Maritain's Philosophy of History as a Retrospective of His Thought

"O Wisdom which reaches with strength from one end of the world to the other and makes extremes one! O promise which makes beauty of these times of misery, and renders us joyful! Though baptized nations, unfaithful to their calling, cut themselves off from the Church, blaspheme the name of Christ on all sides by presenting as a Christian civilization what is nothing but its corpse, the Church still loves those nations. . . . . It is for their welfare that the Church, by using the only culture in which human reason very nearly succeeded, has tried for so long to impress a Divine form on earthly matter, to raise man's life and reason and so to maintain them in their perfection, under the most gentle sway of grace. If European culture comes to the brink of danger, She will save its essentials and will know how to lift up to Christ everything that can be saved in other cultures. She hears, rumbling at the roots of history, an unforeseen world, a world that will undoubtedly persecute Her as much as the ancient world did. . . . All nations are at home in [the Church]. Their Master's arms on the cross are stretched out over all races and all civilizations. It does not bring *the benefits of civilization* to people, but rather, Christ's Blood and supernatural beatitude."—*The Degrees of Knowledge* (1932)

Jacques Maritain's *On the Philosophy of History* (1959) was derived from four lectures Maritain gave at the University of Notre Dame in 1955, which were themselves in response to an essay by Charles Journet that had extrapolated Maritain's philosophy of history from his other work. As a result, the book arguably builds upon and completes much of his work in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, and politics. In the following three discussions I will attempt to summarize some of that earlier work as background for the overview of *On the Philosophy of History*.

I. The Degrees of Knowledge

"Every existing thing has its own nature or essence. But the existential positing of things is not implied in their nature, and amongst them there are encounters which are themselves not natures, the necessity for which is not prescribed in any nature. Existing reality is therefore composed of *nature* and *adventure*. That is why it has a direction in time and by its duration constitutes an (irreversible) *history* – these two elements are demanded for history, for a world of pure natures would not stir in time; there is no history for Platonic archetypes; nor would a world of pure adventure have any direction; there is no history for a thermodynamic equilibrium."—*The Degrees of Knowledge* (1932)

Maritain's epistemology is a form of critical realism in that it claims that the mind can know the nature of things. He rejects a number of differing modern approaches as being varying species of nominalism, that is positions that either deny that there are universals or that we can know the thing in itself. Following Aristotle and Aquinas, Maritain holds that these universals exist within the things themselves, and our mind thinks through to their existence. To understand this better, and the relationship between what we today typically call "philosophy" and "science," Maritain holds that while there is a hierarchy of degrees of knowledge, that ultimately there is a unity of understanding.

The terms "philosophy" and "science" in this discussion can be a bit confusing because traditionally "science" is used of any organized system of enquiry into truth (rather than just an empirical investigation of the natural world), while "philosophy," as the love of wisdom involves any rational investigation of truth. Maritain uses the word science in both senses at points in his discussion, while philosophy is assumed to be this more expansive rational investigation.

Maritain divides knowledge into rational knowledge ad superrational knowledge, though the area of preconscious understanding may function as a third area of understanding. Superrational knowledge involves organized revealed theology and higher mystical experience. Rational knowledge involves 1) knowledge of the sensible order sought through observation; 2) knowledge of the sensible order sought through explanation, which can include the abstraction sought through mathematical representation; and 3) metaphysical knowledge which extrapolates beyond the sensible to the formal realities within and beyond the sensible.

Degree of Knowledge		Area of Involvement
	Superrational Knowledge	
Mystical wisdom	"transcends the mode of concepts and analogy"	Sought via mystical contemplation: a direct experience of God as he is, it is granted as a gift by the Holy Spirit. A knowledge by "connaturality," it experiences by suffering and love what cannot be verbally conceptualized.
Theological wisdom	"the science of revealed mysteries"	Knowledge of the divine that is granted through and by faith (and is therefore beyond what can be obtained from the sensible alone); it is developed in a systematic and rational manner. This includes theology proper.
	Rational Knowledge	
Speculative knowledge/ Metaphysical wisdom	Third degree of abstraction which is beyond the sensible	The realm of metaphysics; it practices reasoning by analogy about quality, substance, goodness, intelligible being, and the divine. It is the regulative of the levels below and provides for a philosophy of nature. Since it reasons upward to the divine, it includes natural theology.
Physico-Mathematics	Second degree of abstraction alongside the first	Focuses upon quantity, number, extension. While based on sensible things, once abstracted, it can be separated out and worked with independently. It makes a science of phenomena possible.
Natural philosophy (p*hysica*)	First degree of abstraction begins here	Seeks to abstract the nature of things from their sensible behavior. [Science (in the larger Aristotelian sense) is concerned with essences of things—what they *are*.]
Experimental science	"in terms of their empirical manifestations"	Knowledge of the sensible order; seeks to formulate laws that describe the behavior of material things—that is, as to *how* they function; it cannot describe the essence or nature of things. It is built upon pre-scientific experience.
Preconscious understanding	"knowledge by inclination"	Undergirds the artistic process, one's own subjectivity, and also prepares for the knowledge of God.

A Neo-Thomist Model of Knowledge and Investigation

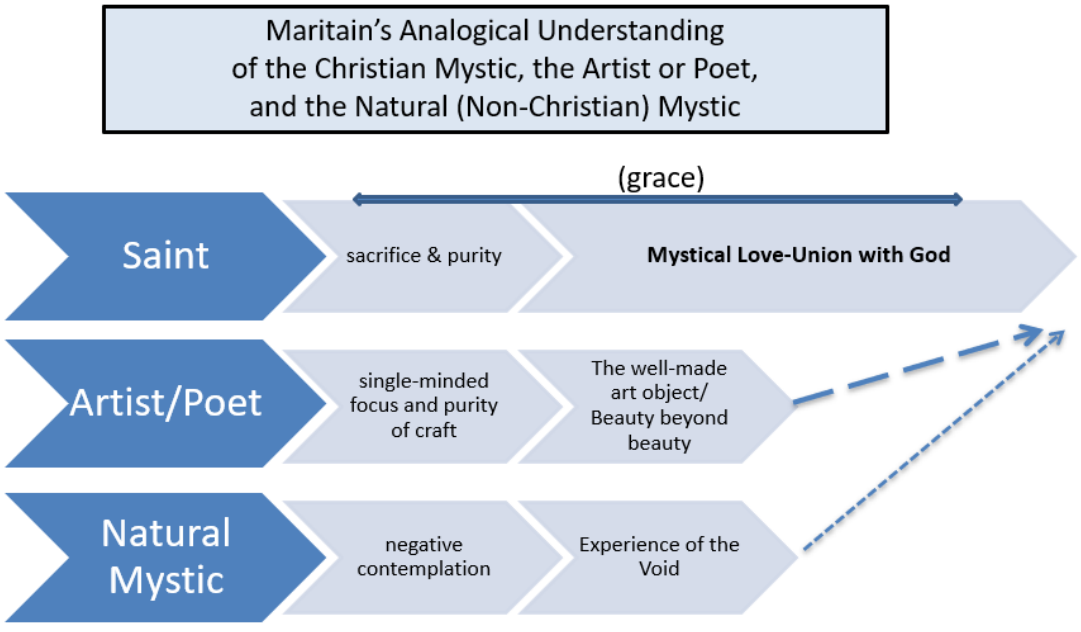
Intellectual
Being
(The Concept) (Intuition)

Seeking the Real	Ascendant Ontological Perception	**THE OBJECT**	Descendent Empirical Resolution	**Physical Operations**

(The Model) (Measurement)
Sense
Verification

One can argue that at the heart of Maritain's model of epistemology is a descending movement that seeks to empirically investigate the physical operations of objects and events and an ascending speculative search for the real essences and universals that are at the heart of things. While the first requires a modeling of the world and depends upon mathematical measurement and description, the second involves rational conceptualization of the essential meaning and nature of things.

Maritain also explored in his career the question of the non-Christian mystic, as well as the relationship between the artistic life and the spiritual life. This considered that what the non-Christian mystic could achieve in terms of a sense of the broad spiritual power of/outside of the universe and what the artist seemed to accomplish in terms of creativity had parallels with true Christin contemplation—in that each invoked preconscious understanding and practiced a connaturality with the some aspect of the truth in a way that transcends either scientific investigation and explanation or metaphysical speculation.



II. Nature and Grace

[Some of this section is borrowed from published essays of mine on this topic.]

Between the 1910s and the 1960s, a theological debate broke out in Roman Catholic circles, which spread into some educated Anglo-Catholic circles as to how best to picture the relationship of nature and grace. One of the deep issues that drove the debate, and would continue to do so well into the 1970s, concerned the best way to describe the "natural" state of human beings, and therefore, their civilizations, including those that were pre- or non-Christian. All sides of the debate shared the conviction that human beings aspire to certain ends and that they choose what they perceive to be means towards those desired ends. This fundamental assumption about human nature and purpose raised important questions, which often took a rather binary shape:

> **Were all humans created by God with a singular end, an innate drive toward the highest good of union with God? Or did they have two ends, simply directed at first toward human happiness and justice with a desire for God coming as a later gift of grace?**

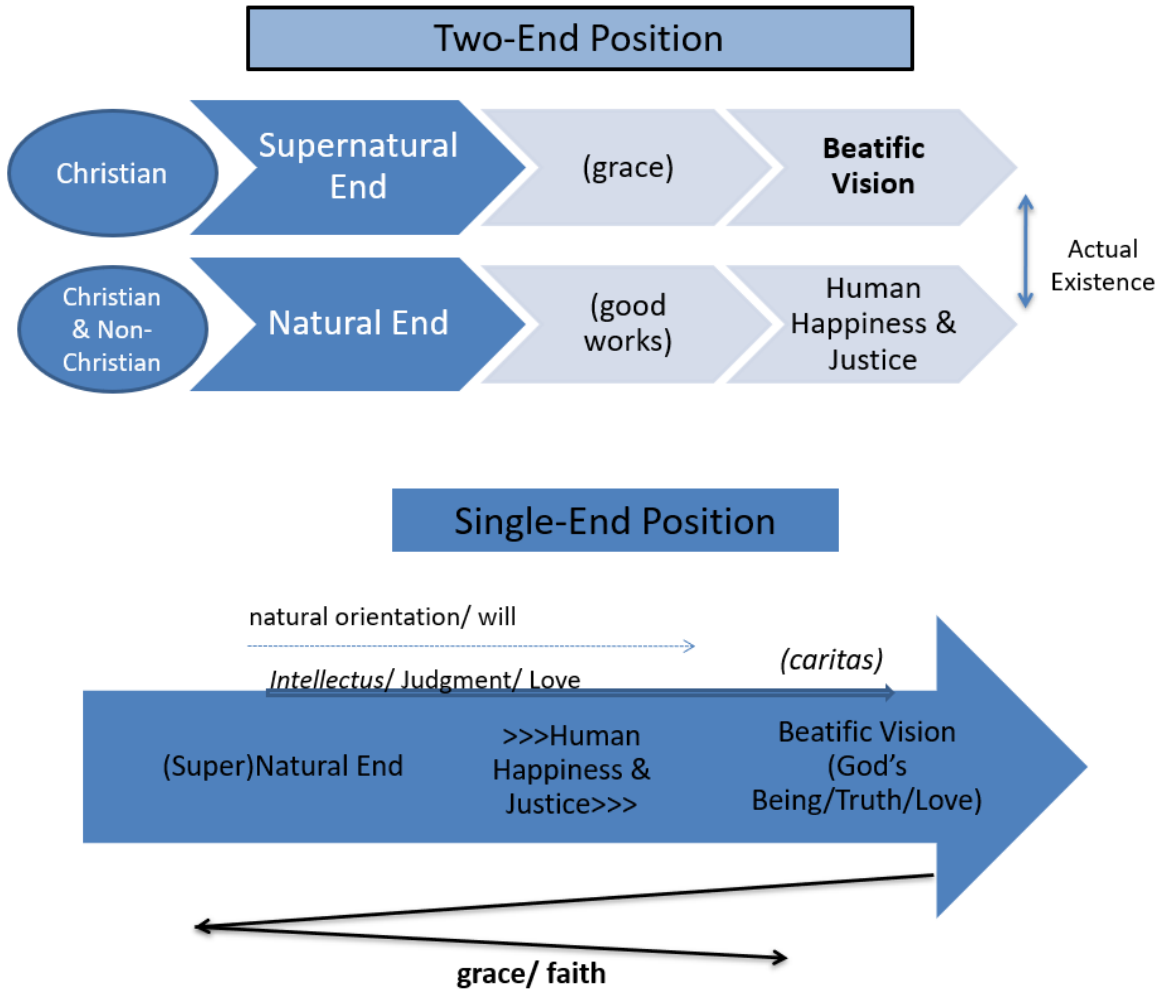
Neo-Scholastics such as Maritain generally admitted that there was no actual state of pure nature. The distinction was hypothetical but important in that it helped to distinguish two potential finalities for human beings—a natural one of human happiness and a supernatural one of the Beatific Vision. Without the former end, neo-Scholastics worried that human nature would be too highly exalted and self-sufficient, for they insisted there can be no natural inclination towards the Beatific Vision; grace must be offered in complete gratuity. And without a purely natural end, there was no easy way to account for the good works of those outside the Church, works which were admirable and good for people and for their cultures, but which nonetheless seemed to have no eternal benefit.

But as historical research showed, neither the Patristic Fathers nor Aquinas ever considered a state of pure nature or two delineable ends for humanity. Instead, humanity's one end had always been to behold God face-to-face. The concept of two ends, their work showed, had been introduced by the 16th and 17th-century commentators of Second Scholasticism. Theologians like Pierre Rousselot held in response that the only true orientation of the human person is to the Beatific Vision. Charity (divine *caritas*), Rousselot insisted, fulfills the orientation of natural self-love. *Intellectus*, as Aquinas understood it, is "sharing in the life of another person." According to Rousselot, the infusion of faith elevates *intellectus* to the supernatural, allowing it to assent to the truths of revelation, and this grasp of truth is itself love. A new love, affected by faith, then, arises in the person in an "apperceptive synthesis" of what one beholds and what one desires; thus, the person's free will is in harmony with the gift of faith.

For Aquinas, "the ultimate end of all creation . . . is beauty, which is intelligibility because it is assimilation to God, the representation of divine perfection by creatures." Those like Rousselot feared that human free will would be violated by grace, wresting the will toward an alien supernatural end. Every human judgment, asserted Joseph Maréchal, is an implicit move towards God's Being, an "ontological affirmation" or a teleological orientation because each partial, intermediate solution in our human questioning leads us onward towards Truth. In sensing the real, we always desire some measure of the divine, a desire native to us but in need of God's grace to truly move towards God.

To those outside the debate, I suspect, Maritain's position in practice does not seem that far removed from those who rejected the doctrine of two ends, and indeed, Maritain throughout his career moved to a mediating position. He, for example, shared with Rousselot and Maréchal a trust in the mind's connaturality (i.e. natural fit or similarity) with the real and with love for the real, as well as with Rousselot a belief that through cultural development the person can become more inclined to the real. They each also shared a hierarchical organization of the ascent of knowledge and the descent of revelation, for Maritain agreed that love is a medium of knowledge. And with Maréchal, he shared a trust that the elements in the hierarchy of knowledge interpenetrate one another; the traffic between nature and grace is constant.

Maritain was, after all, quite willing to admit that "the *actual* natural end of the world is this natural end superelevated" by God's constant free grace at work in the world. Grace neither replaces nature nor ignores its need for change.



Note these two passages from *On the Philosophy of History*:

> "The world, as the entire order of nature, is in actual fact in vital connection with the universe of the kingdom of God. Hence it appears that in actual fact it is ordained, not only to its own natural ends, but also ... to an absolutely supreme end that is supernatural and that is the very end of the

> kingdom of God.... But I would also Insist ... that the natural end of the world, though it is not the absolutely supreme end, is, nevertheless a real end [in the order of nature]: it is not a mere means. In other words, temporal things are not mere means with respect to the attainment of the supernatural end. Of course, they are ordained to it, but not as mere means ordained to an end. I would say that they are Intermediate or *infravalent* ends – they are possessed of an intrinsic merit and goodness in themselves, and they are therefore worthy of attainment in themselves, though they are also means with respect to the supernatural end."
>
> "The natural end of the world . . . is superelevated by its connection with the supernatural end and with the supernatural virtues. And I would insist that, given the actual condition of the world – that is, the fact that the world is not in a state of pure nature but is vitally and organically related to the kingdom of God – the *actual* natural end of the world is this natural end superelevated. . . . . Similarly, the natural end of the world – in its threefold character – is a *relatively* ultimate end, an ultimate end in the order of nature, whereas only the supernatural end is the *absolutely* ultimate end. It seems to me that there is a serious drawback to disregarding this value as end – inferior, infravalent, but still, end – of the natural end or ends of this world."

III. Integral Humanism & Freedom of the Human Person

"Human personality is a great metaphysical mystery. We know that an essential characteristic of a great civilization worthy of the name is the sense of and respect for the dignity of the human person. We know we must be ready to give our lives to defend the rights of the human person and to defend liberty. What values, then, deserving of such sacrifice, are enveloped in the personality of man? . . . To say that man is a person is to say that in the depths of his being he is more a whole than a part and more independent than servile. It is to say that he is a minute fragment of matter that is at the same time a universe, a beggar who communicates with absolute being, mortal flesh whose value is eternal, a bit of straw into which heaven enters. It is this metaphysical mystery that religious thought points to when it says that the person is the image of God."—*Principles of a Political Humanism* (1944)

Maritain was deeply concerned with balancing the needs of the person and the needs of the community. He insisted that a Christian personalism must avoid the excesses of extreme collectivism/ totalitarianism and of extreme individualism/ anarchism. One must begin with a recognition that the ultimate end of each person is in God, but that this ultimate end does not absorb the value and dignity of each person into a singular collective, but orients and grounds that individual purpose and worth, which also serve the larger order of the universe.

Thus, there are two ends—an eternal one and a more limited set of temporal ones. This framework of two ends shapes how we understand human worth and the participation of each human within the temporal good of human community, as well as the possibility of participation in the spiritual community destined for redeemed beatitude. Maritain would insist that the temporal good is not simply a means to the supernatural, final end. How, then, does the greater end remain itself yet not isolated or bifurcated from the temporal goods?

How one ranks the importance of each person's worth and that of the common good has to do with what aspect of it one is focused upon. The individual freedom and good of each person may be ranked higher than any universal order if one considers the eternal order of grace, for the end of beholding the beatific vision transcends all intermediate goods. We were made ultimately for God. The common good is found first in God, who is the True and the Good. The end of being one with God is in the order of love, and friendship is an expression of this community of love

oriented together towards God. Yet the individual end of beholding the divine beauty is what provides the basis for this common good. Likewise, this beatific end is found in the speculative (i.e. contemplative) rather than the practical (i.e. active) order. This contemplative order is higher and more central to the path to beatitude. Yet this higher order also enlivens the common good of society.

So we must also tease out, stressed Maritain, the difference between the material aspects of our existence and the higher, more spiritual ones:

- Human **individuality** is concerned with the pragmatic aspects of material existence, including some degree of sociality.
- Human **personality** reveals the higher, spiritual end of human dignity and *intellectus*, and this includes friendship and divine community.

Human beings are a body-soul continuum and not a two-part dualism. As material individuals, humans are part of an "immense web of cosmic, ethnical, historical forces and influences—and bound by their laws," while spiritual persons are subjects of love, "thanks to the operations of the intellect and freedom, capable of super-existing by way of knowledge and of love."

- **Personality** is interior and dialogical. Yet the personal and individual aspects of human beings are a holistic composite and not bifurcations existing at odds with one another.
- The **individual**, material aspect is not intrinsically evil, and only becomes so when it acts in isolation as an ego or idol. Human education should seek to move away from this lamentable direction.

So how then do we understand and achieve the common good? **We live as persons in society, and cannot reach our full potential without the social goods that are found in community.** The common good, which is society's end is only achieved by individuals in their intrinsic goods coming together. The two goods—that of society and that of persons *interpenetrate*, each serving the other. Society cannot be allowed to subsume the person, nor the reverse. The common good is found in most of the elements of socio-political, economic, and cultural life and heritage, and its end is the good life for all its people and not for the aggrandizement of a few. The truly just society has never been realized in the course of history, but its ideal end remains.

The interpenetrating good of society can be compared (albeit weakly) to the divine life of the Trinity, the joy of each member is fulfilled in the good of the other two. The common good of the whole must flowback to the personal good of each of its members.

Thus, the eternal end of human beings also frames these more temporal ends. The individual, eternal worth of each soul surpasses all the temporal value of human societies. Thus, the common good of societies is subordinated to the eternal end of each soul. Any society that claims itself as the supreme good is a tyrant and an idol. Any individual that sacrifices (even dies) for the good of the city does so with the orders of justice and love as its own soul's ends. The person's engagement in the body politic is not at the expense of his whole personhood. We do not owe our whole selves to the state.

Thus, the eternal end is still greater and more important than any temporal one. **While the material individual may be less than the collective society, the spiritual person transcends the collective, and it is upon this truth that fundamental human rights are based.** Society

must support the spiritual progress of each person, which includes progress and freedom. Our collective membership begins with the family, which is more fundamental than the state, and ends in the eternal society and life of the Church, which is at the same time in tension with human societies. In the same way, the heavenly good of the Eternal City fulfills the individual good of all redeemed persons. Thus, Christians as members of the Kingdom must live at a higher level of sanctity than the surrounding profane society, even while remaining active participants in it.

Overview

Part I (The Philosophy of History in General)

Is any Philosophy of History possible?

Sec. 1—Augustine's *City of God* provides an early example of a Christian approach that combines a theology of history with a philosophy of history. It models that sequences in history can be intelligible. There is a potential objection: history is not a science of universals but of particular persons and events. To this, Maritain replies that philosophy of history does not have historical particulars as its object but a broader general conceptualization of their nature.

Sec. 2—Yet still others might object: can history offer any truth or certitude? Historical truth, after all, is never finished. Still, Maritain would counter, the historian accomplishes his (or her) task best when he has a cultural richness of experience. Here is where a true wisdom is possible.

Sec. 3—The features of an historical period can be abstracted from the evidence. Epistemic intuition and philosophical analysis and reflection work together to provide the content of philosophy of history.

Sec. 4—The return to the singular event in a philosophy of history is via the application of philosophical knowledge to the cause of events. Philosophy of history arises from experience which moves through philosophy and history to grasp the singular event's general meaning. Objection: what about the difficulty of isolating a single event in order to establish such meaning? Maritain would stress that because philosophy of history applies philosophy to the movement of human freedom, it is a kind of moral philosophy and, thus, assists human decision-making.

The Hegelian delusion

Sec. 5—While Hegel distorted much, his basic intuition that history is about the perpetual change of human life is correct. The development of historical ideas is one aspect of this consciousness within time. Hegel was himself guided more by intuition and experience than he was willing to admit, and he was for all purposes a modern gnostic who tried to gobble up all theological insights into his thought world.

Sec. 6—Marx's material dialectic also has its origins in the dialectical idealism of Hegel's system.

Sec. 7—Hegel's system ultimately denies freedom to human actions, as does Marx's. There is, however, an explanation for human change that can still account for a measure of predictability

yet without denying human freedom. It is important to keep human freedom in view if we are to recognize these more spiritual components of human action.

Spurious and genuine Philosophy of History

Sec. 8—Practicing historians tend to distrust philosophies of history as oversimplified, a priori, and also overly universal and too deterministic in their explanations.

Sec. 9—A genuine philosophy of history, Maritain tells us, is not a gnostic theory that seeks to uncover the mechanisms of existence but a meditation upon a mystery that is both dependent upon that which is supra-intelligible (i.e. divinely known) and infra-intelligible (i.e. it arises from matter, contingency, and the privation which evil brings). History cannot be explained or predicted upon supposed laws, yet it can be characterized and interpreted by some general axioms.

Sec. 10—Free will is an essential aspect of human nature and action. There is, moreover, a "double contingency" of divine and human freedom which is necessary to acknowledge if we are to understand history's moral and existential meaning:

Without a belief in human free will,	we end up with an inability either . . .	to acknowledge human liberty within history
		or to recognize human patterns of action as undetermined.
Without a belief in divine free action,		to see history as having any divine purpose
		or to avoid reducing that purpose to either an idealist or material set of impersonal forces.

Sec. 11—The structure of time is a singular sequence of unique and unrepeatable events; and it has a meaning and direction; therefore, periodization is possible. The temptation to despair before history is a common one, as evidenced by myths of cyclic return, yet the Christian conclusion that time is linear is one that the modern world is still dependent upon.

Philosophy of History and Moral Philosophy adequately taken

Sec. 12—There is a resulting order of grace and a theology of history concerned with salvation history and the Church. There is an order of nature and a philosophy of history concerned with the history of civilizations. Christian moral philosophy is concerned with human action in time, and the wisdom of history, which is a concern of the theology of history, is also one of moral philosophy. The existential condition of humanity is one the moral philosopher must be concerned with.

<u>Questions for Consideration</u>

- Is Maritain right to argue that philosophy of history, as related to moral philosophy, can draw out the moral meanings to historical events?
- Would periodization be possible without a sense of historical direction?
- Why does the Christian faith stress a transcendent divine purpose for history as opposed to a set of immanent laws for it?

Part II (Axiomatic Formulas or Functional Laws)

The law of two-fold contrasting progress

Sec. 1—Both good and evil develop as two immanent movements in history which are intertwined—the one drawing towards eternal salvation, the other towards demonic nihilism. Knowledge of natural law is obscured by evil, which God through divine revelation (culminating in Christ) opposes.

Sec. 2—A law, then, of degradation and revitalization is the energy of history, with each operating at the same time. Maritain explores two historical examples: 1) the mixed nature of "primitive man" and 2) the positives and negatives of the modern world (ca. 18th century to 1955). All this suggests that the Christian political mission is not to bring in a utopian order but to work towards the good in various cultural actions and productions.

Sec. 3—"The law of the parasitical part" suggests that any good development is accompanied by corrupting aspects. For example, the mathematical knowledge of nature was accompanied by mechanistic philosophy, just as a greater separation of natural science from philosophy was bought with a Kantian denial of critical realism. The gains in psychology have also been corrupted by Freudian views of life.

The ambivalence of history

Sec. 4—A consequence of this double law is that of pessimistic and optimistic views of history. History is always ambivalent.

Sec. 5—But this law is not Manichean. God is sovereign, so even the devil's treacherous actions are finally used by God for his just and good final end. The enemies of God are still used by God despite their rebellious intentions.

> [Maritain is referring to Habakkuk 3:5. "Plague went before him, and pestilence followed his feet." The note which cites 8,5 is probably a typo. The Latin Vulgate appears to be paraphrasing the Greek Septuagint translation of the passage, which refers to a being with winged shoes (ala' a god) going before God instead of pestilence and plague.]

Sec. 6—This double movement can lead to differing analyses, depending upon the approach, e.g. the nature of schism:

Speculative (philosophical) theology	Seeks to refute and explain schism by seeing its nature and its ultimate place even in truth.
Theology of history	Recognizes that those in schismatic communities can be considered dissident instead of truly heretical.
Philosophy of history	Examines how both long-term negative and positive outcomes can arises from schismatic movements.

Thus, the Christian answer to the Marxist (and Hegelian) trust in history is to trust in God. It is not temporal success that finally lasts but faithful presence.

The law of the historical fructifications of good and evil

Sec. 7—The long-term development in history of good and evil is to be judged differently than its immediate results. While natural conditions can impact the health of societies, in general one can say that justice leads to societal flourishing, while injustice degrades it.

Sec. 8—There is a vital unity in humanity (which is *not* the same as the faithful community of God), and there are events which have wide-spread, even global impact. Yet historical events can eventually exhaust themselves and no longer be of importance to any future development.

Sec. 9—[This section reveals much about Maritain's own political ideals in the 1940s and 50s.] He argues that the possibility of a Christian revolution in the early twentieth century has passed, so now Christians should now be working in the non-Communist world to advance justice.

The law of prise de conscience

Sec. 10— *Prise de conscience* suggests both awareness and consciousness of something's consequences. Maritain here offers in brief a kind of philosophy of the history of philosophy or of ideas—The ideas that explain various social changes sometimes follow behind them.

The law of the hierarchy of means

Sec. 11—"The law of *superiority of humble temporal means*" argues that the less materialistic the action, the more long-term are its spiritual consequences. Thus, the contemplative is the least effective in temporal terms, but has the broadest spiritual power.

Sec. 12—"The law of the *superiority of spiritual means of temporal activity and welfare over carnal means of temporal activity and welfare*": Martian cites the power of the truly sacrificial, and he explores an extended example of Gandhi, as well as two shorter Christian ones—Danilo Dolci in Sicily and MLK in Montgomery.

<u>Questions for Consideration</u>

- Can Maritain's observations about the development of good and evil be considered historical laws?
- Can you think of examples of the law of *prise de conscience*?
- Is Maritain correct that humble sacrifice has longer and broader significance?

Part III (Typological Formulas or Functional Laws)

Sec. 1—Maritain says that there are vectorial patterns in history that by their change hold together a historical relationship, such as the shift from a magical (imagination-dominate) to a rational (intellect-dominated) consciousness.

The theological notion of the various "states" of human nature

Sec. 2—The theological categories of "pure nature," "fallen nature," and "redeemed nature" do not provide a chronological pattern because pure nature is a hypothetical description of what

humanity might have been without a fall, while fallen and redeemed man are historically continuous categories, looking toward or in gratitude for Christ's incarnation. The fall of humanity cannot be proven by history, for it is a revealed truth, yet the human state can be described philosophically as "wounded." Moral philosophers mistakenly treat human anthropology as more like a pure state, but humans are historically worse off than the pure state (because of sin) and yet also better (because of grace and the impact of revelation upon culture).

The theological notion of the various "states" in the historical development of mankind

Sec. 3—A Christian theology of history holds to three states in history: 1) the natural state of the conscience before the Torah, 2) the state of the Torah which we learn that we cannot perfectly fulfill; and 3) the more internal state of pure motivations which the Gospel teaches.

The destiny of the Jewish people

Sec. 4—Maritain explores Romans 9-11 and the promise that Israel will be (re)integrated with the Kingdom of God in a future age, an expectation he says that medieval Christendom held.

Sec. 5—In this temporal world now, the Church has the supratemporal end of calling the world to salvation, while Israel has the temporal calling of being leaven in the world. This leaves open a list of current political issues as to Israel's place after the Holocaust and with the then new State of Israel.

The false Hegelian and Comtian laws of various states or stages

Sec. 6—He makes a critique of the three-stage systems of Hegel and Comte. Both falsely claim that religion and metaphysics are being superseded in the world.

> Hegel—abstract right (Roman Empire); morality of conscience (the Enlightenment); social morality (the German Protestant state)
>
> Comte—theological (supernatural beings); metaphysical (abstract forces); positivist (scientific laws and relations)

The law of the passage from the "magical" to the "rational" regime or state in the history of human culture

Sec. 7—[Vector 1] is a change in human consciousness. The magical was (and is) still a rational state which can be self-aware and involves patterning. [This is incidentally, Maritain participating in a larger twentieth-century debate about the meaning of myth.]

Sec. 8—This claim obligates Maritain to answer those like Comte and Bergson who claim that religion, metaphysics, and even poetry are vestigial states surviving from the magical. Bergson has a more positive view that the metaphysical and religious do point to the search for truth. Maritain responds that the growing differentiation of philosophy, religion, and science is because they grew up together with magic. Each still has a legitimate role in human knowing. Religion, too, underwent historical development in terms of mythological rationalization, metaphysical sophistication, and systematic revelation.

The law of the progress of moral conscience

Sec. 9—[Vector 2] means a growth in human understanding of the natural law, not progress in human obedience to it. He gives a number of examples including changes in views of slavery, the treatment of prisoners of war, child labor, and so on.

Sec. 10—Maritain lists off five "*fundamental dynamic schemes*" that all cultures share in terms of natural law: 1) taking a human life is different than taking an animal life; 2) the family group has a fixed pattern; 3) sexual intercourse has certain approved limits; 4) humans look to the Invisible; 5) social life requires some fixed regulations. Maritain also points out that moral philosophy, because it is dependent for study upon the history of moral experience, is a reflective form of knowledge.

The law of the passage from "sacral" to "secular" or "lay" civilizations

Sec. 11—[Vector 3] is concerned specifically with the move from a sacral Christian republic united by faith and fortitude to a secular Christian democracy centered on the unity of the human person. This raises a number of conundrums about Indian civilization, Muslim civilization, the State of Israel, and even how best to describe ancient Greek civilization (as hieropolitical).

The law of the political and social coming of age of the people

Sec. 12—[Vector 4] tries to argue that the democratic process is the natural future of peoples, owing in part to the spread of the Gospel.

<u>Questions for Consideration</u>

- How do Maritain's views of nature and grace, the degrees of knowledge, and of the Church and State shape his views in Part III?
- How does Maritain's anthropology shape his philosophy here?
- Do you find Maritain's four vectors convincing? Why and/or why not?

Part IV (God and History: God and the Mystery of the World)

God and history

Sec. 1—Maritain summarizes his view of human freedom and God's freedom. God is not the author of evil but has provided for human freedom and thus allowed us to violate the good. He does this with a greater good in view. God's eternal design is outside of time and is made with human actions in mind, for only God can overcome our numerous destructions with a greater super-abundance of being.

The world and its natural ends

Sec. 2—The world is all that is not God, and more specifically, the human and moral world is that of the imago dei of God (as human rational and free agents). The end of the natural human world is three-fold: 1) our mastery of nature; 2) our self-realization of numerous creative capacities; and 3) a manifestation of these in the material world.

Christ's mystical body

Sec. 3—The supernatural end of humanity is the mystical Body of Christ, which includes the visible Church, those who are invisibly part of it; and those who may yet be. Our final end is theosis, and those the actual natural end is to be superelevated by the supernatural end.

The mystery of the world

Sec. 4—The mystery of the world is the great drama in which Christ is concerned with both the natural and supernatural ends. In the New Testament, world refers to both the system antagonistic to God and the redeemed and reconciled community he loves.

Sec. 5—The world cannot be neutral; it is either advancing towards or away from that redemption. The Mystical Church is finally beyond history, and the world's inferno of corruptions awaits being finally freed beyond history. For now, no human evil at least is completely evil in terms of cultural shape and influence.

The good of the soul and the good of the world

Sec. 6—The final end of humanity is *caritas*, as seen in the vision of the pure and spotless Church. There can be good acts by sinners which do good in this world but that do not help towards eternal life.

Sec. 7—Maritain examines in some detail the good done in civilizations before knowledge of the Gospel. The Christian world includes all parts of human history where the knowledge of the Gospel has impacted society. He posits a fairy wide possibility for eternal salvation: only those who explicitly choose Hell over God are lost.

Thy Kingdom come

Sec. 8—He argues that there are three mistaken views of the Kingdom of God and the world:

Anthropocratic	That humanity by reason and technology can bring in the Kingdom
Satanocratic	That no progress is possible: the world is abandoned to Satan
Theocratic	That this socio-political historical order will be made the Kingdom

Instead, Christians are to work for a more just social order, even while remembering that the eternal salvation of souls is a higher goal.

Sec. 9—The implications of the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," include looking forward to the final renewed state after history, as well as temporary expressions of it in this world. Christendom is not equal to the Church or Christianity, yet it is a worthy temporal goal to seek to build a new and better Christian civilization since this makes it easier to live out the requirements of the Gospel. Sometimes this even happens when non-Christians (or non-Catholics) advance Christian concerns. The Christian approach to history looks beyond history to its final end.

Questions for Consideration

- Is Maritain's larger view of salvation for humanity necessary for his approach to history here?
- How does Maritain's two-end view of nature and grace shape his meta-historical reasoning here? Is he functionally any different than a single-end view?
- How does he seek to hold in tension various aspects of the world within scripture?
- Does the problem of evil shape our view of the problem of history?

Part V

Philosophy and History

Sec. 1—Somewhere between moral philosophy at its most abstract and factual history in its most particular is the flexible space in which philosophy of history draws upon particulars and general history gestures towards larger meanings. The great classical historians are deeply humanistic and thus provide a wisdom that draws on both. The details of factual history are important as is the impulse toward some philosophical understanding. The latter is actually a practical undertaking, while the practice of historical narrative is speculative in its own sense.

Philosophy of History and supra-historical data

Sec. 2—Maritain admits that he did not undertake the larger comparative study of the particulars of civilizations.

Sec. 3—Toynbee's metahistory, while far more honest than Spengler's, is still somewhat disappointing. Toynbee axiomatic formulas mostly seem like common-sense. His work is ambitious, but without any appeal to a theology of history, it lacks necessary resources. Dawson's critique of Toynbee draws attention to Toynbee's mid-career shift to a view of history in which humanity is drawing to a unification of world religions, a view both Dawson and Maritain reject.

Questions for Consideration

- How would you compare Maritain's view of the philosophy of history to that of Dawson's or others covered in the handouts?
- What would you say is the final relationship between his theology of history and his philosophy of history?