

infertile spouses who desperately want a child but do not use such procedures as IVF. The will of those using IVF is portrayed as radically different, indeed, as evil. It is because of their will being evil that the act is evil; Rhonheimer states that the acts of those who intend to have a child (rather than who accept a child) have as their “sole significance” the “fulfillment of the desire.”

While I believe that Rhonheimer may be correct about the quality of the intention of some of those who have recourse to IVF, I think many who use IVF might have a full understanding that a child is a gift but are ignorant about the fact that IVF is intrinsically incompatible with treating a child as a gift. Thus, again, I think it is precisely what they do that makes IVF wrong. If they did something like hang an avocado from a tree to help produce a baby, we would not call the hanging of an avocado from a tree an evil act (though the agents may be guided by blameworthy selfishness as well as by ignorance). It is the attempt to unite a sperm with an egg in a petri dish that is intrinsically wrong, precisely, I think, because a man’s sperm has as its

natural telos the uniting with his wife’s ovum during an act of sexual intercourse. It is God’s design that babies come to be only through a marital act and IVF is not a marital act. Now, Rhonheimer makes statements that seem compatible with what I have just asserted; several times he speaks of the rightness of the “natural act of generation” over that of technology (166) and of “natural processes that unfold through conjugal intercourse” (167). But also he makes statements that seem to conflict with what I have just asserted, in his general antipathy to arguments that employ reference to the biological working and purposes of the sexual act.

In the end I suspect Thomistic scholars who study Rhonheimer’s work will be very frustrated (as I was); they will be challenged to identify precisely what he means by “nature” and how well his arguments correspond to arguments used by the magisterium and John Paul II. I hope the above provides a helpful beginning to that endeavour.

JANET E. SMITH

Sacred Heart Major Seminary

PERSON AND PSYCHE. By Kenneth L. Schmitz. Arlington, VA: The Institute for the Psychological Sciences Press, 2009. Pp. 92. Paper \$19.95, ISBN: 978-09773103-7-1.

In this short book Thomistic anthropology meets contemporary psychotherapy under the guidance of Trinity College fellow and University of Toronto philosophy professor emeritus, Kenneth Schmitz. In the first three chapters Schmitz concisely sketches an account of human persons as relationally self-conscious libertarian free agents whose happiness consists in the communal

pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty present in all beings. The encounter with contemporary psychotherapy reveals the fundamental importance that non-conscious processes have in shaping human emotional well-being, which according to Schmitz, confirms the hylomorphic view that human persons are essentially animals, over the dualistic view that persons are essentially

disembodied minds. The prescriptions for healthy human living offered by positive psychology and attachment theory corroborate Aristotle's account of moral virtue as excellences of embodied self-directing agents pursuing truth, goodness, and beauty. While such findings are supported by empirical cross-cultural psychological studies, the physical reductionist assumptions embraced by all the authors Schmitz considers are simply assumed. Throughout the book Schmitz argues that such assumptions imply the impossibility of humans genuinely knowing these very accounts and freely choosing the new ways of behaving these accounts offer.

Schmitz ignores philosophical defenses of naturalism as well as critiques ofhylomorphism. He simply presents an account of reality, human nature, and human capabilities with arguments familiar to philosophers in the Thomistic tradition. Schmitz aims to reveal how this tradition can ground psychotherapy's goals and critique its reductionist assumptions. Since he provides no background or justification for the neuroscientists and psychologists he considers, his audience seems to be psychotherapists who would recognize the wisdom of his choices.

Schmitz's account of being as actual presence exemplifies philosophy's foundational role in therapy. He argues that the term "being" must designate presence in contrast to absence, for being is that which exists. The potential of newborn humans to learn a language is a reality, not a being. Lacking a limb or cognitive abilities are also realities, but not beings. Hence, being does not encompass all reality, for reality includes both actual presences and potentials for development, unrealized capacities,

and privations. This distinction between reality and being is central to Schmitz's enterprise, for reality rarely fulfills the essence of a given being. Privations and unrealized capacities of a particular being's nature, like mental or emotional disorders, characterize particular beings. Closing the gap between the reality of these disorders and human fulfillment is psychotherapy's goal. Philosophy contributes to psychotherapy by illuminating the human person's nature which objectively grounds the therapist's goal, according to Schmitz.

With Aquinas as his guide Schmitz identifies two principles of all being: *esse*, a principle of existence, and essence, a formal principle responsible for the characteristic type of being. In addition, all beings share two properties: a unity resulting from *esse* and essence working in tandem, and relationality, the property of being in relation to other beings. From this analysis he concludes that all beings bear the relations of truth, goodness, and beauty to intelligent agents. Truth is a relational property of all beings, since all beings are intelligible. Since all beings realize their essence to varying degrees, all are able to be judged good to varying degrees. The recognition of goodness of any being implies that it can be experienced as beautiful. These three relations ground psychotherapy, for it seeks the truth about how human beings can fulfill their nature (goodness) resulting in beautiful theories, beautiful humans, and beautiful human creations.

Privations, lack of fulfillment, and potential for development make sense only if there are natures that can be fulfilled or frustrated by external or internal conditions. In chapter 2 Schmitz argues that all organisms have natures, i.e., internally rooted causal sources of

development and behavior. Hence, all organisms are substances. His case for natures hinges on two facts: our ability to explain the regular behavior of organisms and our inability to construct a science of biology, chemistry, or psychology without natures. Schmitz notes how professed reductionists cannot escape tacit reference to the nature of organisms. Antonio Damasio, professor of neuroscience and director of the Brain and Creativity Institute at the University of Southern California, is a reductionist who does just this. Damasio's research has revealed the neuro-anatomical structures that ground many emotional and cognitive states. He acknowledges the causal reality of an organism's nature when he observes that, while the building blocks for the construction and maintenance of organisms are regularly replaced, the architectural design for the varied structures of organisms are carefully maintained. Writes Damasio, "There is a *Bauplan* for life and our bodies are a *Bauhaus*" (*The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion, and the Making of Consciousness* [London: Vintage, 2000], 144; as quoted by Schmitz [18]). This design plan, Schmitz observes, is the formal cause of the life activities of the organism.

In chapter 3 Schmitz explains that the capacities for non-invasive sensory and intellectual knowing are what make human animals persons. Sensory knowing changes the agent as a consequence of what the agent does without changing the object or environment that is sensed. While light and sound wave transmissions change the microscopic properties of an object, such transmissions are only conditions for seeing, not the seeing itself. Schmitz illustrates this reality by reflecting on how he can sit in a chair

in a well-lit room and see the objects in the room without his activity of seeing in any way changing the surroundings. Non-invasive sensory knowing confirms that humans are animals, for these activities require physical organs shared with other mammals.

These human animals also know universals, a something one able to be in many, which is another non-invasive action humans initiate. This capacity opens humans up to a world not limited to sensory stimulation. It makes predication possible, which is necessary for developing any science of motion, life, or human behavior. The cognitive capacity for recognizing universals is necessary for deliberation, which requires an apprehension of one's good and the means to achieving one's good. Deliberation is necessary for moral responsibility. Based on analyses from Karol Wojtyła's work, *The Acting Person*, Schmitz claims that the distinctive character of the person is revealed in how the person chooses actions and practices. Such libertarian free choices constitute the unique reality of that particular person.

In this chapter Schmitz rightly challenges the epistemic consequences of Damasio's reductionist presuppositions. Damasio concedes that he lacks "any idea about how faithful neural patterns and mental images are relative to the objects to which they refer" (Damasio, 320; as quoted by Schmitz [40]). Still, Damasio insists that the objects and their interactions with the brain are real. What we are not certain of is the reality of the properties and structures we apply to these objects. If this is correct, then Damasio has no ground for claiming that his scientific theories are true or even close to true. Schmitz finds two other foundational problems Damasio

recognizes: (1) how the brain generates the connected story of experience, and (2) how the brain generates the sense of an owner and viewer of these experiences. Schmitz argues that the reductionist's presuppositions preclude an intelligible answer to these questions.

In his final chapter Schmitz discovers that the therapeutic treatment developed by this research confirms hylomorphism over Cartesian dualism. For example, Schmitz interprets the discovery of the importance of the protein, oxytocin, in mother-child bonding and in male-female relationships as support for the truth of the Thomistic claim that flourishing of the human form requires appropriate matter. In *The Oxytocin Factor* K. U. Moberg, professor of physiology at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, reports that having sex with a stranger, as in prostitution, contains a certain amount of danger that is registered in the body by initiating a form of the fight-or-flight-reaction, instead of the calm connection system initiated within married sex. Moberg writes, "It is therefore possible that monogamy and the cultural taboo against infidelity have, at least in part, a biologically adaptive basis" (*The Oxytocin Factor*, trans. Roberta Francis [Cambridge, MA: DeCapo Press, 2003], 120; as quoted by Schmitz, [70]). Schmitz sees this as confirmation of natural law and the animal nature of the human person.

Schmitz also finds corroboration of the importance of moral virtues in the work of Martin Seligman, director of the Positive Psychology Center and the Zellerbach Family Professor of Psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, and the founder of the positive psychology movement. In *Authentic Happiness* Seligman recognizes the determinate

role played by self-conscious voluntary decision-making that is open to the development of our "signature strengths" (*Authentic Happiness* [New York: Free Press, 2002]; as referenced by Schmitz [78]). In *Character, Strengths, and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*, Seligman examines six virtues that he finds in all human cultures: wisdom and knowledge, courage, love and humanity, justice, temperance, and spirituality and transcendence (*Character, Strengths, and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* [Oxford: American Psychological Association, 2004]; as referenced by Schmitz [78]). In *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion, and the Making of Consciousness*, Damasio extols the fruits of extended consciousness which allows for humans to reach the peak of their mental abilities. These include the abilities to construct a sense of good and of evil distinct from pleasure and pain; to sense beauty as opposed to just feeling pleasure; and to sense a discord of abstract ideas, which is the source of the sense of truth (referenced by Schmitz [74]). Schmitz finds the committed reductionist affirming the transcendental properties of the good, the beautiful, and the true.

Schmitz's insights into how philosophy and psychotherapy mutually enrich each other are too general to be illuminating for philosophers. Most philosophers in the Thomistic tradition are familiar with the reductionist's problems of accounting for knowledge and human agency. What the tradition needs is a thorough engagement with the details of these accounts which will allow for fruitful dialogue with the neuroscientists. This Schmitz does not provide. Nonetheless, the book offers a useful template for constructing a philosophy of person

course that engages contemporary work in the brain sciences, as well as important bibliographic material for philosophical research in that area.

If Schmitz's aim is to offer a compelling case for hylomorphism and libertarian freedom for contemporary psychotherapists, he misses the mark, for his arguments are too condensed. There is no consideration and response to the problems associated with these positions. On the other hand, if Schmitz's goal is to convince psychotherapists to reexamine their commitment to reductionism, he succeeds. The evidence he presents

about the non-invasive aspects of sensory and intellectual knowing offers good reasons for doubting reductionism independently of any agreement with contentious metaphysical theses. Since his critiques of reductionism entail that theoretical knowledge and human agency are myths, many therapists who read the book will be awakened from their dogmatic slumbers. That is a worthy achievement for such a short book.

MICHAEL J. DEGNAN  
University of St. Thomas  
(St. Paul, MN)