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The University in a Pluralistic Society

Marc D. Guerra, Assumption College

John Courtney Murray, S.J., was not the first 20th century thinker to observe that the modern university contributes to the erosion of those social and political institutions that have traditionally helped sustain American democracy. Similar claims were made earlier in the century by Eric Voegelin, Leo Strauss, and Russell Kirk. As the unprecedented and unexpected success of Allan Bloom's *Closing of the American Mind* (and, to a lesser degree, E. D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy*) later showed, voicing such concerns became something of a cottage industry by the century's end. However, what sets Murray's argument apart from these others is that he approaches this problem from the perspective of America's democratic experience with religious pluralism and the effects this has had on the health and sustainability of what Murray called the "American Proposition."

By institutionalizing the practice of religious pluralism, American democracy formed something of an intellectual and political paradox. The existence of religious pluralism draws attention to the various disagreements religious Americans have about "the nature and destiny of man within a universe that stands under the reign of God."¹ Yet these substantive disagreements come to sight within a civil society that is itself bound together by a "public consensus" about the nature of human beings and human freedom. That the question of the theoretical grounds of the practice of religious pluralism admits of no easy and readymade solution undoubtedly explains "why it is so seldom asked" in our contemporary universities, according to Murray.²

Murray goes out of his way to make clear that the university, even within a democratic society, does not exist for the sake of maintaining a healthy, pluralist civil society. While having discernible moral and political implications, the university's goal transcends the

legitimate but limited concerns of political life. Most fundamentally, the university *qua* university “is committed to the task of putting an end to prejudice based on ignorance.”³ It is that “social institution whose function it is to bring the resources of reason and intelligence to bear, through all the disciplines of learning and teaching, on the problems of truth and understanding that confront society because they confront the mind of man himself.”⁴ To be sure, the university is limited in its ability to achieve its lofty goals. Its end is “not at all messianic.”⁵ But when called upon to justify its place within civil society, the university can respond that it indirectly aids the political order by banishing, “as far as it can,” false prejudices about the true nature and end of human life.⁶ In so doing, it becomes an ally and defender of genuine freedom. To the extent it helps replace unfounded opinion with knowledge of the truth, the university occupies a privileged place in American society, a place where citizens, individually and collectively, enjoy the “freedom to learn – to explore” what it means to be a human being.⁷ In this politically high-minded way the university fulfills an indirect but indispensable role in American democracy.

Theoretically, the modern university and the problem of pluralism converge on the same question: “What is man?”⁸ Not coincidentally, this is also modernity’s essential question. It is the question from which “all others proliferate” and to which eventually “all return” in modernity.⁹ But it cannot be framed in narrowly anthropocentric terms. To understand who and what man is, one has to wonder about his place in the universe. Such a line of inquiry requires one to engage the most serious and authoritative claims about human beings and the whole, including, paradoxically, the “skeptic or agnostic view” that asserts it is “useless or illegitimate even to ask Ultimate Questions.”¹⁰ For this reason, the university is obliged to examine the responses revealed religions give to this question. They too claim to have an answer to the question about man. In fact, they claim to have the definitive answer to this “basic” question. If the university is to take its purpose seriously, it eventually finds itself caught up in “the characteristically modern situation of religious conflict” – albeit a conflict formed not by outward religious or civil strife but by the kind of rigorous intellectual debate that ought to define the life of the uni-

versity.¹¹ To flee from this situation would constitute "a flight from reality," an unfounded and willful attempt to deny the university's "spiritual and intellectual situation" in the modern pluralistic world in which it finds itself.¹²

At this point, some of the political implications Murray attributes to the university begin to come into focus. For the public consensus that lies at the heart of the American Proposition claims to be based on a true account of the nature of man and a just and decent civil society.¹³ In Murray's view, that consensus can be truthfully maintained only by recourse to a "theory of natural law" that offers "an account of the public moral experience" embodied in the American Proposition.¹⁴ Affirming the moral and intellectual legitimacy of the basic equality of all men, the right to religious freedom, the belief that government must respect the consent of the governed, and the claim men are endowed by the Creator with rights that limit the just exercise of popular sovereignty, the natural law theory that undergirds the American Proposition presupposes – and as Murray admits, stands or falls on – a coherent and valid "realist epistemology."¹⁵ Putting such an epistemology to the test, Murray insists, ought to be a regular activity in the intellectual and spiritual life of the modern American university.

Murray famously argued that the intellectual affirmation of natural law theory and its corresponding realist epistemology form part of America's (and more broadly Western civilization's) classical and Christian "patrimony."¹⁶ That patrimony cannot be sustained by pietistic veneration of this inheritance simply because it is our own. Nor should it be. There are many things we inherit – customs, prejudices, old cars – whose veneration and transmission may not be justified in the bright light of day. Whether the natural law theory and epistemology operative in the American Proposition deserves to be sustained rests on whether the claims they make "are true."¹⁷ Murray believes they are, whether the Founders fully recognized this fact or not. Providentially, "the American political community was organized in an era when the tradition of natural law and natural rights was still vigorous."¹⁸ That tradition was invoked to bring a new and unprecedented kind of political order into existence. Its acceptance therefore could not have depended on the pious veneration of a

*preexisting civic order. Quite the contrary, it had to elicit the assent of "free minds."*¹⁹

Murray forthrightly acknowledges that the stability of America's public consensus has been imperiled from the country's beginning. In their writings, the Founders oscillated between rooting the American Proposition in two outwardly similar but inwardly dissimilar notions of natural law. According to Murray, one of these conceptions worked within a natural law tradition that originated in the works of classical philosophy, blossomed in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, and eventually became woven into the "Western classical and Christian tradition." But in their more rationalistic, i.e., more Lockean, formulations, Founders such as Jefferson routinely obscured human freedom's constitutive relation to "transcendent truth." Appealing to theories that claimed that human beings originally existed autonomously in a premoral and prepolitical state of nature, such formulations invoked a "philosophically shallow" law of nature.²⁰ The coexistence of these dueling theoretical notions of natural law reveals a fundamental tension at the heart of the American Founding between a "voluntarist idea of law as will" and a "tradition of natural law as inheritance . . . an intellectualist idea."²¹ The problem of radical autonomy or liberty severed from any end, Murray insists, is not a late edition to or innovation in America's democratic life. It was a "possibility . . . inherent from the beginning."²²

Murray was not the first Catholic thinker to recognize this theoretical tension at the heart of the American Founding. That point had been made in the nineteenth century by the Catholic political thinker Orestes Brownson. Brownson called attention to the dissimilarities between the moral and political demands of what he called America's providential constitution and those he identified with the Jeffersonian idea of democracy. In *The American Republic* (1866), he argued that America like every nation is endowed with a particular providential constitution. Such a constitution exists prior to and is more fundamental than any written constitution; it shapes and informs the life of the American people. "The constitution of the state, or the people of the state, is, in its origin at least, providential, given by God himself, operating through historical events or natural causes."²³ Working

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within the parameters set by human nature and the moral, social, and intellectual history the American people hold in common, this constitution binds citizens together and limits what is possible for citizens and statesmen within American political life. Brownson contrasted this view of American democracy with those of the "so-called Jeffersonian democracy."²⁴ Emphasizing the sovereignty of the individual, this view claims that "government has no powers but such as it derives from the consent of the governed."²⁵ Taken on its own terms and drawn to its logical conclusion, Jeffersonian democracy, according to Brownson, culminates in "pure individualism – philosophically considered, pure egoism, which says, 'I am God.'"²⁶

Moreover, two years before Murray published *We Hold These Truths*, Raymond-Leopold Bruckberger, O.P., made similar observations in his *Images of America* (1958). Bruckberger noted the profound differences between Jefferson's draft of the Declaration of Independence and the final version of that document as voted by Congress. In his view, there was "no doubt . . . that Congress and Jefferson had different concepts of God."²⁷ Jefferson's famed reference to "Nature's God," Bruckberger observes, "did not commit him to much."²⁸ It deliberately remained "as vaguely defined as possible."²⁹ In particular, Jefferson carefully steered clear of any reference to God "as personal and distinct from nature; as Creator, Providence, and Judge."³⁰ By contrast, the majority of the members of Congress remained in the intellectual "tradition of the first New England Puritans."³¹ They were men who "had read the Bible and . . . believed in it."³² The irreducible theoretical differences between Jefferson's and Congress's understandings of God, Bruckberger maintains, nonetheless had positive political effects on the American regime:

The greatest luck of all for the Declaration was precisely the divergence and the compromise between the puritan tradition and what Jefferson wrote. Had the Declaration been written in the strictly Puritan tradition it would probably not have managed to avoid an aftertaste of theocracy and religious fanaticism. Had it been written from the standpoint of the lax philosophy of the day, it would have been a-religious, if not actually offensive to Christians.³³

While Brownson and Bruckberger traced Jefferson's libertarian natural rights teaching back to the writings of early modern political philosophers, Murray traces it back to the nominalism propounded by late medieval thinkers such as Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. There are reasons to question the adequacy of Murray's genealogical analysis, however. It is less than clear that early modern philosophers like Machiavelli, Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, and Locke were unwittingly or blindly drawing out the practical implications of the nominalist conceptions of reason they inherited from the decadent scholasticism of the late medieval period. Their writings suggest otherwise. Machiavelli's critique of imaginary republics, Descartes' criticism of the sandcastles ancient moral philosophy erected, and Spinoza's disparagement of classical Utopias show that these thinkers self-consciously saw themselves as rejecting the forms of rationalism and republicanism that had informed the classical philosophic and Christian theological traditions and embracing new theoretical, empirical, and practical conceptions of reason that were, in their words, far less risky and utopian than their premodern counterparts.

Be that as it may, Murray is right to note that the countervailing intellectualist notion of natural law that originally helped keep the Lockean idea of man as an autonomous individual in check has today fallen into disrepute. Our problem is not simply that the voluntaristic view of natural law has gained moral and political legitimacy. It runs deeper. The belief that there are universal truths about man and morality that human reason can know is now routinely called into question.³⁴ Accordingly, we "face a crisis that is new in history."³⁵ At its core, this crisis stems from late modern rationalism's denial of any metaphysical or transhistorical principles that could help men make sense of their current situation. When translated into the language of political life, the denial of these principles eviscerates the moral and political claims embodied in the American Proposition in "one stroke."³⁶ At the time of the American Founding, the truth of the Declaration's self-evident claims was thought to be able to win the day once "subjected to the unbridled competition of the market place of ideas." In late modernity, "it is no longer possible to cherish this naïveté."³⁷

That contemporary intellectuals no longer share the Enlightenment's faith in reason's unbridled explanatory powers, in Murray's judgment, reveals that we have in the decisive respect "reached the end of the era that it gave itself the qualification 'modern.'"³⁸ As such, we have entered a "post-modern" era. Postmodernism's morally, intellectually, and spiritually "debilitating" doctrine is now the dominant view in America's universities. The university both suffers from and contributes to late modern man's experience of "disenchantment."³⁹ Dogmatically committed to academically fashionable doctrines, our universities wittingly and unwittingly contribute to the "decay of political intelligence" and to the "loss of confidence in the power of reason to fix the purposes of political life and to direct the energies of freedom in such a way as to impose a due measure of human control upon the forces of history."⁴⁰

Murray is quick to point out that the nihilistic and relativistic doctrines students are likely to be indoctrinated with are not propounded by philosophers, or even sophists who pose as philosophers. They are disseminated by what Murray refers to in his short book *The Problem of God* as "the godless man of the Theatre."⁴¹ The appearance of this "Post-modern" type is something new.⁴² The godless man of the Theatre is not so much genuinely post-modern but hyper-modern. Like his early modern predecessors, he desires to exorcise any residual faith that human beings may have in what Hobbes characterized as powers unseen. But unlike his early modern predecessors, he does not believe that reason is (or ever could be) our true star and compass. For him, the claim that reason can know the truth about man and the universe is one of the ghosts that must be exorcised from late modern man's consciousness. In this respect, the godless man of the Theatre exhibits "continuity amid difference."⁴³ As his title suggests, the godless man of the Theatre is essentially an "actor." In sharp contrast to the classical philosophers, and to a lesser extent the early modern philosophers, he is not moved by philosophy. In fact, he denies that *eros* can be directed towards a love of wisdom. Caring "nothing for metaphysics or epistemology,"⁴⁴ he views himself as a phenomenologist, artfully and entertainingly describing "the situation" of man. That situation is marked by the claim that

man has no nature. He has only a presence, “an actual ‘being-there-in-the-moment’ in action and freedom.”⁴⁵ The godless man of the Theater acknowledges only the presenting “fact.” One imagines that to such a man Google comes as close as one can to a god: Ask Google a question and it renders the sterile, free-standing answer right before your eyes.

Given the self-imposed strictures he places on his descriptive powers, when speaking to other human beings the godless man of the Theatre is prone to appeal to “the public imagination, common impressions, generally shared feelings about things.”⁴⁶ He uses these emotional appeals as vehicles for his own ideas.⁴⁷ Both playwright and actor, he performs in a project of his own creation in the hope that this will allow him to exist undisturbed in a world he believes is absurd. Any other life, he asserts, is destined to be crippled by a sense of “anguish and anxiety.”⁴⁸ The godless man of the Theatre does not desire to exercise overt rule over his fellow human beings – in this, according to Murray, he differs markedly from the “godless man of the communist world revolution.” But he does seek to exercise indirect rule over his fellow human beings insofar as he wishes to abreast them of the utterly chaotic nature of human life and the universe. His form of rule accordingly provides *a* model, not *the* model, for other human beings.

As Murray presents him, the godless man of the Theatre ultimately sets forth two lessons: 1) the alleged pluripotent character of human existence and, 2) the alleged independence of human freedom from any external and transcendent limit and restraint.⁴⁹ He preaches that each man can, and must, become the “‘inventor of himself’ (in Sartre’s phrase).”⁵⁰ Only through the act of self-creation can one become a free and unique “individual.”⁵¹ Such a radical act unmasks the true power of man and the futility of believing that human beings can hold social and political life in common. Whereas political life requires citizens to recognize both their interconnection and dependence on each other, being an individual demands that one assumes “single and full obligation” for his own existence. The self-creating individual makes a fundamental and “original choice to be-for-himself.” Disavowing any connection or indebtedness to any other human being, he bears “the entire responsibility” for himself and his

world.⁵² Rejecting all metaphysical and teleological claims, the godless man of the Theatre radicalizes the problem of religious pluralism by asserting that each human being is and ought to be his own Creator-God.

Against this backdrop, Murray proposes that our universities reclaim something of their natural purpose by subjecting the claims the Western revealed religions make about human beings, the universe, and God to serious, academic examination. Murray does not propose that the modern university assume the implausible role the *Republic* ironically assigns to the philosopher-king. The university, like the professors and students that populate it, is constitutionally incapable of demonstrating the truth of a revealed religion, let alone ordering civil society around such a demonstration.⁵³ It therefore must resist the temptation to "reduce modern pluralism to unity."⁵⁴ But it can and should seek to elucidate the claims about the nature and end of human life that revealed religions make. And it should be able to say something about how reasonable these claims actually are.

One of the striking features of Murray's proposal is that it suggests that this kind of investigation should begin by reflecting on the content and demands of natural law and not by engaging in unmistakably metaphysical or theological reflections. But as Murray makes clear, serious natural law reflections are neither narrowly moral and political nor constrictively positivistic or reductionistic. Rather, eventually they require one to "opt . . . for a metaphysic of right."⁵⁵ Whether deliberate or not, Murray's argument at times exaggerates what natural law reflections actually allow us to know about the nature of man and the moral universe. Illustrative of this tendency is his under-qualified remark that through the natural law our "intelligence" is capable of discovering the true "nature of things."⁵⁶

Murray remains on safer theoretical grounds when claiming that natural law theory requires the affirmation of a God "Who is eternal reason, *Nous*, . . . [and] the summit of the order of being."⁵⁷ Absent the recognition of that God, natural law theory is in the end untenable.⁵⁸ Contrary to a number of 20th century Catholic and non-Catholic proponents of natural law theory, Murray rejects the claim that one can deny the existence of God and still maintain that

natural law coherently articulates the natural ends to which human freedom is ordered. Taken on its own terms and drawn to its logic conclusion, such a denial would require us to claim along with Kant that nature and human freedom are permanently at odds with each other, or to say that physical or biological necessity mechanistically governs most (maybe even all) of embodied human life. Murray thus rejects those arguments that claim that natural law theory is inherently biological and reductionist. In his judgment, they perpetuate “a particularly gross and gratuitous misrepresentation, since nothing is clearer in natural-law theory than its identification of the ‘natural’ with the ‘rational,’ or perhaps better, the ‘human.’ Its whole effort is to incorporate the biological values in man, notably his sexual tendencies, into the fuller human order of reason, and to deny them the status of the primordial. The primordial in man – that which is first in order – is his rational soul . . . which informs all that is biological in him.”⁵⁹ To affirm the existence of natural law is to affirm that human freedom is ennobling precisely because it is freedom under God. To think otherwise, Murray concludes, is itself unreasonable.

In making this claim, Murray sides with natural law theorists such as Yves Simon over and against new-fangled natural law thinkers like John Finnis and Germain Grisez.⁶⁰ In a way analogous to Murray, Simon emphasized the connection between the existence of God and the knowledge of morality man gains through the natural law. Simon affirmed a connection between the knowledge of morality human beings gain through the natural law and the kind of metaphysical knowledge of a God that renders all of reality, including moral reality, intelligible. Human beings’ knowledge of the natural law provides them access to incomplete but authentic knowledge about the eternal law and, ultimately, about its author, God; to affirm that a particular moral or political arrangement is just or unjust inevitably requires one to appeal to a metaphysical and theocentric order that can support such a claim. On this point, Murray fundamentally agrees with Simon’s claim that “the understanding of natural law can be logically preserved” without acknowledging God as “the ultimate foundation of all laws.”⁶¹

Because revealed religions give substantively different accounts of the nature and purpose of human freedom, they provide the natural

law theorist with an opportunity to reflect upon the concrete implications these differences have on the problem of religious pluralism. Who and what does Judaism claim man is? What is the end or ends of human life, according to Catholicism? What is human freedom grounded in according to Protestantism and what does Reformed Christianity say proximately and remotely informs this freedom? In the final analysis, these questions point well beyond the parameters of even the most robust and expansive theory of natural law. But they are questions whose initial terms and categories – Is man like every other animal? Is he ordered to some form of transcendence? Is the end of human freedom capable of being grasped by the natural light of reason and, if so to, what degree? – are not wholly foreign to natural law theory. In this respect, Murray argues, natural law theory shares with Judaism, Protestantism, and Catholicism the “reasonable belief” that human beings are finite beings intrinsically ordered and extrinsically guided to a truth not of their making.

The natural law theorist’s reflections on the problem of religious pluralism reveal a limited but important truth about the nature of human beings and human freedom. While incapable of judging which religion is the true religion, they can show how the moral teachings of various revealed religions comport to what reason naturally knows about the demands of justice and the natural virtue of religion. Contrary to the claims of radical libertarianism, such knowledge reminds democratic citizens that freedom, including the freedom to choose one’s religion, is constitutionally incapable of being an end in itself. It points to the fact that freedom is a qualified good that necessarily needs to be tethered to a transcendent order of truth if it is to be coherently defended. Practiced in this way, natural law investigations “could make some contribution to . . . the reduction of modern pluralism to intelligibility.”⁶² For this reason, Murray argues, they could help secular and religious universities form true citizens of the academy and indirectly help form citizens fitted for a country that is marked by its long experience of religious pluralism.

It must be noted that two formidable obstacles to Murray’s proposal have arisen since the time he framed his argument about the role of the university in a pluralist society. The first concerns the caliber of academic theological dispute that is capable of occurring in

contemporary American universities. Murray's proposal presupposes the availability of a substantial number of professors within the university who have "an understanding of the nature of religious faith."⁶³ At a minimum, such professors must possess knowledge of their faith's doctrinal claims. But they must also know (and be able to explain) what their faith means when it affirms that a given doctrine is true. To illustrate his point, Murray calls attention to the "radical disagreement" that has historically existed between Catholicism and Protestantism on the precise nature of theological doctrine. For in systematically expressing its doctrinal claims, Catholic theology traditionally stresses the harmony between faith and reason and hence the reasonable character of doctrinal formulations far more than its Protestant counterpart.

But as Pope John Paul II emphasized in his encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio* and Pope Benedict XVI stressed in his Regensburg lecture "Faith, Reason, and University," today the theoretical principles behind such traditional Catholic and Protestant theological disagreements are apt to go unnoticed. Working within modern science's and modern philosophy's reductionistic accounts of the scope of human reason, Catholic academics routinely deemphasize the reasonable character of their faith. In our dehellenized age, an increasing number of Catholic academic theologians – ranging from those who advocate theological eclecticism to some of those who advocate a return to "radical orthodoxy" – present theology not as a speculative science but as a form of postmodern fideism. In their writings, postmodern theory is portrayed not so much as a form of irrationalism that undercuts the distinctive claim to reason Catholicism traditionally makes, but as a doctrine that offers the religion a new sense of legitimacy in a world in which every claim to truth is said to rest on a faith-filled commitment. Murray's proposal proved to be far too optimistic, if not somewhat naïve. At the very least, it seriously misjudged the majority of Catholic academicians' ability to protect themselves from the intellectual deformations that typically plague the late modern mind.

The other obstacle concerns the further disrepute natural law theory has fallen into since Murray wrote *We Hold These Truths*. Murray knew that in 1960 natural law theory was most likely to

find a home in outposts within America's Catholic community. These outposts have only grown smaller in the intervening years. To be sure, over the past several decades an increasing number of Catholic thinkers have found support for natural law arguments in Pope John Paul II's 1993 encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*. But the natural law theory presented there reflects John Paul's own mixture of natural law theory and phenomenological personalism more than it does the kind of natural law theory that Murray strenuously advocated – or, for that matter, the natural law teaching Aquinas sets forth in his *Summa Theologiae*. And as we have already noted, contemporary Catholic jurists and analytic theorists like Finnis and Grisez typically invoke natural law theories that have been trimmed of explicit metaphysical and teleological claims in the hope that such pruning will somehow make their theories more acceptable to the late modern mind.

To be fair, the possible emergence of such obstacles was not wholly unforeseen by Murray. For example, he admitted that while the contemporary “Protestant charcoal burner . . . knows well enough that he differs from the Catholic charcoal burner, and vice versa . . . it is not so certain that either of them could say why, in any articulate fashion.”⁶⁴ What is more, Murray did not think that the existence of these obstacles was entirely lamentable. He wittily remarked that over the years the theory of natural law has been pronounced dead only later to come back to life more times than one can count. Part of the reason for this is that while natural law theory allows us to discover something true about morality, human freedom, and ourselves this discovery needs to be articulated in a way that does justice to the nature of these things. Among other things, such a task requires us to have recourse to language that can truthfully explain how morality helps shape and inform human freedom and our ability to live a genuinely dignified human life. Developing this language (both inside and outside of our universities) in light of all that we can really know about the nature of nature, morality, human freedom, and the cosmos would undoubtedly help us bring about the latest installment in the eternal return of the natural law. And for this opportunity, Murray reminds us, the self-governing citizens of American democracy should be grateful.

Endnotes

- 1 John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005) xiii.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 124.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 131.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 123–124.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 134.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 131.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 *Ibid.*, 124.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 *Ibid.*, 125.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 *Ibid.*, xii.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 110.
- 15 *Ibid.*, xii.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 28.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid.*, 46.
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 *Ibid.*, 311.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 55.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 Orestes Brownson, *The American Republic: Its Constitution, Tendencies, and Destiny*, ed. Peter Augustine Lawler (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2003) 91.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 222.
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 Raymond-Leopold Bruckberger, *Images of America: A Political, Industrial, and Social Portrait*, trans. C.G. Paulding and Virgilia Peterson (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2009) 92.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 *Ibid.*, 93.
- 32 *Ibid.*
- 33 *Ibid.*
- 34 Murray, *We Hold These Truths*, xii.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 38.
- 36 *Ibid.*, xiii.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 126.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 127.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 130.

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- 40 *Ibid.*, 130.
- 41 See John Courtney Murray, *The Problem of God* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1964) 101-121.
- 42 Murray, *The Problem of God*, 101.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 *Ibid.*, 102.
- 47 *Ibid.*
- 48 *Ibid.*, 115. In this respect, the godless man of the Theatre both affirms and attempts to respond to the basic problem of modernity. Yet in the decisive respect he does so as a modern man. The godless man of the Theatre, according to Murray, works within the fundamental categories of modernity: "post-modern man can continue to pursue the mirage which bemused modern man. As he does so, a spiritual vacuum will increasingly be created at the heart of human existence" (*We Hold These Truths*) - .
- 49 *Ibid.*, 107.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 115.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 114.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 116.
- 53 Murray, *We Hold These Truths*, 126.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 132.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 327.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 293.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 294.
- 58 *Ibid.*
- 59 *Ibid.*, 268.
- 60 For a critical explication of the natural law theory Finnis and Grisez continually revise and unfold, see Russell Hittinger's *A Critique of the New Natural Law Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987).
- 61 Yves Simon, *The Tradition of Natural Law: A Philosopher's Reflections*, ed. Vukan Kuic (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992) 62. On the following page, Simon makes the further observation that for the contemporary atheistic existentialist "the postulate that there is no God [has the] character of a fundamental premise, any proposition which would lead to its rejection is logically unacceptable; there cannot be natural law because, if there were such a thing, one would be led to assert the existence of God contrary to a fundamental premise of the system."
- 62 Murray, *We Hold These Truths*, 132.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 133
- 64 *Ibid.*, 133.