

Paul GILBERT, *Jésuites et philosophes. Des origines à nos jours* (« Petite bibliothèque jésuite »). Paris, Éditions jésuites – Lessius, 2020, 11,5 × 19 cm, 240 p., ISBN 978-2-87299-382-6

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Paul GILBERT, **Jésuites et philosophes. Des origines à nos jours** («Petite bibliothèque jésuite»). Paris, Éditions jésuites – Lessius, 2020, 11,5 × 19 cm, 240 p., ISBN 978-2-87299-382-6.

With this book, Fr. Gilbert provides a welcome study of Jesuits in philosophy. Tracing the tradition from the 16th to the 20th century, he shows an overarching unity, even amid differences of problems and positions. Indeed, he illustrates, with a characteristically clear style, how their philosophical pursuits mean both to elucidate and to transform the relation between man, the world and God. Given the book's encyclopedic quality, it is easily recommended as an overview of the breadth of this tradition. Still more, though, its depth might serve to orient others into further work within the task it undertakes.

The book follows, in six chapters, an historical development through representative figures. We note here only a few from each chapter, in order to illustrate its general thrust. Let us mark straightaway, however, how Fr. Gilbert continually refers to the origins of the movement in St. Ignatius, his Company, and the Church. For an understanding of the Society's special mission to care for persons, he turns especially to its expression in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, the *Constitutions* of the Order, and their guide for studies in the *Ratio Studiorum*; and, of course, for its specifically philosophical dimension, he makes clear the presence of St. Thomas Aquinas as teacher and guide. We thus find, throughout the book, insights into how Jesuit philosophers relate to these, according to their context.

So, the first chapter gives a glimpse of the early formation of Jesuit philosophical education and its formulation in manuals of study. It does so by following Frs. Pedro da Fonseca, Benet Perera and Francisco Suárez, all three of which draw deeply from the great Dominican Doctor and his followers. We notice how the metaphysical reflection of Suárez, in particular, has had a lasting impact. His way of thinking, remarkable in the clarity of its systematic presentation, became standard for manuals. In these widely studied texts, the act of the intellect is explicated as a "formal concept" that necessarily corresponds with an "objective concept." Fr. Gilbert connects this with the modern turn to subjectivity as paired with the sense of philosophical science as a search for *necessarily certain foundations* of objectivity. We might wonder to what extent its formulation is influenced by the debates surrounding John Duns Scotus and his followers, though this is not pursued at any length here. In any case, the next chapters show some of its effects.

The second chapter presents how Jesuit institutions of learning promoted immense creativity in the 17th and 18th centuries, both within Society and outside of it. Within the former group, readers are introduced to original researchers like Frs. Josip Bošković, Benedikt Stattler and Sigmund von Storkenau; with the latter, no less than René Descartes, Gottfried Leibniz, and Blaise Pascal. Although all these thinkers contributed significantly to advances in natural science, it is, as a matter of fact, the non-Jesuits who have become most widely read in philosophical studies. To be sure, Fr. Gilbert gives some insight into the shortcomings of their turn to subjectivity as foundational, whether due to the abstraction of the *res cogitans* from the world, the isolation of windowless *monads* from one another, or the apparent tendency to divorce of reason from faith. But he also presents how there is some ten-

dency toward unity with these figures. We find this in examples of working with others, even if entrenched in their own positions (as, say, in the exchange between Leibniz and Fr. Des Bosses or in Pascal's pseudonymous defense of Jansenist friends and attack on Jesuit colleagues in the *Lettres provinciales*); or even in their shared philosophical struggles to retain unity amid the diversification of specific sciences (as even Descartes hoped to do with his foundationalist method); and, finally, in their common defense of the life of faith in the face of reductionistic naturalism (perhaps most clearly expressed by Pascal). We emphasize these points, for they exemplify how this book's approach illuminates dimensions sometimes overlooked, namely, it shines a light on how the Jesuit spirit was present in these glimmers of conversation and cooperation in philosophy. Of course, it also makes clear that genuine community was difficult, to say the least; so much so that, amidst various socio-political tensions, the Society was suppressed in the mid-18th century. Here, we suggest, the book shows the need for further investigation: What happened with the men, the manuals, and the mission in relation to philosophy during this period?

For, in the next chapter, Fr. Gilbert takes us to the early moments of the Society's restoration in the 19th century. We might mark a twofold philosophical concern herein: in the first place, a reflection upon and recovery of tradition; in the second place, a reckoning with modernism and its consequences. An important expression of this concern is found with the embattled Fr. Joseph Kleutgen's influence on the encyclical of 1879, "*Aeterni Patris: On the Restoration of Christian Philosophy in Catholic Schools in the Spirit of the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas.*" The title and subtitle make clear its call for a renewed historical unity in learning and teaching, but in a way that recognizes the presence of fragmentation. How the Society respond to this philosophically may be seen as a main theme of the next three chapters.

In fact, for the rest of the book, we notice that Fr. Gilbert tends to present irenic thinkers rather than polemicists. In this, we find him bringing to the fore that Ignatian call to be understanding, to interpret with generosity and charity, and, where necessary, correct positions. It also presents that spirit of turning inward to reorient one's relation to the other and to God. It makes sense to us, then, that the lengthy fourth chapter pairs a return to St. Thomas with the 20th century's special attention to *intellectual experience*.

Under this banner, Fr. Joseph Maréchal has a secure place. For, as Fr. Gilbert explains (both in this and other works), the reflexive method of Maréchal has a significant impact. It is one of interior investigation, wherein one's natural desire—*exerce et non signate*—for the Absolute is made thematic. In this, he emphasizes the notions of *finality* and *dynamism*, explicating an *a priori method* from the very operation of the mind in coming to know, that is, in human discursive reasoning. This provides a dialectic for understanding the positions of other thinkers. Indeed, to elucidate how the very exigencies of the mind demanded a realist philosophy, Maréchal spent considerable effort transposing the critical work of Immanuel Kant into the more adequate viewpoint of St. Thomas. This was not without controversy, of course, as the campaign against modernism was still raging; nevertheless, his attempts to correct inadequacies by taking seriously other minds at work gave impulse to many students, as the reader can detect throughout this book. Such an approach is not unique to him, but is shared by some of his contemporaries, like Fr.

Pierre Rousselot. Fr. Rousselot, who, before his tragic death at a young age, left profound investigations of the relation of intellect and love. Some of his work, also censured at the time, investigated the “ecstatic” dimensions of the mind and heart by returning to that very experience. Again, this provided a way of understanding each person as self-transcending. And Fr. Gilbert’s discussion of how Rousselot understands the relation between the physical, the psychological, and the transcendent is helpful here. It brings to the fore how these thinkers of the 20th century begin to recover from St. Thomas an understanding of the relation between the natural to supernatural – often either neglected or denied outright in modernity – and did so in light of modern advancements in science. In this respect, it might be fitting to include a discussion of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, of which there is none, since he directly challenges the foundationalist concept of science as a search for necessary and universal natural truths. We might also add how Fr. Maréchal employed both his training in biology as well as experimental psychology in his study of the mystics. Such a wide yet unified horizon, as we find exhibited within this book, is a mark of Jesuits in philosophy.

It is understandable, then, that Fr. Gilbert remarks that it is difficult to decide whether Fr. Bernard Lonergan is a philosopher or theologian. But could we ask a similar question about his aforementioned predecessors as well as his contemporaries, e.g., Johannes-Baptiste Lotz, Karl Rahner, Emerich Coreth, or José Gómez Caffarena? Although it is not stressed in this book, Fr. Lonergan, at least, is clear that he would understand himself as a *methodologist*. Again, this is not meant in the sense of developing a “technique” for doing a specific discipline; rather, it means understanding how one understands at all, how subjects live in a meaningful and valuable world, and so also how they relate to God as the ultimate source and term of meaning and value. For Lonergan, then, not only would philosophy and theology be distinct but linked disciplines, but so too each science and all human endeavors, insofar as the desire to know is in operation in them. Moreover, while the philosophical understanding of the mind and heart is a key to rightly orienting one’s pursuits to their proper end, it is the falling in love with God sets them on a new path to that final end. Hence, as Fr. Gilbert emphasizes, Lonergan’s later work speaks to the significance of various conversions in the transformation of the subject in the world. To some extent, this theme is carried into the next chapters.

The content of the fifth chapter is aptly captured in title of “spirit in the world.” With it, Fr. Gilbert means to turn toward work within concrete contexts, especially from the perspective of the problematics of existence, freedom, identity, difference, and alterity; it also takes up the problem of “negative theology” and the discussions surrounding the now more, now less strict separation of philosophy from theology. On these, he introduces Jesuits whose work is as diverse as that of Erich Przywara, Gaston Fessard, Albert Chapelle and William Richardson. He also notes the influence of thinkers like Maurice Blondel, Gabriel Marcel, and Martin Heidegger had on them. These facts do a great deal to elucidate their concern for the condition of man, the lack of transparency of man to himself, the fragility of his constitution, and the need for grace. Still more, however, the chapter indicates the global sense of Jesuits in philosophy and the concern for finding solidarity in the face of fragmentation.

The final chapter takes up that theme by investigations philosophy in Latin America and India in the 20th century. In India, there is Frs. Richard de Smet and Pierre Johanns, both of whom were students of Fr. Pierre Scheuer (a great confrère of Maréchal at Louvain) and of the Jesuits in the so-called “Calcutta school.” They, along with Fr. Noel Sheth, contributed to an understanding of the rich traditions of that subcontinent and fostered on-going dialogues. We might hope, then, for further presentations of those conversations, especially from the perspectives of the Indian Jesuit interlocutors. The book does introduce us to a large group of thinkers from Latin America, though. It is particularly remarkable how their investigations into the history of philosophy address, in some sense, the complex concerns of the context in which they were being written (e.g., by Frs. Leonel Franca, who renews a notion of the manual tradition, including, as Fr. Gilbert notes, its more polemical aspects). They broach, for example, socio-political critique as well as phenomenological and existentialist attempts to cultivate a more meaningful world. In short, in this chapter, we find further representation of Jesuits as they serve their communities via teaching philosophy—and by living philosophically, so to speak. This motivates one to wonder about such work in, say, China, Japan, or the Americas through these centuries.

So, we hope that Fr. Gilbert continues delving deep into the Jesuit tradition of philosophy, even as he gives guides to it such as this. The answers he provides here – and these are many, to be sure – are as welcome as the questions his work raises. Indeed, he points the way to further work as he makes manifest the need for community and cooperation for any good progress. From this, we might glean a sense of philosophy itself, *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*.

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THÉOLOGIE

Patrick KIPASA MAYIFULU, **Parole, violence et ruse. Une approche narrative du début de l'histoire de Joseph (Genèse 37-39)** (Théologie biblique, 4), préface d'André WÉNIN. Zürich, Lit, 2019, 279 p., 14 × 20,5 cm, ISBN 978-3-643-91164-3.

Through a narrative reading of the beginning of the Joseph story (Genesis 37-39), Kipasa shows the journey of different characters concerning their way of speaking. For him, a character can make a statement to engender violence or to temper it. The author also talks about ruse and lie in their connection with violence. Keeping the good of others in mind, a character can use ruse or lie in order to diminish violence or to allow the truth to be heard.

The choice of the first three chapters of the Joseph story for analysis is astonishing, but not without justification. For Kipasa, those three chapters provide the key to reading the family conflict that will be related in Gn 42-45. Being familiar with