

Le Nouvel Esprit:
A Video Series on the Theology of
the Body

TOB 40, General Audience of Sept. 17, 1980

The Meaning of Desire

- Concupiscent desire in Matt. 5:27-28 is interior within the heart of man
 - This desire is a detachment from the spousal meaning of the body and places the individual in conflict with the dignity of the body and conscience
- Psychological meaning of desire: “an intense orientation toward the object caused by its characteristic value”, TOB 40.1, (p. 286-287)
 - The value involved here is the sexual value of the body
- Biblical meaning: emphasizes the ethical, that there is a value at stake
- JPII’s definition of concupiscent desire: “the deception of the human heart with regard to the *perennial call* of man and woman to communion through reciprocal gift”, TOB 40.1, (p. 287)
 - This perennial call is mediated by the body and is *not* concupiscent deire

Eternal Feminine and Masculine

- At the historical level, the eternal feminine and eternal masculine seek freedom from concupiscence and seeks affirmation at the level proper to personhood
- What is this eternal feminine and eternal masculine?
 - General concept: represents pure femininity or masculinity
 - Psychological solution: a Jungian archetype
 - JPII uses the concept of archetype in TOB 20 and TOB 21 when describing the fact that Adam and Eve *knew* each other through the conjugal act, that this knowledge was an archetype
 - In TOB 21 we examine briefly the meaning of Carl Jung's notion of archetype
 - Platonic solution: a Platonic form
 - Platonic form: pure essence of a thing existing outside space and time in the mind of God
 - Augustinian and Thomistic interpretation of Platonic forms
 - JPII talks about the essence of masculinity and the essence of femininity in TOB 17 (Cf. TOB 21)
 - This requires interpreting the essence of masculinity and femininity as Platonic forms
 - This is a phenomenological interpretation consistent with the style of philosophizing found in Max Scheler, Dietrich von Hildebrand, and others
 - Edith Stein spoke of a essence of masculinity and an essence of femininity as two species of humanity

Desire and Attraction

- Two distinctions
 - 1) The distinction between the value of the body in its masculinity or femininity and the value of the person
 - 2) The distinction between desire and attraction, both begin with the value-perception of the body in its masculinity or femininity

Attraction	Desire
Frees the heart and mind for communion	Closes the heart and mind towards communion
The value of the body is properly integrated within the context of the value of the person	Only considers the value of the body, excluding the value of the person
Preserves the subjectivity of the other	Reduction of the other to an object
Opens man to the spousal meaning of the body	Cancels the spousal meaning of the body

Concluding Remarks

- Looking to desire
 - An interior cognitive act of reduction
 - The other ceases to be an object of attraction and becomes only an object of concupiscence, an object to be used
- Vocabulary
 - Axiology, “the study of the nature of value and valuation, and of the kinds of things that are valuable”, Oxford Dictionary
 - Intentional, intentionality, see our video for TOB 25 towards the end of the video
 - Appetite, “it indicates everything that manifests itself in the subject as “aspiration” and as such it is always orientated toward an end, that is, toward an object known under the aspect of value”, TOB 40:5, (p. 289)

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