

Chapter 4 *The Catholic Scholastics*

IN HIS autobiography, B. A. Santamaria recalled his schooldays at Melbourne's St Kevin's College.

The type of Catholic "apologetics" which was the strength of religious teaching at St Kevin's prepared my mind for John Henry Newman and later C.S. Lewis, who both provided confirmation of my religious beliefs. To the professional philosopher, Newman and C.S. Lewis might appear to be no more than popularizers of other men's ideas. Yet I do not despise the popularizer, since it seems that there are few new objections to religious belief. What one normally encounters are new formulations of the old objections—except, of course, for those contemporary philosophic systems which, in complete self-contradiction, pretend to prove the uselessness of reason as a mechanism in the search for truth ... In the last analysis, the "apologetics" we absorbed could not lift religion above dependence on an act of faith, but an act of faith sustained by, and consonant with, reason. It was not an act of faith standing, as it were, unsupported or contrary to reason ... Sheehan's *Apologetics and Christian Doctrine* provided me, as a schoolboy at matriculation standard, with the rational justification for my act of faith in Catholic Christianity. When I examine what so many Catholic students at the same level are offered today, I stand appalled not merely at the intellectual poverty of the offering but at the ease with which so many so-called teachers of religion dismiss the intellect as a convincing support for religious belief in favour of highly subjective "religious experience". I can understand why so few students believe anything at all: for that which reason does not sustain rests on most unsubstantial foundations when confronted with the challenges of the "new morality" (which, as someone remarked, is only the old immorality writ large).¹

¹ B.A. Santamaria, *Santamaria: A Memoir* (Melbourne, 1997), p. 8.

Santamaria here recalls a time when Catholic intellectual life, from primary school up, was informed by a complete official philosophy, the scholasticism of St Thomas Aquinas. Thomas Keneally's memoirs at the corresponding point also describe the impact of the 'nifty' arguments for the existence of God in Sheehan's *Apologetics*, and represent the author as briefly inspired to combat the evil forces of atheistic Sydney University philosophy.² The Catholic childhood of legend was more than guilt and incense, and one of the essential extra ingredients was philosophy.

The Catholic Church has always been more hospitable to philosophy than other religious bodies. It has taken the view that if 'reason' is a danger to faith, as it obviously is, then the solution is not less reason but more. It is true that the Australian Church has always had at least its fair share of anti-intellectuals, and some leaders of the local church have regarded the pursuits of the mind as an irrelevance and a nuisance, but others argued the opposite, as a response to the pluralism of a colonial society. According to a writer of 1896:

The simple rudimentary Christian knowledge which was sufficient for the poor exile of Erin while yet in his own saintly island village, where his humble home was perhaps sheltered by the ivy-clad ruins of some ancient church or monastery, where he saw 'books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything,' did not suffice when he found himself in a land where both press and pulpit teemed with calumny against his Holy Faith, and where there were then few shepherds to ward off the wolf from the fold.³

In any case, decisions on such matters were made in Rome. Official policy was to ensure that even primary school children understood their faith as clearly as possible, through instruction in the Catechism. At a time when tertiary and even upper secondary education was a rarity, the Catechism was the text that did most to create a difference between a Catholic and a secular education. It began on an abstract note:

Q. Who made the world?

A. God made the world.

Q. Who is God?

A. God is the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things and the Supreme Lord of all.

² T. Keneally, *Homebush Boy* (Melbourne, 1995), pp. 37, 43, 45; similar in *Sweet Mothers, Sweet Maids*, ed. K. & D. Nelson (Ringwood, 1986), pp. 168–9.

³ M.J. Treacy, 'The necessity of being able to give a reason for the faith that is in us', *ACR 2* (1896): pp. 412–24, at pp. 415–6.

Q. How do we know that there is a God?

A. We know that there is a God by the things that He made ...

Q. If God be everywhere, why do we not see Him?

A. We do not see God, because He is a pure Spirit, and therefore cannot be seen by us in this life ...

Q. Had God a beginning?⁴

And that is just part of the first page. The later parts of course do not deal in such abstract and philosophical issues, but the precision of the definitions is notable throughout. They are a philosophical education for those with an ear for such things:

Q. What is man?

A. Man is one of God's creatures, composed of a body and soul, and made to God's likeness.

Q. How do you know that you have a soul?

A. I know that I have a soul because I am alive, and because I can think, reason and choose freely.⁵

Q. What is sin?

A. Sin is any wilful thought, word, deed or omission contrary to the law of God.⁶

Q. What is presumption?

A. Presumption is the expectation of salvation without making proper use of the means necessary to obtain it.⁷

Q. What is a lie?

A. A lie is the saying of anything that we believe to be false.⁸

⁴ *Catechism of Christian Doctrine: Adapted for Australia by 2nd and 3rd Plenary Councils* (4th ed, Sydney, 1944), p. 11; almost identical, but lacking the third question, in *Catechism: Approved for General Use by the Cardinal Delegate, Archbishops and Bishops* (Sydney, 1905), p. 9; see M. Sheehan, 'Some remarks on the catechism problem', *ACR* 14 (1937): pp. 182–9; recollections in J. Redrup, *Banished Camelots: Recollections of a Catholic Childhood* (Sydney, 1997), pp. 127–8.

⁵ *Catechism*, 1944, p. 12.

⁶ *Catechism*, 1905, p. 25, 'actual sin' in 1944, p. 29.

⁷ *Catechism*, 1944, p. 34.

⁸ *Catechism*, 1944, p. 38; cf. A. Coady, 'The morality of lying', *Res Publica* 1 (2) (Winter, 1992): 6–9.

As an intellectual training, it was not without effect either. Little girls came up with curly questions like ‘How could Our Lady have free will if she couldn’t sin?’⁹ and ‘How could a God of intrinsic goodness create evil?’¹⁰ The risk in relying on argument, of course, is that the audience may not be convinced. ‘I remember Sister Amard who tried to teach me the philosophical proofs of the existence of God, and thereby destroyed my faith completely because she didn’t know them; rather, she did know them but they weren’t valid’, says Germaine Greer. She adds ‘the nuns were dreadfully incompetent at teaching Catholic philosophy. The Jesuits on the other hand were very good at it, and if I’d been taught by Jesuits I’d probably still be a Catholic.’¹¹ The reputation of the Jesuits for increasing the validity of arguments is no doubt exaggerated.

The passage from Santamaria refers to the two central themes of Catholic philosophy, the consonance of faith and reason, and the objectivity of ethics. The Church has welcomed the search for arguments for the existence of God,¹² and has tried to resolve the apparent incompatibilities of faith and reason, such as conflicts between science

⁹ Nelson, *Sweet Mothers, Sweet Maids*, p. 130; a serious answer to a similar question in T. Muldoon, ‘Christ’s free will and the Father’s command’, *ACR* 23 (1946): pp. 169–85; also on the Catechism as intellectual training, R. McLaughlin, ‘Humanity’, in *On Being Human*, ed. V. Nelson (Melbourne, 1990), pp. 127–140, at p. 127.

¹⁰ J. Arnold, *Mother Superior Woman Inferior* (Melbourne, 1985), p. 101, cf. pp. 143–4.

¹¹ G. Greer in *There’s Something About a Convent Girl*, ed. J. Bennett & R. Forgan (London, 1991), pp. 88, 92; also in C. Packer, *No Return Ticket* (Sydney, 1984), p. 88.

¹² Arguments for the existence of God in the apologetic style in L. Rumble, *Radio Replies in Defence of Religion* (Sydney, 1936), ch. 1; L. Rumble, *Questions People Ask About the Catholic Church* (Kensington, 1972), ch. 1; L. Dalton, *Can We Prove There Is A God?* (Kensington, 1939); P.J. Ryan, *The Existence of God: The Argument from Design*, (Kensington, 1950); analysis in T.A. Johnston, ‘A note on Kant’s criticism of the arguments for the existence of God’, *AJP* 21 (1943): pp. 10–16; C. Roberts, ‘St Thomas’s world and his “ways”’, *ACR* 27 (1950): pp. 311–6; P.A. Hutchings, ‘Necessary being’, *AJP* 35 (1957): pp. 201–6; for contrary views see G. Stuart Watts, ‘The Thomist proofs of theism’, *AJP* 35 (1957): pp. 30–46; C.B. Martin, *Religious Belief* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1959), ch. 9 (Thomist criticism of which in J.M. Finnis, ‘Theology and criticism’, *On Dit* 19/9/1961, pp. 5–8); M. Scriven, *Primary Philosophy* (New York, 1966), ch. 4; G.C. Nerlich, ‘Popular arguments for the existence of God’, in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. P. Edwards (New York, 1967), vol. 6 pp. 407–11; A. Olding, *Modern Biology and Natural Theology* (London, 1991); G. Oppy, *Ontological Arguments and Belief in God* (Cambridge, 1995); A. Witherall, *The Problem of Existence* (Aldershot, 2002).

and religion, and the problem of evil. It has also been committed to natural law ethics. The reason murder is wrong, on this view, is neither an arbitrary command of God (or of society, or of our genes), nor a free-floating rule, nor some fact about the greatest happiness of the greatest number, nor its failure to be 'free and enterprising' in John Anderson's sense, but the intrinsic worth of persons, which makes their destruction wrong.

Ultimately, then, the morality of human acts is not to be explained by the civil legislation, public opinion and tradition, nor the authority of great men, nor mere utility, nor by gradual evolution from brute beginnings, nor their relation to the production of the super-man, but by their conformity to the law of God, founded in the nature and essential relationships of things, and known by reason. On the other hand, the morality or immorality of our acts does not depend wholly on God's will. In other words, a thing is not always bad because God forbids it; God forbids it because it is bad.¹³

The two themes themselves stem from a more basic doctrine, also mentioned by Santamaria. Thomas Aquinas inherited from Aristotle an unusually optimistic view of reason's ability to know important truths. While sense knowledge may be subject to manifold errors, the human mind, it was believed, has an ability to understand with certainty important matters of principle, like mathematics, philosophy and ethics. It is this capacity to understand objective general facts about the world that grounds both our reasoning about God and our ethical conscience.

While these positions have been part of Catholic tradition at all times, the Church went further in the period of about ninety years from 1880. It officially adopted a very particular philosophy, the scholasticism of Aquinas, taught it to all seminarians and anyone else who would listen, and based school education on it as far as possible. There had been very little attention to Aquinas or other medieval

¹³ P.J. Ryan, 'The fundamental tenets of scholasticism', *Catholic Press* 17/5/1934, p. 12 & 7/6/1934, p. 6; cf. H.B. Loughnan, 'Scholasticism versus realism in ethics', *AJPP* 11 (1933): pp. 141–53; other introductions to scholastic philosophy: T.V. Fleming, *Foundations of Philosophy* (Sydney, 1949) (on Loughnan and Fleming, D. Strong, *Australian Dictionary of Jesuit Biography* (Sydney, 1999), pp. 107–8, 198–9); a more popular introduction: E. Gryst, *Talk Sense!: A Pilgrimage Through Philosophy* (New York, 1961); M.R. Leavey, 'The relevance of St Thomas Aquinas for Australian education', *Melbourne Studies in Education* 1963, pp. 83–200, at pp. 131–93; briefly in R.A. Naulty, 'The philosophy of Aquinas', *Colloquium* 28 (1996): pp. 53–63; G. Oppy, 'On the lack of true philosophic spirit in Aquinas', *Philosophy* 76 (2001): pp. 615–24; H. Ramsay, 'Conscience: Aquinas — with a hint of Aristotle', *Sophia* 40 (2) (2001): pp. 15–29.

thinkers earlier in the nineteenth century. When the first Catholic Bishop and Archbishop of Sydney, John Bede Polding, taught metaphysics before coming to Australia, it was Scottish ‘commonsense’ realism that formed its basis, Aquinas being then little known north of the Alps.¹⁴ But in the obscure recesses of the Vatican, changes were under way.¹⁵ One of the earliest enthusiasts for the new order was Roger Bede Vaughan, author of the first biography of Aquinas in English and later second Archbishop of Sydney and leader in the fight against secular education.¹⁶ Sydney did not get a philosopher Archbishop again, though it came close in 1940, when the Sheehan whose *Apologetics* so impressed the young Santamaria and Keneally almost succeeded to the see. He had been appointed Coadjutor Archbishop with right of succession some twenty years earlier, but the survival of the incumbent Archbishop to the age of 90 prevented realisation of his right.¹⁷ Much the same happened in Melbourne, where the scholastic philosopher Justin Simonds¹⁸ was Coadjutor to Daniel Mannix until the latter’s death at 99.

¹⁴ W.B. Ullathorne, *From Cabin-Boy to Archbishop: The Autobiography of Archbishop Ullathorne* (London, 1941), pp. 38, 41; T. Suttor, ‘Polding’s intellectual formation’, *ACR* 54 (1977): pp. 360–70; on the philosophy degree of the first bishop of Brisbane, see G. Roberts, ‘James Quinn’s Roman background’, *ACR* 37 (1960): pp. 11–16.

¹⁵ Brief accounts in E.J. Howley, ‘Neo-scholasticism’, *ACR* 19 (1913): pp. 403–9; N.M. McNally, ‘Scholasticism’, *Austral Light* 13 (1912): pp. 775–84.

¹⁶ J.T. Donovan, *The Most Reverend Roger Bede Vaughan* (Sydney, 1883), pp. 24–6, 35–41; R.B. Vaughan, *The Life and Labours of Saint Thomas of Aquin* (2 vols, London, 1871–2); also R.B. Vaughan, *Science and Religion: Lectures on the Reasonableness of Christianity and the Shallowness of Unbelief* (Baltimore, 1879); *Arguments for Christianity Delivered in St Mary’s Pro-Cathedral* (Sydney, 1879); Address at St John’s College, Sydney University, 1878, in R.B. Vaughan, *Occasional Addresses Delivered in New South Wales* (Sydney, 1881), pp. 38–44; G. Haines, ‘The Catholic mind of Roger Bede Vaughan’, *Tjurunga* 25 (1983): pp. 133–46; A.E. Cahill, ‘Archbishop Vaughan and St John’s College’, *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society* 14 (1992): pp. 36–47; ‘Philosophy lectures delivered by Archbishop Vaughan, St John’s College, Sydney University’, student notes (Fisher Library, Sydney University, Rare Book Library uncatalogued mss, single ms. no. 139.)

¹⁷ G. Byrnes, ‘Archbishop Sheehan — a biographical sketch’, *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society* 14 (1992): pp. 24–35; M. Sheehan, *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine* (Dublin, 1926, 4th ed, Philadelphia, 1951; 6th ed, ed. P.M. Joseph, London, 2001), (review in *ACR* 7 (1930): pp. 272–5); M. Sheehan, *The Origin of Life: The Case For and Against Evolution* (Dublin, 1952).

¹⁸ M. Vodola, *Simonds: A Rewarding Life* (Melbourne, 1997), pp. 8–16; *ADB* vol. 16 pp. 243–4; M. Vaughan, ‘The philosopher archbishop of Melbourne’, *Bulletin* 30/11/1963, pp. 28–31; J.D. Simonds, ‘Laughter’,

The advantage of running a Church through a centralised bureaucracy is that when change comes, it comes quickly; what was forbidden yesterday is permitted today and may be compulsory tomorrow. An 1879 encyclical made St Thomas Aquinas philosopher By Appointment to the Catholic Church, and study of his philosophy was instituted in seminaries everywhere. That applied even in distant Australia, and especially to Manly seminary, Australia's largest. The seminary continued to teach long courses in philosophy to all its students, though the production of genuine enthusiasts for the subject was probably low.¹⁹ The seminary's official journal records formal debates in Latin in 1923 and 1924 on such topics as 'That God knows himself and knows all other things through himself' and 'There exists in man an intellective faculty which is inorganic and immaterial.'²⁰ An effort was certainly being made.

The difficulty for seminary philosophy perhaps lay not so much in its content as in its being compulsory. Philosophy, in Latin, for people whose interests lay primarily in getting to parish work as soon as possible, was an uphill task;²¹ philosophy is not an ideal choice as a compulsory subject in any circumstances. The student's sensation of an incoherent jumble of terms is well caught in the recollections of Gerard Windsor, a Jesuit seminarian in the 1960s, one with a mind more literary than philosophical:

I heard a confident, unprepared burble about Ethics or a detached, alienated display of Metaphysical Psychology. Principles and tags and maxims and terms bobbed past. None of them seemed to possess or be possessed of any urgency. They floated on, in a rolling, half exposed way, doing the circuit of some river of tradition where every seminarian, as far back and as far forward as imagination reached, paddled fitfully and then stepped

ACR 8 (1931): pp. 289–96; 'Evolution and theology', *ACR* 10 (1933): pp. 12–19; 'Free will and modern psychology', *ACR* 10 (1933): pp. 289–93; 'Einstein and the Prima Via', *ACR* 11 (1934): pp. 11–16; 'Maurice de Wulf', *ACR* 11 (1934): pp. 353–6; 'A new theological series', *ACR* 36 (1959): pp. 78–81; another Louvain philosophy graduate in K. Coen, *Monsignor John Leonard and the Catholic Youth Organisation* (Strathfield, 2000), pp. 19, 31–2.

¹⁹ F.P. Kissane, 'A plea for philosophy', *Manly* 5 (2) (1936): pp. 73–8; F.P. Kissane, 'St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle', *Manly* 6 (1) (1939): pp. 53–7.

²⁰ *Manly* 2 (2) (1923): p. 192 and 2 (3) (1924): pp. 266–7; content of Melbourne seminary philosophy c. 1960 described in V. Noone, 'Post-war Catholic intellectual life: A view from a seminary', *Footprints* 16 (1) (June 1999): pp. 2–28.

²¹ J. Hill, 'Philosophy and the priesthood', *Metaphilosophy* 10 (1979): pp. 215–26; also J. Rheinberger, 'The teaching of ethics in seminaries', *ACR* 47 (1970): pp. 242–5; H. Ramsay, 'Philosophy, teaching and the academic vocation', *ACR* 78 (2001): pp. 131–40.

out. The mind was forever being dipped in the magical stockpot of the Church's Styx.²²

The scholastic industry in seminaries had virtually no impact on Australia's universities. There were a few Catholics among the university philosophy staff, but they were not of a scholastic orientation. The only official post in scholastic philosophy at a university was created at the University of Queensland in 1953, when the Archbishop leaned on the University Senate.²³ The appointee, Father Durell, was not welcomed with open arms by the philosophy department, and experienced difficulty in having credit given to his courses.²⁴ There was a scholastic philosopher briefly appointed at Sydney University in the same period — accidentally, according to rumour, as he confused everyone by knowing about modern symbolic logic as well as scholastic philosophy.²⁵

As with any live intellectual movement, scholasticism was subject to a number of schisms, feuds and long-drawn-out wars between opposing camps. Like the Marxists of the same era, the scholastics naturally arranged themselves on a continuum from 'left' to 'right'.²⁶ The 'left' included such figures as Bernard Lonergan, who sought some kind of *rapprochement* with modern thought, by which they under-

²² G. Windsor, *Heaven Where the Bachelors Sit* (St Lucia, 1996), p. 117; similar in C. Geraghty, *Cassocks in the Wilderness* (Melbourne, 2001), pp. 102–5, 110–5; C. Geraghty, *The Priest Factory* (Melbourne, 2003), pp. 37–42; J. Hanrahan, *From Eternity to Here* (Melbourne, 2002), pp. 69, 139–40, 173–4; G. Dening, *Performances* (Melbourne, 1996), pp. 17–19; I. Guthridge, *Give Me a Child When He Is Young* (Melbourne, 1987), pp. 47–66, 76–80; on Jesuit philosophy teaching, see the articles in *Australian Dictionary of Jesuit Biography* on Daniel, Egan, Fleming, Flynn, Fynn, Gleeson, Gryst, Hehir, Keane, Loughnan, McEntegart, McEvoy, McInerney, Murphy, O'Brien, O'Neill and Stormon.

²³ T.P. Boland, *James Duhig* (St Lucia, 1986), p. 345; T. Truman, *Catholic Action and Politics* (Melbourne, 1960), p. 61.

²⁴ 'University course in scholastic philosophy', with complaint by Durell to Duhig, c. 1959; I am grateful to T.P. Boland for providing a copy.

²⁵ 'New philosophy lecturer on university standards', *Honi Soit* 23 (14) (5/7/1951), p. 3; *One Hundred Years of the Faculty of Arts* (Sydney, 1952), p. 31; J.J. Wellmuth, 'Philosophy and order in logic', *Proceedings of the Catholic Philosophical Association* 17 (1941): pp. 12–17; J.J. Wellmuth, 'Some comments on the nature of mathematical logic', *New Scholasticism* 16 (1942): 9–15; summary of his thesis in *Dissertation Abstracts* vol. 3 no. 2 (1941), pp. 72–3; also J.J. Wellmuth, *The Nature and Origins of Scientism* (Milwaukee, 1944).

²⁶ Overseas background in G.A. McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism: The Evolution of Modern Thomism* (New York, 1989); H.J. John, *The Thomist Spectrum* (New York, 1966).

stood mainly post-Kantian continental philosophy. While Lonergan was studied in Jesuit circles, this stream of scholasticism has not been strongly represented in Australia.²⁷ There have been few followers of the ‘Trotskyist’ Scotist, Ockhamist and Suarezian splinter groups that occasionally appeared in Europe.²⁸ The scholastic ‘centre’ was represented by two French laymen, Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson. While Maritain was part of the general European Catholic thought that inspired the Champion Society in Melbourne,²⁹ and Gilson was also widely read in the English-speaking world, Australian scholasticism has been almost exclusively of the ‘right’. The far right was strongest among ecclesiastics, especially those at the Gregorian and Angelicum universities in Rome. Its dominant figure was the Genghis Khan, so to speak, of the Thomist spectrum, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, professor of theology and philosophy at the Angelicum University in Rome from 1909 to 1960. Late in life, Garrigou-Lagrange supervised the doctoral thesis of Karol Wojtyła, later Pope John Paul II and the world’s most famous philosopher (even if not most famous *qua* philosopher). The isolationism to which ecclesiastical institutions are prone made this an inward-looking brand of Thomism, which regarded virtually all philosophical thought since 1600 as a mistake and saw even the scholastic ‘left’ as sadly deluded semi-Kantian deviationists. It was this milieu that produced Sydney’s

²⁷ But see W. Ryan, ‘The philosophy of Aquinas’, *AJPP* 2 (1924): pp. 272–82; ‘McEvoy, Patrick’, in *Australian Dictionary of Jesuit Biography*, pp. 220–2; on Lonergan, *Lonergan and You: Riverview Reflections 1985* (Pymble, 1987); *Australian Lonergan Workshop*, ed. W.J. Danaher (Lanham, 1993); W.J. Danaher, *Insight in Chemistry* (Lanham, 1988); Windsor, *Heaven Where the Bachelors Sit*, p. 116; Dening, *Performances*, pp. 22–3.

²⁸ E.J. Stormon, ‘Scotus redivivus’, *ACR* 19 (1942): pp. 24–37; F.A.R. Misell, ‘Francis Suarez’, *Newman* (Newman College, Melbourne) 1943, pp. 38–41; complaints of Ockhamist persecution of Thomists in D.D. Smith, ‘A report on philosophical teaching given at St Paschal’s Franciscan College, Box Hill, Melbourne, Australia, in the year 1947’, typescript (copy in Ryan Archives, St Paul’s Seminary, Kensington); the Ockhamist’s ideas in S. Day, *Intuitive Cognition: A Key to the Significance of the Later Scholastics* (St Bonaventure, NY, 1947); cf. J. Fox, ‘Truthmaker’, *AJP* 65 (1987): pp. 188–207.

²⁹ Santamaria, *Santamaria*, p. 11; C.H. Jory, *The Champion Society and Catholic Social Militancy in Australia 1929–1939* (Sydney, 1986), p. 33; meeting of Kevin Kelly and Maritain, with comments on Maritain’s influence in Australia in the 1930s in K.T. Kelly to M. McNerney, 26/1/58, comments in A. Calwell to G. Heffey, 20/6/1958 (in possession of Kelly family), also B. Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?* (Sydney, 2001), pp. 40–4, 385; for Brisbane see G. Harwood, *Blessed City* (Sydney, 1990), pp. 152, 193, 205, 241, 244, 246, 252.

most remarkable scholastic philosophers, two priests who, in different ways, brought their philosophy out of the seminary and into the 'world'. They were Dr P.J. ('Paddy') Ryan of Kensington, and Dr Austin Woodbury of the Aquinas Academy.

In Sydney in the 1930s and 1940s, in contrast to the vigorous Catholic intellectual life in Melbourne, Catholic philosophy, apologetics and controversy was almost a one-man show. The man was Father Paddy Ryan. If it was a question of attacking Communists, or replying to objections on radio, or debating atheist philosophers, or setting up Catholic adult education, or writing a pamphlet to prove the existence of God, one contacted the Sacred Heart fathers at Kensington and got Father Ryan on the job. Born near Wodonga in 1904, he had studied at the Gregorian University in Rome, earning in 1929 doctorates in theology and philosophy with the highest honours.³⁰ He taught philosophy, of a strictly scholastic orientation, at the Kensington seminary thereafter.

His ability as a controversialist was first widely recognised in a debate with John Anderson at Sydney University in 1936.³¹ Anderson and Ryan met again in 1939, in a symposium with two biologists on 'The origin of life'. The largest hall in the University was packed with 500 people; others were turned away. Ryan defended one of the most controversial assertions of mid-century scholasticism, that the evolution of life from the non-living is impossible, whether now or in the distant past, for purely philosophical reasons.³² Though Catholic

³⁰ P. Ryan, *De via morali quam ad Deum cognoscendum proposuit Eduardus le Roy*, thesis, 1932; similar in 'God in contemporary non-Catholic philosophy', typescript, 1937; a fuller account of Ryan in J. Franklin, 'Catholic thought and Catholic Action: Dr Paddy Ryan MSC and the Red Peril', *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society* 17 (1996): pp. 44–55; summary in *ADB*, vol 16, pp. 156–8; also Duncan, *Crusade or Conspiracy?*, pp. 60, 67–9, 180–2, 209–11, 240–1; A. Caruana, *Monastery on the Hill: A History of the Sacred Heart Monastery, Kensington, 1897–1997* (Sydney, 2000), pp. 226–31.

³¹ O.U. Vonwiller, J. Anderson & P.J. Ryan, 'Symposium on science, philosophy and Christianity', *Science Journal* (Sydney University), Michaelmas 1936: pp. 24–36.

³² 'Symposium on "The Origin of Life"', *Catholic Press* 20/7/1939, p. 27; *Catholic Freeman's Journal* 20/7/1939, p. 30; D. Horne, *The Education of Young Donald* (2nd ed, Ringwood, 1988), pp. 179–80; similar earlier in S. Bourke [i.e. Burke], 'The Darwinian theory', *ACR* 6 (1900): pp. 173–89; on the author's philosophy teaching at Manly, K.T. Livingston, *The Emergence of an Australian Catholic Priesthood, 1835–1915* (Sydney, 1977) pp. 198–200; F. Mecham, *John O'Brien and the Boree Log* (Sydney, 1981), p. 49.

philosophy generally gave up the fight against evolution by the 1940s,³⁵ Ryan did not.

There is a sense of the cut and thrust of live argument in the report of a debate Ryan held, also in 1939 at Sydney University, on freewill. His opponent was A.G. Hammer, later Professor of Psychology at the University of New South Wales. An audience of 500 was again estimated. Hammer claimed that ‘all our decisions are as necessary as the explosion of a bomb’, and asserted that ‘we can predict all human acts with absolute certainty, granted a sufficient knowledge of a man’s heredity, environment, and other factors extrinsic to the will.’ Ryan took his stand on the ‘clear and unmistakable testimony of consciousness that it is very often in his power to choose freely amongst various actions which he has motives to perform.’ He was reported, in perhaps a moment of overkill, as having ‘proceeded to prove that the testimony of consciousness is absolutely reliable’. Some interesting exchanges during the discussion were reported, which give some sense of Ryan’s ability to argue on his feet — as well as the style of vigorous trading of certainties that once played such a part in the tradition of public debate:

Mr O’Neill, an ardent determinist: Dr Ryan assumes the ‘self’ or ‘ego’ to be an abiding reality. But as a mere succession of states, the ‘ego’ could not be self-determining.

Dr Ryan: My appeal is to facts of experience. We have the direct and immediate experience of the ‘self’ as an abiding reality and the subject of successive states quite distinct from it. The facts cannot be explained away by futile indulgence in metaphysical speculations concerning the nature of the ‘ego’.

Mr O’Neill: Your proof from the validity of consciousness means that all illusions are impossible. Yet there are illusions.

Dr Ryan: How do you know that there are any illusions except from your consciousness of them?

The chairman of the debate, John Passmore, perhaps less well-informed about the history of philosophy than he was later to become, then intervened with a historical point. ‘Relinquishing his duties as chairman’, he accused Ryan of reviving Descartes’ philosophy, and ‘attacked the notion of a self-determining principle, declaring it to be

³⁵ F.A. Mecham, ‘Evolution and man’, *ACR* 26 (1949): pp. 19–28, 262–8; J. Burnheim, ‘Biology versus Catholic philosophy: A new approach’, *ACR* 27 (1950): pp. 267–71; also B. Smith, *The Boy Adeodatus* (2nd ed, Melbourne, 1990), p. 206; an earlier pro-evolutionary article in J. Flynn, ‘On organic evolution’, *ACR* 6 (1900): pp. 342–88.

absurd.’ Ryan pointed out that Descartes’s philosophy was not the same as Aristotelico-Thomistic philosophy.

Mr Passmore: The only person other than Descartes who adopted Dr Ryan’s line of approach was St Augustine, a man not regarded as a philosopher by anyone outside a certain religious organisation.

Dr Ryan: Not one word of that is correct.³⁴

Ryan’s interest in Sydney University continued in the ensuing years. His campaign against Andersonians at the associated Sydney Teachers College seems to have been responsible for two of them being sent off to the classroom ‘to gain more teaching experience.’³⁵ In one of his radio broadcasts, he claimed:

I personally have argued for hours with graduates of Sydney University in a futile endeavour to convince them of their own existence, — so deeply had their very reason been undermined by scepticism and sophistry ...

In defending self-evident truths like one’s own existence and personality, or easily demonstrable truths like the existence of God, we are merely defending the foundations without which all talk of justice and injustice is so much meaningless twaddle.³⁶

³⁴ *Catholic Freeman’s Journal* 27/5/1939, p. 20; another scholastic treatment in H.B. Loughnan, ‘Determinism and responsibility’, *AJPP* 14 (1936): pp. 216–28; earlier work in ‘Philaethes’ [S.O. Lovell], *Free Will and Determinism* (Hobart, 1893); later in R.L. Franklin, *Freewill and Determinism* (London, 1968); P. O’Sullivan, *Intention, Motives and Human Action: An Argument for Free Will* (St Lucia, 1977); R. Young, *Freedom, Responsibility and God* (London, 1975); R. Young, ‘The implications of determinism’, in *A Companion to Ethics*, ed. P. Singer (Oxford, 1991), pp. 534–42; W.R. Boyce Gibson, ‘Freedom and evil’, *AJPP* 3 (1925): pp. 91–8; P. Herbst, ‘Freedom and prediction’, *Mind* 66 (1957): pp. 1–27; P. Edwards, ‘Hard and soft determinism’, in S. Hook, ed, *Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Science* (New York 1958), pp. 104–13; P. Forrest, ‘Backwards causation in defence of free will’, *Mind* 94 (1985): pp. 210–7; see S. Grave, *A History of Philosophy in Australia* (St Lucia, 1984), pp. 134–8.

³⁵ A. Barcan, *Radical Students: The Old Left at Sydney University* (Melbourne, 2002), p. 48; reports on A.G. Hammer, W.H.C. Eddy and Dr Woodward, in Ryan archives, St Paul’s Seminary, Kensington, section Articles, folder Teachers’ College Reports, with letter of M.D. Forrest MSC to NSW Director of Education, 14/12/1939; Dr Rumble, Question Box, *Catholic Freeman’s Journal* 19/10/1939, p. 10; also 2/11/1939, p. 6; 16/11/1939, p. 6; 23/11/1939, p. 6; 30/11/1939, p. 6; 7/12/1939, p. 6; 14/12/1939, p. 12; 21/12/1939, p. 6.

³⁶ P. Ryan, Question Box, *Catholic Freeman’s Journal* 3/7/1941, p. 8; his university debates of the War years in *Honi Soit* 15 (12) (22/4/1943), p. 1; also *Honi Soit* 15 (24) (26/8/1943), p. 1; reply by Doug Everingham, later

Donald Horne had the opportunity to tangle personally with Ryan in 1941, when, as editor of the student newspaper *Honi Soit*, he was a representative at a 'Youth Parliament' which saw a clash between Stalinists and Catholics. Horne recalled, 'In the evening I drank beer with some of the Stalinists, infuriated by the unscrupulous red-herring tactics of the clerical fascists, who were not concerned with the constructive work of the Youth Parliament but with disrupting it by obscurantist Gestapo methods ... Whenever the name "Catholic Action" was mentioned I would fall quiet with hate.'³⁷ The Catholic resolution which particularly disturbed the 'Parliament' was one affirming 'its complete adherence to the principles of democracy; its repudiation of the Totalitarian ideologies whether Nazi, Fascist or Communist.' As Ryan said, it was hard to see why any genuinely democratic Australian would not be in favour of such a motherhood resolution, so it was fair to ask why the 'Youth Parliament' rejected it. 'Characteristic in this respect', Ryan added, 'is the Mr D.R. Horne, published in "Honi Soit" issue of June 27, 1941. Mr Horne writes with deep emotion — with more heat than light. I gather from the references to the "unbalanced priest" who speaks over Radio 2SM, "the vaporisings of Dr Ryan", the "Catholic papers" and sundry threats of Blitzkriegs to come, that he is making some sort of attack on me.'³⁸

Ryan was employed by the Church in a huge range of activities during the thirty years from about 1932 to 1962. At various times in the late 1930s, during the hierarchy's periodic wringings of hands over the loss of young Catholics after they left school, lecture courses on apologetics and social theory were instituted, with Ryan as director and provider of study material.³⁹ After the War, he headed a 'Workers' School of Social Reconstruction'.⁴⁰ In 1954, the problem was as unsolved as ever ('There is practically no such thing in Australia as the Catholic mind', according to Ryan⁴¹) and an Adult Educa-

minister of health in the Whitlam government, in *Honi Soit* 15 (26) (30/9/1943), p. 3.

³⁷ Horne, *Education*, pp. 262–4.

³⁸ 'The cat got out', in Dr Ryan's Question Box, *Catholic Freeman's Journal* 10/7/1941, p. 8; Horne letter in *Honi Soit* 13 (14) (27/6/1941), p. 2.

³⁹ 'Catholic Action: Educational lectures inaugurated', *Catholic Press* 19/3/1936, p. 10; C. Jory, *Campion Society*, p. 105; B.F. Duncan, *From Ghetto to Crusade: A Study of the Social and Political Thought of Catholic Opinion-Makers in Sydney During the 1930s* (PhD thesis, Dept of Government, Sydney University, 1987), ch. 10.

⁴⁰ *Catholic Weekly* 5/9/1946, p. 3; P.J. Ryan, 'Vested interests challenged', *Social Survey* 1 (2) (Oct 1951): pp. 2–5.

⁴¹ Quoted in N. Turner, *Catholics in Australia: A Social History*, (Melbourne, 1992) vol. II p. 111; P.J. Ryan, 'The Catholic mind: As it is in Australia

tion Institute (Director, Paddy Ryan) was set up in the city to offer courses in apologetics, theology and public speaking. Another outlet for his arguments was provided by radio; in a single broadcast of 1941 he dealt with the permissibility of moderate consumption of alcohol, the idiocy of chain letters ('shows the depth of absurdity to which people can fall when they lack genuine religion') and the responsibility of H.G. Wells for the War ('If people teach, as Mr Wells does teach, that the Ten Commandments are so much junk, they have no right to complain if Hitler presents them with a working model of their own philosophy.')⁴²

It was the Red Peril, however, that came to take up most of Ryan's energy. While many Australians took a favourable view of the USSR at the time when Stalin was on the same side during the war, and membership of the Communist Party of Australia reached a peak in 1944, Catholic circles remained solidly hostile. In 1943, Ryan answered one of the most effective leftist writings of the day, *The Socialist Sixth of the World* by the 'Red Dean' of Canterbury, Hewlett Johnson. This was the book which had converted to Communism the young Frances Bernie, hitherto active in Catholic youth organisations; one result was her leaking of papers from Dr Evatt's office to the Communist Party, and eventually her appearance before the Petrov Royal Commission.⁴³ Ryan's answer, concentrating on the lack of freedom of religion in Russia, sold some 45,000 copies.⁴⁴ There was a reply by the indefatigable Communist General Secretary, Lance Sharkey, at this time also busy with 'exposing' Anderson's Trotskyism. Sharkey says that Lenin is as much in favour of a moral way of life as Father Ryan. But the fact that employers and their press laud the strikebreaker as a hero, while the workers regard him as a scab ('the most immoral creature on earth') 'refutes Father Ryan's stand-

today', *The Newman* (Newman Catholic Graduates Association) 1 (2) (June 1955): pp. 5-7.

⁴² *The Southern Cross* 2/5/1941, p. 5; 'Rev Dr. Ryan's Question Box' appeared weekly in the *Catholic Freeman's Journal* from 7/3/1940 to 18/12/1941; on the radio work of Ryan's colleague Dr Rumble, see E. Campion, *Australian Catholics* (Ringwood, 1987), pp. 134-6; *Observer* 17/9/1960, pp. 6-8; *SMH* 15/11/1975, p. 14; biography in *Who is Father Rumble?* (pamphlet, St Paul, Minnesota, n.d.); *ADB* vol. 16 pp. 150-1.

⁴³ *Royal Commission on Espionage: Transcript of Proceedings* (Canberra, 1955), vol. 3 p. 1329; the Dean's visit to Sydney University in *Honi Soit* 27/4/1950.

⁴⁴ P.J. Ryan, *Dean Hewlett Johnson's Socialist Sixth: A Commentary*, (Sydney, 1943); similar in anon, *A Catechism of Communism for Australian Youth* (Melbourne, 1936); L. Dalton, *Red Menace in Australia* (Melbourne, 1937); L. Dalton, *Notes on Communism* (Kensington, 1945); F.J. Sheed, *Communism and Man* (London, 1938); Campion, *Australian Catholics*, p. 133.

point that there is a general, fixed system of morals that applies to all conceivable conditions.⁴⁵

Ryan's finest hour came with a public debate at the Rushcutters Bay Stadium on September 23, 1948, on the topic 'That Communism is in the best interests of the Australian people.' His opponent was Edgar Ross, a member of the central committee of the Party. Despite rain, 30,000 turned up, clogging the trams. Ross complains in his memoirs that the front rows were flooded with priests and nuns, though the other side also did their best, rounding up members of the Eureka Youth League and the New Housewives Association.⁴⁶

Ross opened with a quotation from Pope Leo XIII on the need to find a remedy for the misery and wretchedness of the working class. He went on to condemn monopoly capitalism, imperialism, atomic bombs, American bases. 'Against this, the Soviet Union stood strong, secure, stable and prosperous (applause and boos).' 'The family was the bulwark of Soviet society (Laughter). In no country of the world were human rights so explicitly acknowledged. The Catholic Church in Russia enjoyed complete freedom of activity. (Dr Ryan scribbles furiously and waves a gently protesting hand to shush the audience).'

Ryan then spoke. He alleged Communism was based on a degraded philosophy of life, that its program necessarily involved ruthless and unlimited dictatorship, and that the Australian Party had no loyalty to God or country, but only to Moscow. 'The audience broke out into coughing as Dr Ryan went measuredly into the influence of the philosopher Hegel on the thought of Karl Marx', but perked up when he moved on to the possibility of getting a divorce in Russia simply by sending a card through the post to the registrar. Even more shockingly, he alleged that workers in Russia were forbidden to strike.

Ross, in reply, 'claimed that Dr Ryan had given a lot of generalisations on philosophy, a few lies about the Soviet, but nothing about the practical tasks confronting the worker in the real situation today.' Catholic preaching about the evils of society was like trying to cure cancer with an Aspro. To Ryan's claim that all the Catholic bishops in Russia were dead, in exile or missing, Ross replied that the

⁴⁵ L.L. Sharkey, *Reply to Father Ryan* (1943), summarised in *The Sharkey Writings*, ed. L.H. Gould (Sydney, 1974?), pp. 159–62; also L.L. Sharkey, 'Marxism and morals: Dr. Ryan answered', *Tribune* 2/10/1948, p. 7; 'official' Communist view on morality in V. Kolbanoski, *Communist Morality*, with foreword by L.H. Gould (Sydney, 1947); Ryan's reply in the pamphlet, *Said Comrade Sharkey* (Sydney, 1944).

⁴⁶ E. Ross, *Of Storm and Struggle* (Sydney, 1982), p. 113; *News Weekly* 15/9/1948, reported in ASIO file on Catholic Action, Australian Archives series A6122/30 item 1222.

churches were open ‘in thousands’ in Russia. ‘To the laughter he shouted, “Do you think I would pull the wool over your eyes?” One solitary shrill feminine voice shouted: “Yes”.’ Ryan asked what reliance could be placed on Ross’s word, when ‘according to Lenin, Communist morality was wholly subordinated to the class struggle of the proletariat.’ ‘In saying that the Catholic Church supported Fascism, Mr Ross was (again the quiet unimpassioned voice) a liar. The Catholic Church was the deadliest enemy of Fascism, and of Red Fascism, too (Wild applause).’⁴⁷

Ryan’s wish to spend some of his time on such an abstruse matter as Hegel’s influence on Marx is a perfect example of what Frank Knopfelmacher was later to call the ‘seminarian-deductive’ attitude to political doctrines. It is characterised, according to Knopfelmacher, by a ‘naive’ kind of intellectualism, which is pre-Freudian and pre-Marxist in believing in the ‘authentic force and causal efficacy of intellectual convictions.’⁴⁸ Ryan certainly did believe that, though whether it is naive is arguable. In any case, Australia might well be grateful for the ‘intellectualism’ that meant that the Cold War was fought here, not with the widespread killings of many other countries, but by nothing much worse than Dr Ryan lecturing the Communist housewives of New South Wales on Hegel.

Ryan continued to speak against Communism to large audiences, notably at the time of the coalminers’ strike and during the campaign for Menzies’ anti-Communism referendum of 1951.⁴⁹ These speeches, and Ryan’s study materials, are the prototypes of the thousands of ‘Evils of Communism’ speeches in emotion-charged church halls that are such a well-remembered element of Catholic myth. He was the founder in Sydney of the ‘Movement’ that ran cells of anti-Communists in the unions. Unlike B.A. Santamaria, who ran the parallel operation in Melbourne, he maintained official contacts with the security services (the forerunners of ASIO).⁵⁰

⁴⁷ ‘Stadium’s record crowd hears political debate, with big anti-Communist majority’, *SMH* 24/9/1948, pp. 1, 3; ‘Huge stadium crowd shows wide interest in Communism’, *Tribune* 29/9/1948, p. 8; full text in *Catholic Weekly* 30/9/1948, pp. 1–4, 19–20.

⁴⁸ F. Knopfelmacher, *Intellectuals and Politics* (Melbourne, 1968), pp. 76–7.

⁴⁹ Listed in Franklin, ‘Catholic thought and Catholic action’; Sydney University speeches in *Honi Soit* 14/9/1950, 4/10/1951, 9/10/1952.

⁵⁰ Early theory in P.J. Ryan, *An Outline of Catholic Action* (Kensington, 1935); summary in Duncan, *From Ghetto to Crusade*, pp. 158–60; see the regular ‘Secretariate of Catholic Action’ page in the weekly *Catholic Freeman’s Journal*, 1939 to mid-1941; Ryan’s founding of the Movement in P. Ormonde, *The Movement* (Melbourne, 1972), p. 3; Santamaria, *Santamaria*, p. 73; G. Williams, *Cardinal Sir Norman Gilroy* (Sydney, 1971), p. 51; G.



Dr P.J. Ryan (centre) at a wedding, September 1948 (St Paul's Seminary, Kensington, Archives)

A significant issue of applied moral philosophy arose in connection with these activities: may one vote at meetings of organisations of which one is not a member? That is, could the Movement stack meetings? This became an issue for students at Sydney University, where the Movement had spectacular success in 1951–2 and controlled all major student organisations;⁵¹ the editorship of *Honi Soit* went to Movement activist Edmund Campion.⁵² Students reported that Ryan positively encouraged Arts and Engineering students to vote at Medical students' meetings, and vice versa. The chaplain at Sydney University recalled that 'Dr Ryan had once come back from the Vatican and reported to him and some Movement people that he had consulted some top moral theologians at the Gregorian and Lateran Universities and they had advised that Catholics were morally justified in doing anything that Communists did.'⁵³ Views such as these, understandable enough in the context of, say, Czechoslovakia,

Henderson, *Mr Santamaria and the Bishops* (Sydney, 1982), p. 26; J. Kane, *Exploding the Myths* (North Ryde, 1989), p. 23; R. Murray, *The Split* (2nd ed, Melbourne, 1972), p. 46; Hanrahan, *From Eternity to Here*, p. 148; security contacts in ASIO file on Catholic Action, as above; D. McKnight, *Australia's Spies and Their Secrets* (Sydney, 1994), pp. 202–3; further in Franklin, 'Catholic thought and Catholic Action'; exposed by Communists in *Tribune* 27/8/1949, p. 3; also 7/9/1949, p. 6.

⁵¹ Barcan, *Radical Students*, pp. 254–63; *Honi Soit* 16/10/1952.

⁵² E. Campion, *Rockchoppers* (Melbourne, 1982), pp. 104–7.

⁵³ Ormonde, *The Movement*, p. 43.

were less acceptable in Australia. Many Catholics were not prepared to lie on demand and left the Movement over such tactics.

Ryan's operation was taken over by the Melbourne Movement, which disagreed with what Santamaria called Ryan's 'cowboys and indians' tactics.⁵⁴ There was ill feeling on both sides. Ryan was a key speaker at the meetings in 1956 at which the vast majority of New South Wales Movement men decided to accept the Sydney bishops' policy of staying with the Labor Party instead of joining their Victorian and Queensland colleagues in what later became the Democratic Labor Party.

An earlier student from the same Roman milieu as Ryan was a Marist priest from the Hawkesbury Valley of New South Wales, Dr Austin Woodbury.⁵⁵ A student of Garrigou-Lagrange in Rome in the 1920s, he founded the Aquinas Academy in Sydney in 1945⁵⁶ and headed it for thirty years. It was primarily an evening school, aimed principally at the laity, and was for long a remarkably successful operation. In 1961, for example, it was running nineteen classes a week, with a total enrolment of some 500.⁵⁷ Like his counterpart and rival a few miles away at Sydney University, John Anderson, 'the Doc' was a charismatic classroom teacher. The artist John Ogburn recalls

Frequently Woodbury would send me to the canvas with his answer and I responded to this as a miner greets the fresh air after working a double shift underground. Through the teaching of these two men [Woodbury and the artist Orban] I had at last found the source of that clear stream of

⁵⁴ B.A. Santamaria to author, 7/11/1996.

⁵⁵ 'Friend of philosophy', *Catholic Weekly* 15/2/1945, p. 9; *ADB* vol. 16 pp. 580–1; obituary in *SMH* 6/2/1979, p. 4; brief summary of his philosophy in A.M. Woodbury, 'What is metaphysics?', *Catholic Weekly* 14/2/1946, pp. 11, 21; introduction to Academy philosophy in J. Young, *Reasoning Things Out* (booklet, Parramatta, 1975, repr. Fort Worth, 1981).

⁵⁶ 'School of philosophy to be opened here in March', *Catholic Weekly* 25/1/1945, p. 1; 1/3/1945, p. 2; 1/3/1945, p. 6; 21/6/1945, p. 1; 27/3/1947, p. 6; courses detailed in *Catholic Weekly* 3/4/1947, p. 2 and 8/5/1947, p. 6; on the Academy's teaching on the philosophy of economics, see H.G. Pearce, *Value, Normal and Morbid: An Exposition of Economic Value* (Sydney, 1948, 2nd ed, Eastwood, 1987); D.G. Boland, *Economics and Justice* (to appear); cf. J.P. Kelly, *Aquinas and Modern Practices of Interest Taking* (Brisbane, 1945); A.J. Walsh, *A Neo-Aristotelian Theory of Social Justice* (Aldershot, 1997); on Thomist economic principles and the Cain government's policies, see M. Simons, 'Hard times for local heroes', *Eureka Street* 1 (2) (Apr. 1991): pp. 13–15.

⁵⁷ *The Academician* 2 (5) (June 1961), p. 3; 2 (10) (Nov 1961); further in 'The dream that came true: The story of the Aquinas Academy', *Catholic Weekly* 28/4/1960; 400 normal at the start of most years, J. Ziegler to author, 12/4/1995.

loveliness and beauty, the Being from which or in which all other beings are. I could now start to paint seriously.⁵⁸

The historian and theologian Tim Suttor also writes of the immediate impact of a single evening of Woodbury's lecturing, which freed him from dissatisfaction with modern philosophers and oriented him towards Thomism.⁵⁹

Also like Anderson, Woodbury became after his return to Australia rather isolated from the world scene. Again like Anderson, he never published a book summarising his thought — though there were a few pamphlets and many volumes of lecture notes — and he did not tolerate dissent, discussion or questions. His opinion of Anderson's philosophy was much the same as Anderson's of his, an opinion he expressed freely and often in his lectures. The cold war between the Academy and Anderson's department entered a brief hot phase in 1952, when Woodbury claimed publicly, 'The department of philosophy in the University of Sydney is a cancer at what ought to be the heart of the scholastic life of this city. It is a disgrace to the University of Sydney, and would be a disgrace to any university anywhere. I would warn students, and the parents of students, that a grave risk to their future intellectual and moral life is incurred by students who follow the course of philosophy at the University of Sydney without at the same time taking courses at this academy.' Anderson deigned to reply, at least briefly, describing Woodbury's attack as 'sheer rubbish and propaganda'. 'Dr Woodbury not only knows nothing about philosophy, but he knows nothing about the department of philosophy at the University.'⁶⁰ As for debate between the two positions, none was forthcoming.

This skirmish was only a curtain-raiser to the later 'Gough-Kinsella affair', to be described in the next chapter. The Aquinas Academy entered the limelight briefly once more in 1966 at the time of the 'Mother Gorman affair', a confused scuffle over the television appearance of an American nun of 'advanced' views,⁶¹ but generally simply

⁵⁸ N. Turner, *Catholics in Australia: A Social History* (Melbourne, 1992), vol. II, pp. 286.

⁵⁹ T. Suttor, 'Austin Mary Woodbury', *ACR* 55 (1978): pp. 142–50, at pp. 149–50; cf. T. Suttor, introduction to Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 11 (London, 1970).

⁶⁰ *Catholic Weekly* 13/3/1952, p. 1; also 'Atomic age no threat to perennial philosophy', *Catholic Weekly* 13/3/1952, p. 15; reply in *Sun* 9/3/1952, p. 12; Anderson to Ruth Walker, 14/3/1952, in Walker papers, Sydney University Archives, P.158 series 2; a recollection in McLaughlin, 'Humanity', at pp. 128–9.

⁶¹ 'Dr Muldoon and Mother Gorman', *Nation* 10/12/1966, pp. 9–10; Campion, *Rockchoppers*, pp. 172–6.

pursued its teaching role in the background. Attendance waned as Dr Woodbury's health failed in the 1970s. After Woodbury's death in 1979, the Academy was continued for some time by his followers, but then fell to a coup by Jungians, who changed the character of its teaching entirely. The defeated party set up and still maintains a small Centre for Thomistic Studies, which preserves whole and unreconstructed the authentic deposit of ancient days.⁶²

One other scholastic philosopher gained some prominence in the fight against the godlessness of university philosophy. Father Farrell, a Dominican and brother of the historian of Catholic Australia, Patrick O'Farrell,⁶³ took the unusual step of submitting an article to the 'enemy' journal, *Mind*; *Mind* took the even more unusual step of printing it.⁶⁴ It was a reply to an article by John Mackie of Sydney University on the problem of evil. It is recognised by most religious philosophers that the problem of evil is the most serious rational objection to religion: how can a good God cause, or even allow, evil in the world he creates? Or at least, how can a good God allow the never-ending tragedies that actually exist in this world: if people have an obligation to prevent evil when they can, why not God?

The problem is a very obvious one. In the only philosophical interlude in Albert Facey's *A Fortunate Life*, he writes, 'Anyone who has taken part in a fierce bayonet charge (and I have), and who has managed to retain his proper sanity, must doubt the truth of the Bible and the power of God, if one exists.'⁶⁵ The thought is reasonable, even inevitable. Still, experiences of great evils have been interpreted very differently by those with different philosophical ideas. Mackie posed the problem in its traditional form: how can it be held simultaneously that God is omnipotent, that God is wholly good, and that evil exists? For surely if he were good and had the power to remove the evils, he would do so? Are there then any excuses that can be made on God's behalf? Mackie argued that various excuses offered by believers all amount to implicitly denying one of these three propositions. For example, the idea that evil is due to human will, or that the universe as a whole is better with some evil, or that

⁶² J. Ziegler, 'A brief history of the CTS'; *Universitas* 3 (1) (1999) (www.cts.org.au/1999/ctshistory.htm); support for Thomism also from *Opus Dei* in P. Grant, 'Metaphysics', *ACR* 63 (1986): pp. 412–5.

⁶³ P. O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community in Australia: A History* (Melbourne 1967, rev. ed. 1977); *Vanished Kingdoms* (Kensington, 1990), pp. 99–100, 185–196; occasional writings in *Current Affairs Bulletin* 22 (9) (1958), 30 (6) (1962), 31 (1) (1962).

⁶⁴ P.M. Farrell, 'Evil and omnipotence', *Mind* 67 (1958): pp. 399–403; further in 'Freedom and evil', *AJP* 36 (1958): pp. 216–21.

⁶⁵ A.B. Facey, *A Fortunate Life* (Fremantle, 1981), p. 317.

evil is necessary as a means to good, he argued to be incompatible with true divine omnipotence, as a truly omnipotent God would be able to remove the evils, but retain the goods.⁶⁶

Father Farrell replied that designing universes is not as easy as Mackie makes it sound. If the universe is not to be extremely simple, the result must be an interconnected whole in which what happens in one part necessarily restricts what can happen in another. The corruption and decay of living things is an evil, for example, but it is simply impossible for God to create corruptible goods like living things, in such a way that they do not corrupt. So omnipotence is compatible with evil because, though it is not obvious to us, eliminating evils while retaining goods is logically impossible. No doubt the abstractness of the treatment may give an impression of lack of feeling in the face of suffering. On the other hand, the problem posed was an abstract one, and the alternative to an abstract treatment is to start speculating on reasons for the existence of particular evils, which is bound to end in farce. Fr Farrell shows himself aware of the pitfalls by mentioning that the point of the existence of 'certain groups of bacteria, e.g.' in the divine plan remains obscure to us. Plainly, whatever necessities there may be connecting the parts of creation, we cannot expect to discern them with any confidence. But it is just the *possibility* of such necessary interconnections that explains why one can consistently believe all three of the propositions: God is omnipotent, God is wholly good, evil (even a great deal of it) exists. There is no better excuse for anything than absolute necessity; nor will anything less do as an answer.

The same line of reasoning had been developed for a more popular audience in Sheehan's *Apologetics*: 'The notion that there are defects in the work of God is due, not to the imperfect character of His design, but to our imperfect understanding of it.' He appears at first to overstep the mark in offering to explain God's design, on such questions as why there are so many useless things in the world. 'if the animals called labyrinthodonts which belong to the early geological ages had been endowed with intelligence, they might have made a strong case against the wisdom of Providence from the lavish waste of fern spores.' Yet, all that vegetable waste has given us our coal. The animals would have judged wrongly 'from their not being able to

⁶⁶ J.L. Mackie, 'Evil and omnipotence', *Mind* 64 (1955): pp. 200–12, repr. in *The Philosophy of Religion*, ed. B. Mitchell (Oxford, 1971), pp. 92–104; Farrell is unmentioned in Mackie's later *The Miracle of Theism*, but there is a brief mention in J.L. Mackie, 'Theism and utopia', *Philosophy* 37 (1962): pp. 153–8, and a polemical reply in *Prospect* 5 (3) (1962): p. 23.

foresee events of what was to them an incalculably remote future.’⁶⁷ The example is bizarre but the point is a fair one: it is the abstract possibility of long-range trade-offs in the design of the universe that is being argued for, rather than the explanation of this or that evil.⁶⁸ The same thought on the necessary interconnection of evils was advanced, though in a more political context, by John Anderson: ‘It is only in the struggle with evil that goods exist, and the attempt to eliminate evils ... could lead, at its most successful, only to a drab existence which would emphatically be evil.’⁶⁹

In 1961 Farrell took the fight to the public, publishing in the Catholic newspapers an attack on the academic standards of Mackie

⁶⁷ Sheehan, *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine*, pp. 41–2; other arguments on evil and necessity in F. Mora, ‘Thank God for evil?’, *Philosophy* 58 (1983): pp. 399–401; B. Langtry, ‘Can God replace the actual world by a better one?’, *Philosophical Papers* 20 (1991): pp. 183–92; E.J. Khamara, ‘In defence of omnipotence’, *Philosophical Quarterly* 28 (1978): pp. 215–28; E.J. Khamara, ‘Mackie’s paradox and the free will defence’, *Sophia* 34 (1) (1995): pp. 42–8; M. Levine, ‘Must God create the best?’, *Sophia* 35 (1) (1996): pp. 28–34; J. Franklin, ‘Two caricatures, II. Leibniz’s best world’, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 52 (2002): pp. 45–56.

⁶⁸ Other work on the problem of evil: M.B. Ahern, *The Problem of Evil* (London, 1971); H.J. McCloskey, *God and Evil* (The Hague, 1974); J. Cowburn, *Shadows and the Dark* (London, 1979); C. Roberts, ‘God and evil’, *ACR* 26 (1949): pp. 11–18; G. Schlesinger, *Religion and Scientific Method* (Dordrecht, 1977), Part I; G.N. Schlesinger, *New Perspectives on Old-time Religion* (Oxford, 1988), ch. 2; K. Campbell, ‘Patterson Brown on God and evil’, *Mind* 74 (1965): pp. 582–4; M. Scriven, *Primary Philosophy* (New York, 1966), pp. 158–64; A. Olding, ‘Finite and infinite gods’, *Sophia* 6 (1967): pp. 3–7; P. Edwards, ‘Difficulties in the idea of God’, in *The Idea of God*, ed. E.H. Madden *et al.* (Springfield, Ill, 1968), pp. 43–77; R.J. Pargetter, ‘Evil as evidence against the existence of God’, *Mind* 85 (1976): pp. 242–5; P. Kelly, *Searching for Truth: A Personal View of Roman Catholicism* (London, 1978), pp. 67–71; C.B. McCullagh, ‘Evil and the love of God’, *Sophia* 31 (3) (1992): pp. 48–60; B. Langtry, ‘God, evil and probability’, *Sophia* 28 (1989): pp. 32–40; B. Langtry, ‘Some internal theodicies and the objection from alternative goods’, *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* 34 (1993): pp. 29–39; B. Langtry, ‘Eyeballing evil: Some epistemic principles’, *Philosophical Papers* 25 (1996): pp. 127–37; M.P. Levine, ‘Pantheism, theism and the problem of evil’, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 35 (1994): pp. 129–151; J. O’Leary-Hawthorne, ‘Non-organic theories of value and pointless evil’, *Faith and Philosophy* 9 (1992): pp. 387–91; P. Bilimoria, ‘Duhka and karma: The problem of evil and God’s omnipotence’, *Sophia* 34 (1) (1995): pp. 92–119; J.J.C. Smart & J.J. Haldane, *Atheism and Theism* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 66–73, 183–5; P. Forrester, *God Without the Supernatural* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1996), ch. 8.

⁶⁹ J. Anderson, *Studies in Empirical Philosophy* (Sydney, 1962), p. 338

and certain other university philosophers. Mackie's article, he claimed, was defective in claiming to have refuted all existing attempted solutions to the problem of evil, while ignoring those put forward by Aquinas. He complained further about a later article by another Melbourne University philosopher,⁷⁰ which had agreed with Mackie's article but not referred to Farrell's or considered the kind of argument he had put forward. Since university philosophers were attacking Christianity while ignoring its counter-arguments, Farrell concluded, the public ought to complain and Catholic students should avoid philosophy at universities.

The debate dragged on inconclusively for months, with the Catholic philosophers of Melbourne and elsewhere being mostly concerned to draw a *cordon sanitaire* around Farrell and any like-minded Dominican inquisitors.⁷¹ Parents were assured that studying philosophy at respectable universities like Melbourne was no danger to their children's faith. Max Charlesworth, a philosopher in the liberal tradition of Melbourne Catholicism, was goaded into expressing his real opinion of scholastic philosophers: 'If we were to apply Father Farrell's test of philosophical competence to contemporary scholastic philosophers' treatment of modern philosophical positions, we would be forced to declare the majority of them to be flagrantly "incompetent".'⁷² Another university Catholic philosopher involved was Selwyn Grave, whose story of conversion to Catholicism appears to provide a counterexample to the theory that no-one is converted by pure argument.⁷³ Grave had himself written an answer to Mackie.⁷⁴ His opinion of the scholastics is evident in his later *History of Philosophy in Australia*, which gives them not so much as a single footnote. No mention was made during the debate of the fact that, except for Fr Durell's tenuous position in

⁷⁰ H.J. McCloskey, 'God and evil', *Philosophical Quarterly* 10 (1960): pp. 97–114.

⁷¹ *Advocate* 26/10/1961: p. 18; 2/11: p. 18; 9/11: p. 18; 16/11: p. 18; 23/11: p. 18; 30/11: p. 18; 7/12: p. 18; 21/12: p. 12; 14/12: p. 18; *Catholic Weekly* 12/10/1961: pp. 12–13; 16/11: p. 20; 30/11: p. 13; 21/12: p. 22; 11/1/62: p. 12; *Prospect* 5 (1962): p. 26; J. Kovesi, 'The temptation of absolute truth', *Twentieth Century* 16 (1962): pp. 216–22; R.M. Gascoigne, 'A comment on a controversy', *Twentieth Century* 17 (1962): pp. 17–24; J. Kovesi, 'An answer', pp. 25–41; cf. T. Suttor, 'Australian Catholic culture', *Manna* 4 (1961): pp. 122–36.

⁷² M. Charlesworth, 'Academics and Christianity', *Advocate* 30/11/1961: p. 18.

⁷³ S. Grave, 'A discovery of the Church', in *Treasure Hidden in a Field*, ed. M. Elliott (Melbourne, 1971), pp. 149–58.

⁷⁴ S. Grave, 'On evil and omnipotence', *Mind* 65 (1956): pp. 259–62.

Queensland, none of the Catholic philosophers employed in Australian universities were scholastics. The Sydney University philosophers did not join the debate, and there was no substantial discussion of Farrell's actual charges against Mackie.

As Grave's case shows, not all converts to Catholicism have been enthusiastic about scholastic philosophy, thinking perhaps that they have taken on board quite enough new doctrines already. James McAuley, on the contrary, understood that in a sense Catholicism with its philosophy asked for less belief than the faith alone, since the philosophy provided a few principles from which a great deal follows. The Christian tradition, he says, is 'confined to a few bare principles of natural law and a meagre deposit of revealed teaching'.⁷⁵ After phases of Marxism, Andersonianism and anarchism in youth,⁷⁶ he was converted to Catholicism and was happy to buy the whole package. He admired Gilson in particular,⁷⁷ though he was distressed that both Gilson and Maritain were admirers of modern art.⁷⁸ McAuley expressed his own view of the essence of Catholic philosophy in a well-known passage in *The End of Modernity*:

While the Greco-Christian tradition remained intact, it was possible to give an intelligible account of human personality and show in what its eminent dignity and worth consist. To be a person means to be capable of reason and choice; able therefore to apprehend objective values and become a bearer of those values. What the Renaissance did was to begin to

⁷⁵ J. McAuley, *The End of Modernity* (Sydney, 1959), p. 12.

⁷⁶ 'McAuley and Anderson', ch. 4 of M. Cook, 'James McAuley's Encounter with Modernism', PhD thesis, Sydney University, 1993; J. McAuley, 'Realist aesthetics', reported in *Union Recorder*, 1/10/1936, repr. in *Heracitus* 41 (May 1995): p. 6; 'Metaphysical poetry', *Union Recorder* 2/7/1936, reported in *Heracitus* 40 (Mar 1995): pp. 4–5; G. Balzidis, 'James McAuley's radical ingredients', *Meanjin* 39 (1980): pp. 374–82; Horne, *Education of Young Donald*, pp. 200–1.

⁷⁷ Cook, 'McAuley's Encounter', pp. 274–82; J. McAuley, letter, *Australian Quarterly* 24 (2) (1952): pp. 76–8; J. McAuley, 'A small testament', *Quadrant* 20 (12) (1976), repr. in *James McAuley*, ed. L. Kramer (St Lucia, 1988); with comment in *Quadrant* 25 (9) (Sept 1981): p. 79 and 25 (11) (Nov 1981): p. 76; N. Rowe, 'James McAuley and the grammar of existence', *Australian Journal of Law and Society* 9 (1993): pp. 107–17; G. Melleuish, *Cultural Liberalism in Australia* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 181–6.

⁷⁸ J. McAuley, 'A note on Maritain's views', in *The End of Modernity*, pp. 111–6; also J. Wright, 'Art and tradition — a rejoinder', *Australian Quarterly* 24 (1) (Mar, 1952): pp. 73–6; cf. A. Boyce Gibson, reviews of *Art and Faith: Exchange of Letters between Jean Cocteau and Jacques Maritain*, *AJP* 27 (1949): pp. 70–2 and of Gilson's *Dante the Philosopher*, *AJP* 28 (1950): pp. 43–50; and A. Boyce Gibson, 'The French spirit in philosophy', in *Light Out of France*, ed. J.G. Stanbury & A.R. Chisholm (Sydney, 1951).

fritter away this conception of man as a rational being oriented to real values, in favour of a cult of individualism and personal idiosyncrasy. Today our publicists deafen us with proclamations of the 'value' or 'sacredness' of 'personality'; but which of them can give us a rational account of these terms? Scientism, the contraction of science to empirical knowledge, presents us with an impoverished reality in which *persons* have no theoretical charter to exist. In its rigorously determinist form, scientism leaves no room for free will, values, or rational judgement itself. As Etienne Gilson says: 'This is the reason why, for want of a rational metaphysics by which the course of science could be regulated, the liberal philosophers had no other choice than to attack science itself and to weaken its absolute rationality. The source of modern agnosticism is the fear of scientific determinism in the hearts of men who, by breaking metaphysical rationalism, had broken the very backbone of human liberty.' The notion of the value of personality, whose banishment the totalitarians have gladly accepted from the hands of scientism, survives for the liberals only as an irrational sentiment, and under these circumstances the very meaning of personality is corrupted.⁷⁹

He also drew some lessons for poetry. In particular, he thought, the common exaltation of imagination over intellect by poets is a mistake: 'deep waters of feeling are stirred, and imagination induced to disclose its hidden treasures, only under the regnant star of intellectual ideas.'⁸⁰

Remarkably, A.D. Hope, McAuley's rival as the leading poet of his generation, also had some connections with medieval philosophy. Though remaining closer to Anderson and classicism, and never a Catholic, he wrote an early article expressing substantial criticism of Anderson's ethics.⁸¹ He proposed to write a thesis on Ockham, until prevented by Anderson,⁸² and wrote an article on 'The esthetic theory of James Joyce', which is really about Thomas Aquinas' aesthetics.⁸³

⁷⁹ 'The loss of intellectuality', in *The End of Modernity* pp. 86–9, at pp. 88–9; cf. p. 35; similar in J. McAuley, 'Friend of permanent things', *Quadrant* 14 (2) (Mar/Apr 1970): pp. 40–3; discussion in C. Pybus, *The Devil and James McAuley* (St Lucia, 1999), pp. 139–40; his views on university philosophy in 'A letter to John Dryden', *Collected Poems* (Sydney, 1994), pp. 104–17.

⁸⁰ McAuley, *End of Modernity*, preface, p. vii.

⁸¹ A.D. Hope, 'The meaning of good', *AJPP* 21 (1943): pp. 17–26.

⁸² A.D. Hope, *Chance Encounters* (Melbourne, 1992), p. 52; see 'A.D. Hope in his Sydney years', *Heracitus* 82 (2000): p. 8.

⁸³ A.D. Hope, 'The esthetic theory of James Joyce', *AJPP* 21 (1943): pp. 93–114; further on the same theme in 'Three faces of love', in A.D. Hope, *The Cave and the Spring* (Adelaide, 1965), on which S. Moore, 'A.D. Hope's "Three faces of love"', *Australian Literary Studies* 10 (1982): pp. 389–91; cf. Anderson, *Art and Reality*, p. 260; recollection of Hope at this time in D. Horne, 'Portrait of an un-Australian', *Observer* 4/10/1958, pp. 517–8; on

The aspect of scholastic philosophy with the widest impact on ordinary life, and the source of its most widespread controversies, was moral philosophy and its offshoot, the ‘science’ of casuistry. The promise of objectivity in ethics, combined with the expectation that confessors should provide detailed and consistent advice on any matter that penitents cared to raise, created a vast body of reasoning on the application of moral principles to particular ‘cases’.⁸⁴ As we saw, Dr Ryan sought opinions from experts on the morality of matching Communist tactics, and Dr Woodbury used to tell the story of Franco asking his advisers in moral theology whether it was permissible to make war on the Spanish republic, to which the answer was, ‘not only licit but obligatory’. During the Vietnam War, too, Catholics created some bemusement among outsiders by debating whether the conflict fulfilled the traditional conditions for a just war.⁸⁵ Some of the stranger cases of conscience arose from complications in Church rules, rather than from natural law, but even those were supposed to be solved as reasonably as possible. May one deliberately confess to a deaf priest? (Of course not, since that defeats the essential purpose of confession.)⁸⁶ Is an excommunicate obliged to attend Mass? (A more realistic case than it looks, as there were many who considered themselves Catholics but who had incurred automatic excommunica-

Hope and Anderson also E. Fell, ‘John Anderson is alive and well and treasured by a generation’, *Financial Review* 23/7/1982, p. 35.

⁸⁴ J. Franklin, *The Science of Conjecture: Evidence and Probability Before Pascal* (Baltimore, 2001), ch. 4.

⁸⁵ V. Noone, ‘Melbourne Catholics and the 1965 increase in Australian military intervention in Vietnam’, *Journal of Religious History* 16 (1991): pp. 456–81, section III; M. Charlesworth & V. Noone, ‘Christians, Vietnam and the theory of the just war’, in *War: Australia and Vietnam*, ed. K. Maddock & B. Wright (Sydney, 1987), pp. 148–59; J. Fox, ‘Can war ever be justified?’, in *Catholics in Revolution*, ed. P. Ormonde (Melbourne, 1968), pp. 113–8; opposite Catholic view in Bob Breen, *First to Fight* (Sydney, 1988), p. 23; V. Noone, ed, *Catholics and Nuclear War*, (Melbourne, 1982); also *Critical Philosophy* 3 (1986), special issue on nuclear armaments; S.I. Benn, ‘Deterrence or appeasement’, *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 1 (1984): pp. 5–19; C.A.J. Coady, ‘The leaders and the led’, *Inquiry* 23 (1980): pp. 275–91; C.A.J. Coady, ‘Deterrent intentions revisited’, *Ethics* 99 (1988): pp. 98–108; C.A.J. Coady, ‘Objecting morally’, *Journal of Ethics* 1 (1997): pp. 375–97; D. Oderberg, *Applied Ethics: A Non-Consequentialist Approach* (Oxford, 2000), ch. 29.

⁸⁶ J.J. Nevin, ‘Purposely confessing to a deaf priest’, *ACR* 20 (1943): pp. 258–9 (on the author: K.J. Walsh, *Yesterday’s Seminary: A History of St Patrick’s Manly* (Sydney, 1998), pp. 190–218); cf. J. Passmore, *Memoirs of a Semi-Detached Australian* (Melbourne, 1997), p. 45; P. Mullins, ‘Looking back on the way we were’, *ACR* 75 (1998): pp. 264–70.

tion by marrying in another Church: Ben Chifley, for example.⁸⁷ The answer is tricky.⁸⁸) The most important cases, though, were ones involving matters of ethical principle, which ought to apply equally to everyone, whether Catholic or not. Outside the Catholic (and Jewish) tradition, there has been a general feeling that it is not appropriate to confine ethical principle to such detailed 'rules',⁸⁹ but this perhaps rests on a misunderstanding of casuistry. Moral dilemmas, like legal cases, come up of their own accord, each with its own collection of properties and circumstances. To decide what is right in those circumstances, there is hardly any choice but to look at how all applicable ethical principles bear on the case, and perhaps conflict with one another. And the answer is surely applicable to all other relevantly similar cases, and can thus be called a rule.

The crunch for casuistry came, as far as the general Catholic population was concerned, with the prohibition of the Pill, on the grounds that artificial contraception defeats one of the essential purposes of sexual activity. Since the subtle deductions of casuistry did permit sex for the infertile as well as contraception by the rhythm method, the boundary between the licit and the illicit was a very thin one, and the reasoning did not carry the conviction hoped for, even among experts.⁹⁰ The large number of Catholics who ignored the Pope's 1968 encyclical on the Pill tended to blame and reject the whole apparatus of casuistry and confession. They did not usually respond to the arguments.

⁸⁷ D. Day, *Chifley* (Sydney, 2001), pp. 92–4; P. Hasluck, *The Chance of Politics* (Melbourne, 1997), p. 29.

⁸⁸ J.J. Nevin, 'Is an excommunicate bound to go to Mass on Sunday?', *ACR* 22 (1945): pp. 232–5; on the relevant metacasuistical principles, see H. McDermott, 'Probabilism vindicated', *ACR* 12 (1905): pp. 374–84; Walsh, *Yesterday's Seminary*, pp. 133–4; T.F. Roche, 'St. Alphonsus' probabilism', *ACR* 19 (1942): pp. 146–53.

⁸⁹ E.N. Merrington, *The Possibility of a Science of Casuistry* (Sydney, 1902); Anon, *Roman Catholic Morality as Inculcated in the Theological Class-Books Used in Maynooth College* (3rd ed, Dublin, 1836, repr. Sydney, 1839).

⁹⁰ Earlier Catholic views in S. Siedlecky & D. Wyndham, *Populate and Perish* (Sydney, 1990), pp. 15–16; J.C. Thompson, *Lectures on Medical and Legal Ethics Given at St John's College, University of Sydney* (Sydney, 1933); later debate in J. Finnis, 'Natural law in *Humanae Vitae*', *Law Quarterly Review* 84 (1968): pp. 467–71; N. Ford, 'Humanae vitae — twenty-five years on and beyond', *ACR* 70 (1993): pp. 139–60; N. Tonti-Filippini, 'Postpartum contraception', *ACR* 71 (1994): pp. 82–8; J. Young, *Catholic Thinking* (Merrylands, 1990), pp. 104–5; F. Mobbs, *Beyond its Authority? The Magisterium and Matters of Moral Law* (Sydney, 1997); G. Gleeson, 'The scope of the Church's moral teaching', *ACR* 75 (1998): pp. 264–70.

On the surface, scholasticism has virtually disappeared. After the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, much of Catholic opinion lost sympathy with systems of thought identified with the *ancien régime*. Circles eager for change, in which ‘before the Council’ became a term of abuse, were hardly likely to approve of an intellectual structure that dated from before the Council of Trent. It was certainly true that scholasticism had in some ways left itself in a weak position to survive the onslaught, by taking little notice of so many developments in modern thought. It had made little attempt to come to terms with scientific thought, for example.⁹¹ That was despite the fact that modern science itself grew out of a scholastic matrix, which gave it its initial vocabulary, set of questions and methodology. (These matters were one of the themes of the Australian expatriate Alistair Crombie, from his widely read *Augustine to Galileo* of 1952 to his monumental *Styles of Scientific Thinking in the European Tradition* of 1994.⁹²) By contrast, new ideas in general were the weak point of modern scholasticism. It was said that the way to stop the charge of a man-eating Thomist was to ask what questions not dealt with by Aquinas Thomists were about to work on.⁹³

Catholic philosophy since the 1960s has gone through a ‘post-scholastic’ phase, which rejects the details of scholasticism but hopes to preserve a distinctively Catholic orientation. This means that a concern for objective morality and the general reliability of reason has been grounded on a synthesis, or attempted synthesis, of some of the basics of scholasticism with ideas from modern philosophy.⁹⁴ There

⁹¹ Some Australian attempts in G. Ardley, *Aquinas and Kant* (London, 1950); G.W.R. Ardley, ‘Prolegomenon to any natural science which can be called philosophical’, *Modern Schoolman* 32 (1955): pp. 101–13; V.A. Garten, ‘Physics and the goodness of creation’, *Divus Thomas*, no. 4 of 1985, pp. 276–88; D. Rockey, ‘Some fundamental principles for the solution of terminological problems in speech pathology and therapy’, *British Journal of Disorders of Communication* 4 (1969): pp. 166–75; J.B.T. McCaughan, ‘Capillarity — a lesson in the epistemology of physics’, *Physics Education* 22 (1987): pp. 100–6.

⁹² J.D. North, ‘Alistair Cameron Crombie’, *History of Science* 34 (1996): pp. 245–8; bibliography in A.C. Crombie, *Science, Optics and Music in Medieval and Early Modern Thought* (London, 1990); originally in A.C. Crombie, ‘Scholastic Logic and the experimental method’, *Actes du Ve Congrès International d’Histoire des Sciences, Lausanne, 1947* (Paris, 1948), pp. 45–50; also on this theme, J. Franklin, ‘Mental furniture from the philosophers’, *Et Cetera* 40 (1983): pp. 177–191; J. Franklin, ‘The genius of the scholastics and the orbit of Aristotle’, in Franklin, *The Science of Conjecture*, pp. 343–9.

⁹³ F.J. Sheed, *The Church and I* (London, 1974), p. 104.

⁹⁴ Examples in R. Gascoigne, *Freedom and Purpose: An Introduction to Christian Ethics* (Sydney, 1993); N. Brown, *The Worth of Persons: A Study in Christian*

have continued to be defenders of the need to base Catholic education on a commitment to intellectual values, though, as Santamaria said, the results have not always been evident in Catholic schools.⁹⁵ Similar motives lie behind the project by Catholics of varying degrees of orthodoxy to develop, or discover, an 'Australian spirituality'.⁹⁶

All these attempts are interesting, and not without their successes. From the scholastic point of view, though, they are like trying to have one's cake after eating the ingredients. Or perhaps more exactly, they are like trying to have Euclid's theorems without the axioms.

In some ways, the demise of scholasticism has been much exaggerated. Survivals of it are everywhere. Casuistry is back, for example, and not just in Catholic circles. It is now called 'applied ethics', and is performed by committees. It will be treated briefly in the last chapter. Distinctively Catholic views on ethics are also visible in the recent debates on such topics as euthanasia, as will also be described in the last chapter. There are other issues on which most Catholics still maintain views which descend from the core doctrines of the old moral philosophy. A properly conducted sociological study of Australians' attitudes to abortion showed that opposition to abortion depended strongly on 'deductive moral reasoning from basic Christian beliefs', and little on such attitudes as obedience to the Pope or ('contrary to received wisdom') a desire to keep women tied to the

Ethics (Manly, 1983); and in *ACR* 64 (1987): pp. 167–81; N. Ford, 'The meaning of intrinsic moral norms for persons', *ACR* 60 (1983): pp. 186–97; J. Hill, 'Natural sanction and philosophical theology', *Sophia* 17 (1978): pp. 27–34; J. Hill, 'Christian moral education', *Journal of Religious Ethics* 9 (1981): pp. 103–17; J. Hill, 'The methodology of *Veritatis splendor*', *ACR* 71 (1994): pp. 145–61; J. Hill, 'Can we talk about ethics anymore?', *Journal of Business Ethics* 14 (1995): pp. 585–92; E. Hepburn, *Of Life and Death: An Australian Guide to Catholic Bioethics* (Melbourne, 1996).

⁹⁵ E. D'Arcy, 'The intellectual apostolate', *ACR* 62 (1985): pp. 349–58. J. Franklin, 'Australian Catholics', *Quadrant* 32 (1/2) (Jan/Feb 1988): pp. 114–6; B. Tobin, 'The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the role of cognition in Christian life', *ACR* 71 (1994): pp. 411–8.

⁹⁶ J. Thornhill, *Making Australia* (Newtown, 1992); J. Thornhill, *Sign and Promise* (London, 1988); Tony Kelly, *A New Imagining: Towards an Australian Spirituality* (Melbourne, 1990); V. Brady, *Caught in the Draught* (Sydney, 1994), esp. ch. 5; E. Stockton, *The Aboriginal Gift: Spirituality for a Nation* (Alexandria, 1995); R. Cameron, *Karingal: A Search for Australian Spirituality* (Homebush, 1995); less orthodox but in the same vein, D.J. Tacey, *Edge of the Sacred* (Melbourne, 1995); D. Tacey, *Reenchantment* (Sydney, 2000); Thomist reaction in T. Rowland, *Culture and the Thomist Tradition after Vatican II* (London, 2003).

kitchen sink.⁹⁷ In the philosophy of religion, there have also been several substantial books by Catholic philosophers who added to rather than subtracted from the scholastic legacy.⁹⁸

Even more surprisingly, just as scholasticism was being consigned by most Catholics to the scrapheap of history, the realist metaphysics at its core was becoming respectable in mainstream philosophy, and nowhere more so than in Australia. The main event in its acceptance was the publication in 1978 of David Armstrong's *Universals and Scientific Realism*, which defends a strongly and explicitly Aristotelian position in the old scholastic debate, the problem of universals.⁹⁹ The story will be described in chapter 12. As a result, the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* has welcomed articles on topics like substances, universals, dispositions and haecceities, previously regarded as the among the most obscure and meaningless items of decadent scholasticism.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ J. Kelley, M.D.R. Evans & B. Headey, 'Moral reasoning and political conflict: the abortion controversy', *British Journal of Sociology* 44 (1993): pp. 589–612; work on the topic from a Catholic orientation in J. Finnis, 'The rights and wrongs of abortion', in M. Cohen *et al.*, eds, *The Rights and Wrongs of Abortion* (Princeton, 1974), pp. 85–113; N. Ford, *When Did I Begin?* (Cambridge, 1988); A. Fisher & J. Buckingham, *Abortion in Australia* (Blackburn, 1985); B.F. Scarlett, 'The moral status of embryos', *Journal of Medical Ethics* 10 (1984): pp. 79–80; P. Drum, 'Hylomorphism and abortion', *Australian Journal of Professional and Applied Ethics* 2 (1) (2000): pp. 71–4; T. Keneally, *Three Cheers for the Paraclete* (Sydney, 1968), pp. 110–3; Les Murray, 'Who's Ignatius, whose Loyola?', *Kunapipi* 1 (2) (1979): pp. 149–54

⁹⁸ P. Forrest, *God Without the Supernatural: A Defense of Scientific Theism* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1996); discussion in M. Wynn, 'In defence of "the supernatural"', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 73 (1999): pp. 477–95; also P. Forrest, *Speculation and Experience: The New Metaphysics* (inaugural lecture, Armidale, 1987); B. Miller, *A Most Unlikely God* (Notre Dame, 1996), especially ch. 9; cf. R.J. Kearney, 'Analogy and inference', *New Scholasticism* 51 (1977): pp. 131–41 earlier B. Miller, *The Range of Intellect* (London, 1961); *From Existence to God* (London, 1992).

⁹⁹ D.M. Armstrong, *Universals and Scientific Realism* (Cambridge, 1978); see esp. vol II p. 75 n. 1; Catholic view in D. Gallery, 'Nominalism and realism', *ACR* 10 (1904): pp. 145–51.

¹⁰⁰ *AJP*, special number on universals 64 (1) (1986); M.M. Tweedale, 'Aristotle's universals', *AJP* 65 (1987): pp. 412–26; B. Ellis & C. Lierse, 'Dispositional essentialism', *AJP* 72 (1994): pp. 27–45; M.C. LaBossiere, 'Substances and substrata', *AJP* 72 (1994): pp. 360–70; J.L. Kvanvig, 'The haecceity theory and perspectival limitation', *AJP* 67 (1989): pp. 295–305, etc; also D.S. Oderberg, 'Form and matter', *Ratio* 11 (1998): pp. 209–13; D. Brown, 'Immanence and individuation: Brentano and the scholastics on knowledge of singulars', *Monist* 83 (2000): pp. 22–46.