

practice is merely supposed to be a part of the spy “game.” Overall, Cole’s treatment of the object of an act is too elastic. These critiques do not prevent Cole’s book from being a major contribution to the difficult and pressing task of establishing a just war ethics of espionage.

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*A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics.* By Peter Redpath. St. Louis MO: Enroute Books & Media, 2015. Pp. viii + 309. \$19.99 paper.

On one occasion during my stint in the U.S. Navy, we received a radio message from the leader of the task force ordering our ship to make a 180 degree turn and proceed in the new direction at “flank” speed (approximately 32 mph) until otherwise ordered. We were later shocked to find out that the radio message had been misunderstood by the junior officer who received it and that consequently we had been racing in the wrong direction for a number of hours. That was bad enough. But imagine how bad it is to have an entire civilization traveling in the wrong direction for over a thousand years! In *A Not-So-Elementary Christian Metaphysics* Peter Redpath argues that since the late portion of the medieval period we have been following misleading metaphysical road signs in the mistaken belief that we were walking down the true paths of Western Culture, or else confused about our direction because of a skepticism as to which metaphysical road signs we ought to follow.

Redpath wants us to appreciate the “devastating” consequences of following the faulty direction given by the West’s metaphysical compass. As he writes in his Introduction, “Anyone familiar with Western intellectual history knows (1) that metaphysical principles found civilizations and that, based upon these principles, civilizations generate cultures of different kinds; and (2) that once cultures lose their conviction about the truth of their founding metaphysical principles, they decay from within. Hence, the existence of strong metaphysical convictions generates civilizations, and skepticism and doubt about them kill civilizations.” No less a defender of the importance of metaphysical principles for civilization than R. G. Collingwood in *An Essay on Metaphysics* would enthusiastically affirm Redpath’s words here. Unfortunately, Collingwood himself contributes to the disorientation by treating Aristotle’s doctrine of being as referring to a mere *concept* rather than to a *reality*, thereby embracing a view that Redpath cites as a primary example of a misleading metaphysical road sign.

The chief goal of the first six chapters of Redpath’s book is to show “the nature and Western history of philosophy and science from the ancient Greeks up to St. Thomas.” He sees this as a necessary step in understanding what caused the separation between wisdom and science. For Redpath, this separation is a root cause of the separation that the West makes between wisdom, philosophy, and science. Its genesis was the effort by early medieval Jewish and Christian thinkers “to separate wisdom from philosophy and to reduce the whole of wisdom to revealed theology.” The path to this separation was cleared by the failure of the thinkers in the Christian middle ages to grasp the nature of philosophy as entertained by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus and instead to confuse it with the liberal arts and revealed theology. This view held sway in the middle ages until its correction by St. Thomas in the thirteenth century.

Throughout the book Redpath seeks to retrieve what the ancient Greeks and St. Thomas took to be the nature of philosophy as a science. In the seventh chapter he undertakes, first, to show how, after St. Thomas’s death, philosophy began its downward spiral into an in-

creasing depersonalization accompanied by a reduction of philosophy to systematic logic wherein Western intellectuals more and more sought to dismantle the unity of philosophy, science, and wisdom. The second task of this chapter is to complete the re-integration of wisdom, science, and philosophy along the lines of the Thomistic synthesis discussed in the earlier chapters.

With the exception of Aristotle and Plotinus, ancient Greek thinkers lost sight of what philosophy mainly is. Aquinas recovered the crucial insight when he focused on the cultivation of "a philosophical habit involving the study of the problem of the one and the many." He achieved this by his creative synthesis of what had become a misbegotten philosophy swimming in a stew of the liberal arts and theology, seasoned with a dedication to the principle of faith seeking understanding, commonly through the practice of the trivium.

When later medieval thinkers squandered their philosophical inheritance, argues Redpath, it set the stage for Descartes to reduce truth, science, philosophy, and wisdom to an exercise of will-power, for Jean-Jacques Rousseau to shrink metaphysics to a utopian-socialist hermeneutic for interpreting history, and for subsequent thinkers to identify all science with mathematical physics.

Redpath argues that the "disembodied reason" defended by Descartes as the essence of a human being, Rousseau's conception of human reason as "depersonalized" and "collectivist," and the "anti-contemplative reductionism" of modern and contemporary "science falsely so-called" are necessary conditions for the "murderous depersonalization promoted by modern utopianism and by scientific socialism like Nazism, Fascism, and Marxism." How so? Redpath answers that Descartes, Rousseau, et al., entertained a notion of human reason that belied reality, thereby leaving their Enlightenment socialist progeny with no way of properly understanding human nature, individual human relationships, loving acts, or contemplative, moral or political beings. For these Enlightenment thinkers, nothing made sense if it could not be expressed in terms of mathematically-measurable data or mechanistically- or socialistically-controlled events.

A proper appreciation of Redpath's achievement requires us to understand that the supposed metaphysical principles that support the dominant contemporary Western conception of science are not really philosophical but merely "sophistical principles of human nature, conscience, and natural law; chiefly ideological, propagandistic, principles derived from Rousseau's sophistic, utopian dream of human nature, science, and happiness."

This latest of Redpath's books is an important and timely contribution to the conversation on the nature and direction of Western civilization. Consider, for example, his discussion of the following topics.

(1) Philosophy, and ultimately its highest branch, metaphysics, alone may lay claim to the term "science." Redpath observes that such influential major figures in the ancient world as Aristotle saw that the arts and sciences all presuppose metaphysical principles and that it is impossible without those principles to explain not only the coalescence of arts and sciences so as to produce a common culture or civilization but also how any art or science can exist at all. These principles are not based on hypothesis or conclusions derived from other sciences but from principles known to be true in themselves. Once one knows the meaning of their terms, it is clear that the statements that express these principles are necessarily true.

Redpath commits himself to showing, before the book ends, the truth of that claim. As a preliminary collateral proof, he points to the West's failure to grasp the nature of metaphysics as the cause of the emaciation of philosophy departments at most colleges and universities

and the attempt to replace metaphysics by the social sciences as the queen of the sciences. For Redpath, they are neither social nor scientific.

(2) Philosophy as the true science is more than an organization of known things. It is a *habit* [*habitus*] of intellect that affirms theism, the immortality of the human soul, other moral and intellectual habits [*habitus*], and the essential connection between science and wisdom. This meaning of “philosophy” as “science” is clearly the product of Christian philosophy, notably that of Thomas Aquinas. The integrity of intellect and morality allows the philosopher who is a Christian to see reality in a light importantly different from that of a pagan vision. But, as Redpath observes, Descartes severed philosophy from this tradition by offering the West a philosophy allegedly independent of the theological habit [*habitus*].

(3) The primary subject of philosophy is the one and the many. Redpath writes: “Strictly speaking, for Aristotle, a universal (*katholou*) is a kind of whole. As an object of science Aristotle grounds our knowledge of universals in individual, sensible beings. While these things are changeable, composite, and contingent in nature, they contain an unchanging, permanent, principle, a one or unitary whole (a form) *that universally and necessarily relates* to all individual things that contain it. As such, an individual, contingent, sensible thing contains a necessity of the appropriate kind so as to act as the object of scientific knowledge, or subject of a science.”

(4) Thus, among the mistakes that Redpath identifies in the modern understanding of philosophy, science, and wisdom is the assumption that the search for universals is a search for logical universals when instead what philosophy, science, and wisdom seek are *ontological* universals that can only be derived from sensible being.

(5) This is because the proper object of the intellect is the essence of sensible things. This means that all human knowledge begins with the senses (especially sight, hearing, and touch). Thus, mind is not the measure of things but rather things are the measure of mind. When Aristotle said that philosophy begins in wonder, the wonder to which he referred was of sensible things, not the logic of *modus ponens*.

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*The Intolerable God: Kant's Theological Journey.* By Christopher J. Insole. Grand Rapids MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2016. Pp. 176. \$30.00 paper.

Even for a specialist the texts of Kant are difficult. For the non-specialist, they are forbidding. But no school of contemporary theology regards itself as academically respectable without somehow taking his thought into account. One may well disagree with Kant, but the challenges that he has laid down cannot be simply ignored. Christopher J. Insole's new volume concentrates on the parts of Kant's system that are most relevant for those interested in religion. He does wonderful service in making clear the meaning of some of those forbidding texts, their significance for theologians, and the reasoning that Kant used to defend his points.

Besides offering access to the intricacies of Kant's thought by giving relatively jargon-free explanations, Insole assists our comprehension of the subject by his focus on Kant's lifelong concern with God, freedom, and happiness. He chose these themes as likely to have special interest to theologians. In contrast to those accounts of Kant that treat his pre-critical work as rather dull and generally unimportant, Insole finds that many of the themes from