterious word sounds obscurantist to a scientific age devoted to the search for truth through empirical reasoning as the superior — perhaps the only — mode of knowing. Yet some scientists are taking a new look at the mystical approach to knowing, and they suggest that the two paths to knowledge are not as divergent as our age has heretofore assumed.

The philosophers Yves R. Simon and Jacques Maritain, who have contributed to the philosophy of science, likewise concur that the two modes of knowing — the scientific and the mystical — are not incompatible. Simon sees truth as « total and indivisible », embracing at once all realms of thought, and he comments that the significance of Maritain's study of mysticism in his epistemological opus The Degrees of Knowledge « cannot be exaggerated ». What is important about this work, according to Simon, is that « there should be a book in which the ways proper to mystical experience, as well as those proper to the positive sciences, are compared with those of philosophy and theology. It is for very good reasons that the full title of The Degrees of Knowledge is Distinguishing Tones ». Simon and Maritain approach the subject of mystical contemplation quite differently. Simon's philosophic discourse is unquestionably free of dogma. Maritain, on the other hand, often « borrows » from theology, and nowhere is such borrowing more evident than in his philosophic work on mystical contemplation. Unlike Simon, he is much criticized for his association of philosophic discourse with the pen of the apostolate. Yet one must recall, as Simon himself notes, that Maritain had « the soul of a contemplative » (3), and it seems to me that he is at his best as a writer when he addresses himself to art and poetry, and especially to contemplation.

For the very reason that these two philosophers are so different in their approaches to contemplation, their common concerns with specific problems are all the more interesting. Both define the nature of contemplation within the Christian mystical tradition. Although they also recognize the experience of contemplation in non-mystical forms, they concur that the highest contemplative experience is attained only through the ascetic way of St. John of the Cross. They both also agree that such mystical contemplation is the highest expression of freedom attainable to man. Finally, they both argue for the value of contemplation in our modern society.

This article will address each philosopher, separately, on his approach to these specific problems. Such a study is intended to invite further work on the significance of these philosophers in the area of contemplation.

Yves R. Simon

Simon holds that contemplation transcends the world of becoming and death. In finite existence « contemplation, joy, and all the happier forms of love » « elevate humanity above the temporal world, even though such » « true images of eternity » are rarely experienced, and the experience itself is ephemeral because of the needs of a life that is always changing (4). « The essence of man's intellect is nonetheless not limited to its finite form, but aspires to an unbound condition in which the intellect is » « infinitely more truly an intellect without the limitations imposed upon it by material existence ». Since it is contemplation which frees man from the boundedness of the finite, there must be time devoted to daily life to meditation or contemplation of « eternal truths ». At such times « the mind withdraws into itself and strengthens its adherence to these» « truths » (5).

According to Simon, contemplation, like some other psychological activities such as joy, is an activity of rest. It is « immanent », « motionless activity », « a participation in eternal life », an activity « not by way of change ». The psychological activity of love, on the other hand, can be both « restless and rest », although « the higher, the more perfect, the more genuine form of love exists, like contemplation and joy, in presence by way of rest ». There are circumstances in which the contemplative would develop the psychology of the higher type of lover, although Simon cautions that the relationship between love and contemplation is a « profound problem ». He notes that, in historical context, Aristotle's contemplation was not one of love, in contrast to the Christian contemplative who is also a lover. He further qualifies that he addresses himself only to the Christian mystical contemplative exemplified by St. John of the Cross (6).

Simon also clarifies that the experience of participation in eternal life, of « union with the absolute », can be attained in diverse ways in the realm of the senses. Such « metaphysical marvels » as « universal harmony, super-abundance, common and unanimous life, liberty, peace, the original unity regained at the cost of an immense negation of the distinction of forms, mystery and joy invading the entire soul » can be evoked at the coming of spring, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or by dance and sound effects. These emotions are « expressive of a love greater than the world and capable of the absolute ». The poet, too, experiences « the boundless force » which generates poetic creation, and which is the « spiritual will in the highest of its functions, the aspiration to an experimental union with the absolute ».

But mystical aspiration, if it is to be fully realized, must « disengage itself from the senses and attain through the ascetic way, to the full freedom of the spiritual life ». Any mystical aspiration which falls short of this freedom by returning to the sphere of the senses Simon calls « aberrant » (7). The distinction between the ascetic way and the non-ascetic is « analogous to his thought as it is to the Christian mystics. He argues for the ascetic way on the ground that « the most desirable of all freedoms is the freedom to be all things, as becomes a faithful image of God ». Since no condition is more essential to the spirit than freedom from the lower forces which hold us in bondage to our subjective existence, it follows that contemplative union with the absolute demands « an active and dominating indifference » to the desires of the ego, the subjective self. Obstacles to spiritual freedom may be either external or internal. The internal ones, which lie inside the self, are in a sense the more difficult

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to overcome. Included among these are, from the grosser level to the more refined: "habit, sensuous desires, lust for wealth, attachment to beliefs, things and persons, and, in regard to truth, excessive concern with the contribution of my own self" (such as being faithful to one's principles) (8).

In arguing for the ascetic way Simon states anew an essential tenet of the Christian contemplative life: "Whoever seeks his food away from God undergoes precisely the worst kind of alienation. And whoever surrenders his self for the love of God finds himself in God and eternity" (9). Because the mystic is a lover, union with the absolute requires the self-sacrifice of devoted love of God as one's spouse "above all," for "He is more interior to me than I am to myself." What must be "suppressed or rather surpassed are the limits of the heart. One must suffer self-sacrifice in this effort to go beyond the boundedness of the self. We have to leave our bounded heart for the boundless heart of God." (10)

The union of spiritual marriage is the highest freedom attainable to man. Simon argues that adherence to the "comprehensive good" is the most voluntary, the least constrained, the least coerced, the most spontaneous of all actions. Yet there is no choice involved — and thereby no freedom — because choice is between acting and non-acting. Although philosophers may never be able to determine whether an intuition of the comprehensive good is attainable for a finite intellect, he suggests that what can be philosophically established is the truth of the conditional proposition: "If there is an intuition of the comprehensive good there is also a determination to it." Adherence would be spontaneous, voluntary, and without choice. There could be no choice because "between what and what would there be a choice?" There is a law between a good and its opposite because there is no opposition within the good which is absolute. In the absolute, he concludes, there is "unqualified voluntariness without freedom." It is central to his contribution to the problem of freedom that he places the act of beatific love not below the level of freedom but above it. (12)

Simon contrasts his view of freedom with the opposite view which is commonly held in a wide variety of contexts. According to this view, the freedom of making wrong choices as well as right ones is a freedom far superior to whatever freedom — if any — ascetic souls enjoy who confine themselves within the limits of virtue. Simon points out the fear of many people who feel that if they become "stabilized in the good" they will lose some of their freedom. Indeed, they fear the restriction of their freedom so much that they occasionally rebel against virtue simply to preserve their freedom. This view equates voluntarism with freedom (13).

Simon holds, on the contrary, that it is in the heroes and the saints that the sense of freedom is coupled with a sense of "the unique worth of irrevocable decisions." He suggests some useful questions: "Where do we find the most unmistakable examples of whatever we call freedom, free will, liberty? Do we find these distinguished examples in perforce, suddenly, weak-willed and highly suggestible people? Or should we consider as the most certain exemplifications of the free man persons in firm control of their images and emotions, persons who know what they want and will not be deterred from their goals by accidents of imagination or affectivity, pressure or lure, disease or poverty; persons who, at the summit of human effort, hold that death itself is an accident which cannot affect their relation to the really important ends of human life?" (14).

One is thus not deprived of the freedom of choosing when one chooses the good; one's freedom is, rather, "exalted." (15)

Lastly, Simon evaluates the question of the value of contemplation in our work-oriented society. Although contemplation, or meditation, is voluminous in the history of mankind in China, India, Persia, and the mediaeval Christian world, contemplatives in these societies were more or less withdrawn from society, yet respected and supported by the society they renounced. In contrast, modern western society resents contemplatives, whether philosophic or mystical. It views contemplation as not a useful activity, as is work, and considers contemplatives to be "idlers" if they simply contemplate, without also rendering service to society to repay their societal debts.

The ethic of the worker has, in Simon's view, "serious limitations." The problem is that modern society has a restrictive view of socially useful activities. According to this view, social utility is not something to be transcended, but is itself the ultimate standard. The problem cannot be overcome without first recognizing the goodness of things which have nothing to do with social utility, and which are, moreover, better than useful. What is crucial is to know that the socially useful may someday be transcended by something which is not useful but terminal, something which is beyond utility (16).

Simon does not suggest an ideal of culture based on freedom from work, but rather an ideal based on contemplation. Culture will then "blossom" because "perfect order of refinement, flexibility, charm spring from what is strong." If, through contemplation, culture be watered at its roots, it will grow in a "world of free development," of "free expansion." Culture will have "freedom" and escape into "luxury," "extravagance," "plenitude," even "infinity." He points out that such possibilities are present in all science. In the contemplative cultural ideal, mysticism and science will understand each other because their knowledge will stem from the source of all knowledge (17).

The contemplative is related to society "as the fruit to the tree." Far from being a parasite, the contemplative fulfills the "highest form of sociability" in the "communion of the saints" (18). Such contemplation, even among a few, causes order to descend into the depths of the human will, and spontaneously creates order in society (19).

II. JACQUES MARITAIN

Maritain approaches the nature of mystical contemplation directly from the experience of mystics themselves. He would condemn any thinker who would seek to understand the nature of mysticism, which is inaccessible to the intellect, without giving full credence to the testimony of what the mystics themselves say they experience. It is "a scandal to the intellect... to see psychologists and sociologists — or even philosophers and metaphysicians — lay hands on mystical experience in order to judge its nature by their own light. They want to systematically misunderstand it." (20)

There is "no question" in Maritain's mind that mystical experience is "absolutely independent of philosophy and gets along perfectly well without it." He points out that great contemplatives are not often to be found among philosophers. Mystical experience alone is capable of the "highest degree of knowledge," which is "above nature, above reason," but not "outside of nature, outside of reason." The distinction he draws is between "knowing that is supernatural in mode and must proceed under the rule..."
of the Holy Spirit, and knowing in the human mode which proceeds according to the rule of reason. If, on the one hand, one wants "to know" one must study metaphysics or theology. But if, on the other hand, one wants "divine union", one will thereby know much more by going "beyond knowledge" (22).

One must ask St. John of the Cross for lessons in metaphysics; one must ask Aristotle for everything outside of the order of mystical contemplation, we have recourse to reason. But it is impossible on the level of reason to communicate "supreme, incommunicable knowledge" (22).

Maritain clarifies his use of the words "mystic" and "contemplation" because of their misleading associations. By mystic he does not mean to evoke a "procession of phenomena, ecstasies, and extraordinary gifts" (23). He uses mystic in the sense of an experimental knowledge of the deepest things of God, or a suffering of divine things, an experience which leads the soul through a series of states and transformations until within the very depths of itself it feels the touch of divinity and "experiences the life of God" (24).

Maritain's use of the word contemplation is not intended to communicate the Greek notion of the contemplation of philosophers, whose end is intellectual knowledge. Such contemplation "soars", but does not "stay at rest", because it does not experience the supernatural passivity proper to the contemplation of the Saints, which soars and rests at the same time (25). Contemplation, in the sense in which he uses it, seeks to know God through the union with God in love (26). On this point, Maritain quotes St. Gregory the Great: "We know through love" (27). Contemplation is the supreme means of attaining union with God through an "experimental, loving, and passive" form of knowing (28). Maritain thus adheres to the view of Aquinas and St. John of the Cross that contemplation is an experimental knowledge of love and union.

Because knowing in the human mode must be renounced in order to attain the highest knowing of divine union, it follows that contemplation is "a ray of darkness for the intellect". Contemplation is the "night" in which the soul dispossesses itself of distinct ideas and formulated knowledge, and passes "beyond and above" the human mode of concepts to experience supreme knowledge. So dispossessed one can say: "I was reduced to nothing and I knew no more... For now my exercise is in loving alone" (29).

Distinct knowledge is unnecessary because God communicates to the soul the supernatural knowledge of light and love. This light may be said to be "heat-giving light... for that light also enkindles the soul in love". This light of knowledge, which is darkness to the understanding, is called "secret knowledge" of mystical theology. Such knowledge is called secret not only because it is hidden from the understanding, but also because it is indecipherable. It is called secret, moreover, because through it the soul is hidden within itself. Maritain draws upon the words of St. John of the Cross: "...it sometimes absorbs the soul and engulfs it in its secret abyss, in such a way that the soul clearly sees that it has been carried far away from every creature... so that it considers itself as having been placed in a most profound and vast retreat... which nowhere has any boundary... by comparison with this supreme knowledge and Divine feeling (the soul) learns how base and defective, and, in some measure, how inert, are all the forms and words which are used in this life, all of Divine things, and it is impossible in any natural way or manner, however learnedly and sublimely they may be spoken of, to be able to know and to perceive them as they are, save by the illumination of this mystical theology" (30).

Maritain explains that according to this mystical theology the soul seeks God by withdrawing from the world of things and the senses so that it can find rest within itself, "within the heart's deepest recesses", where the soul experiences God. At the same time, it experiences its own nature as a spirit at the hidden-most point of contemplative awareness. In the region of contemplation, divine action penetrates the substance of the soul, and the faculties are touched "in their deepest roots" — "at the secret nexus where the soul's powers are rooted" (31).

In such contemplation the soul itself is transformed in God and becomes God by participation. The substance of the soul, although it can never be changed into the substance of God, is nevertheless united in one spirit with God, and accordingly appears to be God. In this state of awareness the soul of a contemplative in such a way that it becomes the light of God as a window in which light dwells by nature. Such contemplative experience of union with God, which mystical theology calls "spiritual marriage", is the very highest point in the life of the soul where knowledge and love bear their noblest fruit (32).

Maritain further seeks to clarify the nature of mystical contemplation by way of analogy in the natural order. According to him, it is the poet who comes closest to mystical experience. The source of poetry and all creative intuition lies in the depths of the soul where "intelligence and desire, intuition and sensibility, imagination and love have their common source". The poet contacts this source of all knowledge, this "generative and nourishing center", through a "concentration of all his senses into the experience of unity". Maritain is careful to qualify his meaning of concentration here in the passive sense of quietude, not in the sense of voluntary and active concentration. This "withdrawal" and the "obscure and savoy knowledge" which is thereby experienced, is common to both the poetic state and to mystical contemplation (33).

Although poets and other artists, inventors and saints, all touch the "same divine source", their diverse callings in the order of natural contemplation tend to create an object, whereas supernatural contemplation tends to intensify the contemplative life. "The poet finds the plenitude of his joy in realizing his aspiration in the creation of a new form. But for him who comes back to the surface of life from the depths of mystical union, it is as if he becomes conscious again of images and distinct forms. The feeling of plenitude for the mystics is in the repose of union... The poet, on the other hand, would find perfect joy in the adequacy of the created form to the creative inspiration" (34).

Whereas the poet "progresses toward the Word", the mystic "tends toward Silence": The poet identifies himself with the forces of the manifest universe, while the mystic traverses them and tries to unite with the immutably and unlimited power of the absolute behind them (35).

The highest calling, even for the poet, is mystical contemplation, because it is the highest of all values (36). Maritain's prose on this point evokes the calling of the mystic contemplation: "The fact is that when the poet passes from the state of poetic withdrawal, to the source of images and forms, to the mystical sleep, images and forms are lost, drunk up by the sea. The poet has perhaps lost his poem, but in the scale of absolute values this is an inestimable gain" (37).

Although the source of all creative intuition can be experienced in the diverse callings of the natural order, the calling of mystical contemplation can be attained only through the ascetic way. Indeed Maritain insists on
the necessity of asceticism as strongly as does St. John of the Cross. Maritain’s words it takes “a mad courage, heroic confidence” (43) to creature to “rid himself of self” for the spiritual life. The death called self-surrender is “very real” yet “subtle.” It does not ruin sensibility, it refines it, and it does not “harden the fibers of being,” but “softens and spiritualizes them.” On the one hand, “nothing more completely strips humanity, and empties it of self, nothing exacts more radical purification and suffering,” than self-surrender. On the other hand, the transformation that love desires in God’s perfect nature and does not destroy it is (39).

Maritain further holds that it is only through such asceticism that one attains perfect freedom. Because one no longer belongs to self, God becomes in the soul’s “Supreme Liberty,” so that what the human wills God wills. In this mystical sense of absolute freedom “God and the saint have exchanged hearts” (39).

Finally Maritain argues for the value of contemplation in contemporary society. He attributes our society’s resentment of contemplation to our economic view of work, and cautions that the injunction of St. Paul, “If any will not work, neither shall he eat,” has often been misused as a motive in the mistaken belief that there is only one kind of work, that which is economically useful. The modern Western world has lost touch with the conception of work in the more “refined” sense of those dedicated to the contemplative life. He explains that contemplation is “not work, not a thing of utility. It is a fruit.” Contemplation is both “non-activity” and the “highest activity”; it is “the active reposé of the soul breathing what is eternal” (40). Contemplation is therefore not “to do nothing.” Indeed, apart from necessary duties, the Saint can do “nothing more useful and fruitful than to contemplate and love God in solitude” (41).

Although contemplation is not in any way a useful service or a work in the most refined sense of contemplation “overflows as a protection and a benediction to society” (42). It is through love that contemplation becomes fruitful, and “passes into action by virtue of the very generosity and abundance of love.” Far from “suppressing” action, contemplation “enriches” it (43).

The repression of contemplation in a society is the “first cause of all disorder” (44). Maritain holds that the distress of our modern world cannot be dissolved unless it claims the vital truth that “external activity must overflow from an abundance of internal activity, by which man is united to the universe and made the source of being” (45). The renewal of order in society is not dependent, however, upon everyone becoming a contemplative. It is rather the union of a few in contemplation which is alone sufficient to reawaken in the social body “a new impulse in the secret sources of its being” (46). In its anguish, our modern world is “crying out for saints” (47).

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by Anthony Olivier Simon **


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This classic study, first published in 1951, has been reissued in the Midway Series of the University of Chicago Press. The new printing, along with the posthumous works being published by Fordham University Press, is a sign of the permanent value of Simon’s writings. There is no philosopher in this century who has used Thomistic principles as effectively in the realm of political philosophy. His writing is clear, precise, concrete, and directly applicable to issues that are still very much alive.

Simon has a grasp of the metaphysical issues that underlie political theory: he makes it clear when he is dealing with a distinction that is essential and necessary, and when with one that, though commonly found, is factual or accidental. He has a fine sense of resemblance, a sense of one political phenomenon seeming to be, not being, another. He distinguishes definitions that provide criteria for recognition of cases that fall under the definition, from those that do not provide such criteria. Such remarks about the being and truth of what he is examining show that he not only describes political realities, but is reflectively aware of the way he is thinking about them, and of the way that they exist. He is not just a political analyst, but a political philosopher.

His metaphysical thinking is applied to the mass of historical detail, empirical and practical generalizations, and the writings of many authors in political philosophy, both ancient and modern. His style may seem somewhat at times, but it is never infatu- ted; he is always working out a substantial issue, with as much economy of expression as the issue permits.

The important distinction in the book, and the one most frequently associated with Simon, is that between essential and substantial authority. Substantive authority exists because of the deficiency of the person subordinate; it is geared to the improvement of the subordinate and aims at its own accomplishment. Some people seem to think that all authority is substantial, but Simon argues that even in a society of perfectly mature and virtuous people, another kind of authority, which he calls a "standard," is necessary; it is necessary because of inevitable disagreement about the means to achieving ends that we agree upon, and because of unavoidable tensions between common goods and particular goods. In his development of this theory of authority, he also clarifies many concepts like those of means, ends, common goods, particular goods, and united action.

After Chapter 1, the book is concerned with various conceptions of authority. Different meanings of democracy are examined, the special need for a different form of government is stressed, the place of experts in modern societies and politics is treated, and the political parties, coercion, propaganda, justice, and violence, lobbying, social criticism, property the family, bureaucracy, equality of opportunity and social classes, are all explored. Simon deals with a variety of important issues, and his conclusions are always well documented. He is interested in many concrete illustrations, which are illuminating references to historical developments. Simon is an especially good teacher of technical concepts, and the student will find in his book the essential concepts about politics that he needs to know. He is well aware of the relationship between technical achievement and the good or bad uses to which it can be put. At each point the strategic distinction is always made, and there are many observations which clearly come from the reader’s own experience of political realities: for example, the description of the bewildered state of private persons who, in times of crisis, may sense that there are no longer any public persons among them; the response to the special energies a people may possess because of some "prodigious achievement in the past" (p. 220); and his mentioning of the "irrelevance of the contemporary" as one of the chief virtues of an administrator (p. 151).

There is one major doctrine in the book that I would like to question. In discussing authority in democracy, Simon tries to explain how one human being can bind the conscience of another (pp. 145, 154, 176). Using Cajeatis, Bellarmine, and Suarez, and remaining alert to the historical development of the issue, he adopts a version of the transmission theory. He says the basic political power (sovereignty) is originally placed by God in the people, who then must, generally, transmit it to their governing personnel, and who are obliged to obey this government. The people retain a latent sovereignty and can depose tyrants, but they have truly transmitted power and normally are bound in conscience to obey the government. The problem with this theory is that the transmission of power to the government? What marks them off as one people, as something capable of self-government? How can they be one people without the form of a polity, which involves some sort of establishment or constitution as one of the steps of a divided and united people? By the time Simon appeals to a divine source for the power in the people, and it seems to me this indicates the reason why he has a problem here. He is trying to find some sort of abstract principle that is explicable, for example, the concept of political theory, not as a political phenomenon to be handled in political philosophy. His original query — how can one people be morally bound in conscience? Only God can so bind anyone — is theological. One can raise the question about authority, and even the question about the ethical obligation to obey political authority, as a question in Aristotelian ethics. Then there would not be the sense of a source of the people, the power of the people, the sense of power coming into the people, and the sense of power being transmitted to a government which is described as being from the people. These separations of power introduce problems of reunification that are not true philosophical problems. Once the issue of authority is treated ethically, it can then be placed within a theological context and the problem of conscience can be raised, but the separation of powers would not have to be introduced. Many of the problems involved in the authority thesis are similar, of course, to those that occur in the theory of the social contract as described by Hobbes and others. It is questionable whether the categorization of sovereignty is at all useful in determining the nature of political authority.

(Robert Sokolowski *)


The substance of this posthumously published book is a course, "Work and the Workman," which Yves R. Simon gave at the University of Chicago in 1956. The lecture was recorded on tape. Transcriptions made some corrections to the transcription as well as adding some remarks to it. A draft manuscript was made from this emended transcript by William J. Sullivan in 1965 and was entitled "Work and the Working Man." Professor Vukan Kuic, /editor of the final work, entitled Work, Society, and Culture, is based primarily on this manuscript, but also on notes from lectures Simon gave at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington in the summer of 1959 and on notes from his file on "Work" at the Jacques Maritain Center at the University of Notre Dame. A complete bibliography of Simon's works, assembled by his son, Anthony O. Simon, has also been included. The end product represents Simon's matured and fully developed subject of work. As Professor Kuic observes in the editor's preface, Simon's interest

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in this subject goes way back. He published his first article on Work in 1936 and developed the thoughts expressed there in a monograph, *Protagonists in the Work Society*, which appeared in 1962.

The title, *Work, Society, and Culture*, accurately expresses the scope of this remarkable book. Simon guides his readers into the very heart of the notion of work. But his efforts do not end there. In setting out "...to analyze work from the metaphysical, psychologically, and ethically points of view in addition to the sociological..." (p. 4), Simon offers vistas for viewing the significance of work for both society and culture. Therefore, he displays a fine sense of intellectual balance. Like Josef Pieper, Simon insists upon the necessity of a contemplative ideal for society and its culture. But whereas Pieper focuses on the threat which the glorification of work poses for modern culture, Simon calls attention to the less conspicuous yet nonetheless serious matter of how the devaluation of work vitiates culture. And like John Dewey, Simon sees clearly that a significant class which is isolated from the activities and demands of the workaday world becomes effete and its knowledge "effeminate" (to use Dewey's term). But whereas Dewey's nominalism blinded him to the essentially contemplative nature of science, philosophy, and art so that he could scarcely imagine elevating work to the highest of human activities, Simon's realism enables him to keep in perspective the relation between work and practical activities, on the one hand, and the contemplative activities, on the other. This is clear from the book's final chapter where Simon analyzes the components of culture into activities of work and activities of contemplation, showing the specific ways in which the life of culture depends upon a harmonious interaction between them. Through it all, however, Simon leaves no doubt that he regards the contemplative activities as higher and nobler than the activities that fall under the heading of work.

Simon's greatest contribution to the theory of work is his analysis of the relation of work into its metaphysical, psychological, ethical, and sociological facets. This multi-faceted analysis enables him to arrive at a definition of work that is at once comprehensive and illuminating. It is not so narrow as to exclude the activities of workers and yet it acknowledges importantly different categories of work. Simon takes manual work as the paradigmatic instance to which it is not the "most unmistakable case" of work. From it he extracts the two characteristics which define an activity as work. First, the activity in question must be the object on which it acts; second, the activity is always socially useful. We do not observe regard activities done for play, exercise, a service not only as work. In contrast, contemplation is an activity which neither acts upon nor changes any object but is instead an immanent activity and a sharing in eternal life. And because it is an end in itself, contemplation is never useful.

Simon agrees with common opinion and daily usage in saying that only the manual worker is truly a worker, that he is "an 'real work'." But this, he says, is to define work in terms of its social classification. When we abstract the notion of work from its social classification and consider it simply in terms of its theoretical meaning, we see that a wide range of other activities count as work. Insofar as they involve change and utility, the term work is readily applied to social activities of engineers and technical workers of all kinds, social workers — e.g., lawyers, veterinarians, politicians, psychiatrists, teachers, and priests, etc. — and intellectual workers, e.g., mathematicians, physicists, and other pure researchers. Those who only contemplate can be excluded. Because a considerable amount of effort is needed to reach the point of contemplation, "not even philosophers need be absolutely excluded from the general category of workers." (p. 17)

But although Simon thereby opens up and extends the concept of work so that it embraces activities in society, he does not fall into the error of supposing that work alone is the most personal realization. This is clear from his cleavage between activities of legal fulfillment and activities of free development to form the context of his discussion of the question of the

and therefore is not art. That is why the artist, considered as creator, is a solitary and often anti-social personality. It is this that gives some of the free development to form the context of his discussion of the question of the

...
kind of leisure so frequently regarded as the indispensable foundation for the development of culture is the "flower-like component of culture". This consists of activities of free development exemplified in daily experience show that the "structural component of culture" (i.e., activities of legal fulfillment, manual and technical work, in addition to technical mechanisms in science and thought) does not seem to demand social leisure as its necessary condition. Simon states an example of a university professor who is obliged to teach fifteen hours a week as well as in summer to support himself and his family, and concludes that historical development belies the indispensability of the flower-like component of leisure for culture. In the past society was sharply divided into the masses who labored to maintain society and the leisureed few who maintained culture. But with the growth of the state, to enjoy leisure today, it becomes ever clearer that "all that a life of leisure was ever able to support for any length of time is the development of culture. With more people enjoying more social leisure than had ever been thought possible, we can now state more clearly that, instead of a life of leisure, the real basis of culture — its supporting structure and hard core — is to be found rather in the performing of a work which a manlike disposition is indispensable" (p. 185).

The insufficiency of the flower-like component of culture reveals, observes Simon, is the necessity of constructing a theory of culture that has its roots not in leisure but in work in its broadest sense. This sense of work includes moral, social, and intellectual work in addition to technical and manual work. The former and the latter is a sort of work exert a mutually beneficial influence. Intellectual activity, particularly its higher forms, makes it "all to easy to cheat". A philosophical theory, for example, is constructed on a basis of an efficient and answerable to the intellectual work as the supportive essence of culture. Each author emphasizes a different but indispensable aspect of culture, we have no reason for supposing that Simon intended a criticism of Peiper's participation. Indeed, their respective books are written on a mutually complementary basis.

Readers of Yves R. Simon's Philosophy of Democratic Government will find a philosophic parallel to his political philosophy. The modern work displays Simon's mastery of political theory and insight into political life, the latter species his firm grasp of fundamental economic principles. Together they form a comprehensive sociopolitical system. It concludes the review of one of Simon's books without commenting on his lucidity of mind and straightforward style. He has the finest mode of everyday examples to lead the reader to an apprehension of profound philosophical thought. This knack shows us that Yves R. Simon was not a philosopher of the ivory tower but was very much a part of human events. The breadth of his learning, the sharpness of his critical faculties, and the courage and power of his analyses work, Politics, Society, and Culture an indispensable acquisition for anyone interested in the development of work for contemporary marxists. (Raymond Denuly*).


The reader must be prepared to read A General Theory of Authority at least twice. The book is compact, with a density of thought that requires careful study. In addition to details of terminology and choice of illustrative material, it is like Aristotle's Economics and Politics, and perhaps for the same reason. As with Aristotle's treatises, it was written to guide the teacher in his lectures rather than for book publication. Professor Simon's death prevented the rewriting which most surely would have taken place. Professor Capone's introduction attempts to give the book into context. The reviewer's primary obligation is to give the prospective reader a summary of the argument.

The thesis of the book is that authority exists in human society as a natural function of political community, not simply as compensation for a defect or as substitution for immaturity. "The problem is whether deficiencies alone cause authority to be necessary" (p. 24).

The argument begins with four objections to the thesis. It then proceeds with a statement of the contrary (the hypothesis) and its development. It concludes with an answer to the objections. The four objections are formidable in that each seems to be heading for an impasse into seeming conflict with a valued human capability: justice, life, truth, order. In point of fact, authority is grounded in the control and is essential to common action.

The common good is anything which contributes to the welfare of all the inhabitants of a given political division, such as, the security of their lives, property and rights (p. 63), and their assembling for the sake of noble life (p. 1). It is abundantly true that it is good for all, and partly because it can be achieved only by the concerted action of all.

Authority is the natural function of the political community striving to achieve the common (that is, public, not private) good by common (that is, concerted) action. Thus, authority has more than substantial function; that is, it is made necessary by things other than deficiencies alone. Even an ideally centralized virtuous community needs authority to unify its action." (p. 50).

Diversity of opinion can exist in a community because of the variety of knowledge among inhabitants. In such instances, perfect knowledge possessed by all would lead inevitably
to perfect agreement. But diversity of opinion can also arise because of superior knowledge which reveals a plurality of genuine means with regard to one and the same end. The obstacle to unanimity in this latter instance is not ignorance but a high level of knowledge. The only way to achieve unanimity is to develop a mechanism of decision, and to expect obedience to the decision regardless of individual preferences as to the means. Once the decision is reached, all must join in the implementation so that there may in fact be common action. The power of action has a binding force: rules binding for all is what everyone calls "authority." (p. 48).

The disturbing question is what effect each binding rule has on the autonomy of the individual, or on personal liberty. In the vocabulary of individualism and of the personalistic schools, whatever is included under the rubric of common good only a mean; the character of end belongs exclusively to the individual (p. 68).

A human subject, considered as a member of a species, and distinguished within the species by the material components of his being, is properly designated an individual. The same subject, considered as a complete substance, and distinguished within the universe by rationality and integrity of purpose, is more properly designated a person (p. 71). But when the being which is an individual and a person is considered as member of a set (and this is the relevant way of considering it in the theory of society, for the unity of society is that of an ordered set), the concept of person restricts the character of part whereas the concept of individual expresses no such restriction. As member of a set the individual is purely and simply a part (p. 72).

Even if the designation be that of person, the question is whether there is for the community a proper end over and above the end of the person; and, if there be, what happens to the autonomy which is thought appropriate to a person, and to a person's integrity as such as an end in itself. The answer rests on two facts. The first is that no man is without some passive indifference, despite the fact that the notion of freedom expresses a purely dominant indifference. The second fact is that certain features of sociability (for example, love and friendship) belong to the human person qua person, despite the fact that the notion of person expresses wholeness and opposes the character of part (p. 74). The person, by arduous effort, interiorizes the law, so that it becomes part of his willing, so that "authority and autonomy are in no longer conflict with each other and so longer restrict each other." (p. 79). The rebel's notion of autonomy as opposed to law is itself a counterfeit.

In chapter three, the discussion moves from questions of action and practical judgment to questions of theoretical truth. When the question is one of action, not of truth, the person in authority has "the character of a leader." But when the question is one of truth, not of action, the person in authority has "the character of a witness." (p. 84). We rely heavily on witnesses for the facts of our daily, even our scholarly, life. The facts of history can be known almost exclusively through witnesses, despite the intangible, archiological, and noetical. Teaching involves docility on the part of the student, namely, a willingness to accept the teacher's word until a matter can be investigated personally.

The philosophy of liberalism embraces the expression, "freedom of the intellect." It finds the concept of authority to be opposed to such freedom. If we view this opposition as relevant to the sociology of truth it takes on the nature of "sociological agnosticism," in that it holds that society must refrain from any act relative to transcendent truth, and must neither direct nor help the search in any way (p. 108). On the contrary, the State "cannot shirk concern with the thoughts of men, even on the deepest levels, nor can it discharge its most obvious duties of safeguarding life, property and some sort of dignity in marriage." (p. 126). But it is should do so indirectly. Bureaucracy should better deal with problems that are not so lofty and do not pertain so directly to the deep life of our souls." (p. 131). Society can be said to be an assemblage "for the sake of noble life." (p. 61). The question then arises as to the prerogative of civil authority to intervene in "the communication of excellence" (chapter four), and, if the prerogative be admitted, the mechanism for such communication. The mechanism becomes practically a catalogue of the kinds of States, namely, rule by the most excellent, by majority vote, by those in power through a rotation in office, and by those designated by chance. Although a distinct governing personnel is not absolutely necessary, wherever such personnel exists, it is likely to entail a hierarchical distribution of persons. As Simon sees it, "hierarchy results from the assumption of the principle of authority with that of autonomy." (p. 137). He has in mind the statement of Thomas Jefferson that, "it is not by the consolidation, or concentration of powers, but by their distribution, that good government is effected..." (p. 138). Governmental problems should be handled by the level most competent to solve them, and therefore most appropriate to deal with them.

There are great divergences, even among philosophers, as to the kind of excellence expected of statesmen. Some think that government is entirely technical and unemotional. For Simon, "the best way to perceive the ethical character of politics is to realize fully the political character of ethics." (p. 141). The cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance are not found in the individual human so much as they are in the greater good of human communities." (p. 142). In short, the virtue of the individual is fostered by the virtue of the community. We can properly speak of a "freedom from the self;" obedience to the law, by reason of its own nature, "does something for the law-abiding citizen." (p. 154).

A General Theory of Authority is a sequel to Nature and Functions of Authority (Marquette University Press, 1940) and Philosophy of Democratic Government (The University of Chicago Press, 1951), and is best read in conjunction with its predecessors. However, it be read, it cannot be treated lightly, much less ignored, in any serious study of authority. It is an indispensable today as when it was published.

(John O. Riehl *)

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* John O. Riehl, after his Ph.D. at Marquette University, was Commissioner of Education in post-war Germany. Dean of The Marquette University Graduate School, and is now President Emeritus of Queensborough College. John and Clare Riehl, founders of the Agnes Lectures Series, are well known for their work and friendship with Maritain, Simon and Gilson and for their many scholarly publications.
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