

lished a policy, even if not so intended, that was largely followed during the succeeding century: unsigned accusations against Christians should not be accepted; Christians should not be sought out, but if denounced and found guilty they were to be punished; those who denied they were Christians and adored the gods should be pardoned even if they had been suspect in the past. These provisions were in keeping with his general policy of a serious but not fanatical concern for traditions.

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[M. J. COSTELLOE]

## TRANCHEPAIN, MARIE ST. AUGUSTIN, MOTHER

Missionary, first superior of the Ursuline nuns of New Orleans, La.; b. Rouen, France; d. New Orleans, Nov. 11, 1733. Her parents were Protestant members of the French aristocracy. After her conversion to Catholicism, she left home to seek instruction from the Ursulines of her native city; she entered the convent there in 1677. Her aspirations to missionary work were encouraged by the Jesuit Nicolas I. de Beaubois, who arrived in France in 1726. Early the following year Mother St. Augustin and ten companions set out for New France, arriving in New Orleans Aug. 7, 1727, to begin their charitable work for the betterment of all classes, rich and poor, whites, African Americans, and Native Americans. During her administration the first boarding school for girls within the present limits of the United States was opened, and the first free school was established, the first orphanage, and the first sodality of the Blessed Virgin. The nuns also assumed charge of a military hospital and sponsored the first retreat for the ladies of the colony.

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## TRANSCENDENCE

From the Latin *transcendere*, meaning to climb over, to surpass, or to go beyond, a term describing the relation existing between two things when one is superior and extrinsic to the other, e.g., God and the world, animal and plant, and knower and thing known. It implies an aspect



Trajan, Roman Emperor, illustration of a coin. (Archive Photos)

of discontinuity, hiatus, or break between both the realities involved and the means of passing from the one to the other, and this either in reality or in knowledge. Transcendence is opposed to IMMANENCE, which stresses remaining within or under, although the two can be regarded as complementary. Thus God is transcendent, since He is above the world as the highest being and the ultimate cause; He is also immanent, since He is present in the world through PARTICIPATION and through causality. The notion of transcendence is basic in theology and religion in their treatment of God and to philosophy in its treatment of knowledge and of being.

**Kinds.** An understanding of the notion of transcendence requires that one distinguish its various meanings, namely, cosmological, ontological, epistemological, phenomenological, and mathematical.

*Cosmological Transcendence.* The first meaning of transcendence is one of relative comparison. It indicates a certain hierarchy, whether in place or time, or of being or activity. The transcendence is determined by the way one thing is related to another and can lead from the existence of the one to the existence of the other. Thus “going beyond” in this sense suggests the hierarchical steps passed over in a dialectical consideration of realities from the lower type to the highest—e.g., the ideas of Plato transcending the world of appearances. Another instance is that based on the relationship between effect and cause; thus St. Thomas Aquinas’s “five ways” conclude to the existence of an ultimate being who, as ultimate efficient cause, transcends all beings (*see* GOD, PROOFS FOR

THE EXISTENCE OF). Similarly, the existence of a transcendent being without causal implications may be established (*via eminentiae*). In each case there is a factual transcendence in the relationship of a multiplicity of beings to a higher being beyond them. This is opposed to the notion of cosmological immanence, which stresses, for example, that God is in fact within the universe even though He is qualitatively a higher type of being.

**Ontological Transcendence.** Transcendence is used also to indicate the value or quality that makes one being superior to another and to explain why this is so. It is primarily concerned with degrees of perfection (*see* PERFECTION, ONTOLOGICAL). Ontological transcendence thus has reference to the above average or the above normal, and is determined by what the transcendent thing is in itself or in its ontological value. God is transcendent as the being who is greatest in perfection, considering that perfection absolutely; all limitation in perfection is denied of Him (*via negationis*, *via remotiois*).

**Epistemological Transcendence.** Transcendence also signifies what is beyond thought as its object, i.e., something known or knowable by man. Epistemological transcendence signifies "going beyond" mind either (1) to some being known as an object existing in reality, (2) to some reality beyond sense data such as an underlying SUBSTANCE or the exercise of CAUSALITY, or (3) to some being above the world, such as God. It is opposed to the immanence of knowledge, i.e., the enclosing of self within the mind, and frequently implies a rejection of PHENOMENALISM, MATERIALISM, and naturalism.

**Phenomenological Transcendence.** Transcendence also signifies something beyond CONSCIOUSNESS as its object. Phenomenological transcendence stresses the value of INTENTIONALITY in the knowing subject and assures both the OBJECTIVITY of the activity of knowing and the objective REALITY of the thing known. It analyzes human subjectivity to discover the contents of man's awareness and their extramental foundations. Phenomenological transcendence thus aims at overcoming the difficulties of the critique of reason that lead to epistemological immanence.

**Mathematical Transcendence.** Finally, transcendence is used in mathematics to designate functions and numbers that are transfinite or indefinite according to particular operational norms. Thus a transcendental number is defined as a number that is not the root of an algebraic equation with rational coefficients.

**Problem of Transcendence.** The problem of transcendence consists in finding out whether there is an absolute transcendent being, and, if so, in determining what this being is and why it is higher and better, yet know-

able, or enigmatic yet attainable. The ABSOLUTE that is conceived as transcendent may be considered in many ways, namely, (1) simply as a more perfect nature that stands apart from this world (PLATO); (2) as a justification of the value of human knowledge in its truth, necessity, and certainty (St. AUGUSTINE); (3) as the cause of this world in its beginning and in its continuance, as regards both its existence and its essence (St. THOMAS AQUINAS); (4) as the object implied in human consciousness that demands the presence of the other, namely, as cause of and horizon for the meaningfulness in one's consciousness (PHENOMENOLOGY); or (5) as the explicit infinite reality that is implicit in any knowledge or expression concerning the finite universe (St. BONAVENTURE).

The dialectical movements and the reasoning processes that lead to the absolute as an existent whose reality cannot be denied vary according to the framework in which thought about the transcendent is developed. Such inquiry is prominent in contemporary thought, with its concern over the ontological question of extramental existence and the related epistemological question of the possibility of knowing anything beyond consciousness. Both in contemporary thought and throughout history, however, philosophers vary greatly in the solutions they offer.

**Historical Solutions.** A survey of various theories of transcendence may best be given in terms of the answers of philosophers to questions concerning the possibility of mind's transcending itself (1) to know anything other than itself, (2) to know substance or soul, and (3) to know God.

**Objects beyond Thought.** Is there any thing or object beyond thought? "*Un au-delà de la pensée est impensable*" expresses the negative answer of E. LE ROY and of L. BRUNSCHVICG. Greek thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle and medieval thinkers such as Bonaventure, St. Thomas, and J. DUNS SCOTUS accepted as a matter of fact that knowledge can grasp things existing in the world. Modern philosophy, beginning with R. Descartes's reflective *Cogito, ergo sum*, introduced a chasm between mind as spirit and matter as extension. The objectivity of knowledge thenceforth had to be certified or guaranteed by a higher power that did not depend on the very activity of knowing. The agnostic attitude of British EMPIRICISM had its influence on the phenomenalism of I. Kant, who limited valid knowledge to the PHENOMENA of verifiable sense perception.

The theory of intentionality developed by St. Thomas served as a metaphysical explanation of the nature of KNOWLEDGE. His theory of REFLECTION on the activity of knowing and its subject also provided the psychological means of verifying knowledge by a process within the

range of human activity. Contemporary phenomenology, readapting the theory of intentionality, seeks to recover the objectivity of knowledge by a reflection on subjectivity; this opens, through intentionality, to objectivity itself. Such intentionality assures the presence of the object known as something in reality and avoids the Kantian formalities of sensation and thought that serve as substitutes for the existent in the elaboration of knowledge. The subject-object dichotomy, with its hiatus requiring a jump from the self to the other, is there replaced by a subjectivity-objectivity couplet that is linked, from within, by intentionality.

*Substance and Soul.* Ancient and medieval thinkers for the most part accepted the possibility of the human mind's grasping intrinsic principles or transphenomenal factors in the universe. Yet the late Middle Ages, as seen in WILLIAM OF OCKHAM and NICHOLAS OF AUTRECOURT, proposed theories that questioned the power of the human mind to grasp UNIVERSALS, underlying substance, and intrinsic principles such as the SOUL. The history of the concept of substance from R. DESCARTES to D. HUME again shows a slow disintegration of the notion and a questioning of its validity. With Kant, theoretical knowledge of any object not verifiable by sense perception becomes impossible. The critical problem of the possibility of knowing the thing-in-itself or its underlying principles has been accentuated by the skeptical stands taken by proponents of LOGICAL POSITIVISM and of linguistic analysis.

*God.* Can the mind transcend itself to know something beyond both the world of material reality and itself, namely, God? Again theories of intentionality and self-reflection seek to assure the objectivity of knowledge and to extend its validity further into the realm of the immaterial. Yet the God suggested in Plato and Aristotle and affirmed as discoverable by medieval Christian thinkers has slowly come to be regarded as beyond attainment. Reasons alleged by later thinkers include that such a being would be meaningless as an object of thought or irrelevant as an explanation of the universe or simply would involve a contradiction. Again, the need of appealing to God to explain or justify the world seems no longer to be felt. The basic choice has become that between God and the self: the existence of God seems to imply, for some, an alienation and a belittling of self. Thus AGNOSTICISM and ATHEISM have developed as modern rejections of transcendence.

On the other hand, the existence of a transcendent God is affirmed in the many forms of religious and philosophical transcendentalism, albeit with great variations as to God's knowability. Some, considering God to be knowable only by way of negation, hold that nothing pos-

itive can be known about God; others, considering God to be knowable by analogy and by causality, hold that God is knowable as an ideal toward which man must tend; still others, considering human knowledge to be a simple participation of God's knowledge, feel that an adequate understanding of God is attainable through the development of human insights; and finally some, despairing of attaining God through reason, seek the pathway to a transcendent God through the heart and through human emotions.

The "five ways" of St. Thomas serve as a basis for developing a knowledge of God by way of causality, of remotion, and of superexcellence and through the use of analogy of attribution, of participation, and of proportionality. Contemporary personalist and existentialist philosophers, avoiding the problems posed by causality and starting their philosophizing with things and objects, attempt to develop proofs for the existence of God through reflection on the person and consciousness. Whereas for modern philosophers the notion of a transcendent God was unacceptable, for many contemporary thinkers the affirmation of a transcendent God is again considered meaningful and legitimate. The ontological God of the earlier philosophers, however, tends to give way to a living God in the tradition of biblical thought. Again, with the phenomenological investigations of M. Heidegger and K. Jaspers, a new approach to the transcendent is visible, even though this is not properly theistic (*see* EXISTENTIALISM, 2, 5). Somewhat similar is the effort made within PERSONALISM to rediscover, by use of new methods and with different emphases, a personal God who is truly transcendent.

*See Also:* MOTION, FIRST CAUSE OF;  
TRANSCENDENTAL (KANTIAN);  
TRANSCENDENTALISM; TRANSCENDENTALS.

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