DOING THEOLOGY WITH CORNELIO FABRO: KIERKEGAARD, MARY, AND THE CHURCH

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Philosophy must keep up its guard against the desire to be edifying.
– G.W.F. Hegel¹

As philosophy of the act of being,
Thomism is not *another* existential philosophy,
it is the only one.
– Etienne Gilson²

Although he is not always recognised as such, Søren Kierkegaard has been an important ally for Catholic theologians since the early twentieth century. I introduce for the first time in English the constructive theological features in the underexplored writings of the Italian Thomist, Cornelio Fabro. In the first section, I set the stage with Fabro's historical context to show Fabro's desire to negotiate his loyalty to the Thomist revival after *Aeterni Patris* and the claims of the modern world. In the second, I focus on Fabro's recovery of Kierkegaard's writings as a way into understanding Fabro's wider project of renewal in Catholic theology. Specifically, I draw upon Fabro's treatment of Kierkegaard's Mariology and Ecclesiology as two counter-intuitive examples of Catholic theological renewal. I conclude with some observations regarding how Fabro's constructive theological contribution deepens and expands current understanding of *ressourcement* theology in the twentieth century. My aim is not just to narrate a vital moment in the history of Catholic engagement with Kierkegaard, but also to provide a representative entry point for Kierkegaard's writings to continue to stimulate reform and renewal in contemporary Catholic theology in the wake of the *ressourcement* movement.

To some readers, Kierkegaard and Thomas Aquinas are antithetical thinkers. In defence of such a preconception, these readers point to a deep Thomist suspicion of Kierkegaard's so-called 'irrationalism' like that portrayed by Alasdair MacIntyre³; yet many Kierkegaard scholars have debunked this portrayal as a common misconception.⁴ It is rare, however, to discover someone who would identify himself as both a Kierkegaardian and a Thomist. To the English-speaking world, Cornelio Fabro (1911–1995) is not much more than an obscure footnote in the history of Thomism; this footnote signals Fabro's ground-breaking recovery of the Neoplatonic concept of participation in Thomas' metaphysics.⁵ However, such treatment risks reducing Fabro's legacy to his doctoral thesis and fails to convey the breadth and depth of the rest of his life's work: such as advising the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and the preparatory meetings of the Second Vatican Council on which he served as *peritus*,⁶ or translating the writings of Søren Kierkegaard into Italian and appropriating his insights for Catholic theology. Fabro goes so far as to claim that Kierkegaard's writings arrive not infrequently at the threshold of Catholicism, or to be more precise, of *Thomism*.⁷

I introduce here for the first time in English the constructive theological features of the underexplored writings of this Italian Thomist. Rather than providing an exhaustive account of Fabro's distinctive reading of Kierkegaard or Thomas (a worthy idea for a future article), I will first lay out the groundwork for demonstrating Fabro's relevance for contemporary constructive theology. In the first, part I provide the historical context to illustrate Fabro's desire to negotiate his loyalty to the Thomist revival after *Aeterni Patris* with the claims of the modern world. Although Fabro is virtually unknown in the English-speaking world, his desire to build a bridge between continental philosophy and Thomism is a desirable asset for contemporary Catholic theology. In the second, part I focus on Fabro's recovery of Kierkegaard's writings as a means to understand Fabro's wider project of renewal in Catholic theology. Specifically, I draw on Fabro's treatment of Kierkegaard's Mariology and Ecclesiology as two counter-intuitive examples of Catholic theological renewal. I conclude with some observations regarding how Fabro's constructive theological contribution deepens and expands current understandings of *ressourcement* theology. My aim is not just to narrate a key moment in the history of Catholic engagement with Kierkegaard, but also to provide a representative entry point for Kierkegaard's writings to continue to stimulate reform and renewal in contemporary Catholic theology in the wake of the *ressourcement* movement. In particular, Fabro offers a fruitful pathway for re-framing theology in the post-conciliar Church especially after the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (1998)—a document that gives a remarkable endorsement of Kierkegaard.⁸

FABRO'S CONTEXT: THE LEONINE REVIVAL AND THE KIERKEGAARD RENAISSANCE

With the exception of seventeen journal articles, virtually all of Fabro's writings remain untranslated into English. *God in Exile* (1968)⁹ is the only book that was published in English and it did not focus on Thomas or his metaphysics, but rather, on modern atheism. However, Fabro's discovery of Kierkegaard's theology beneath his atheistic commentators (such as Heidegger and Sartre), is *just as revolutionary* as Fabro's discovery of Thomas beneath his Neo-Scholastic commentators. Indeed, Kierkegaard is just as influential on Fabro as is Thomas¹⁰, and much of Fabro's work introduces the Catholic inheritance of Kierkegaard's thought to those already familiar with Thomas, and re-introduces the originality of Kierkegaard's writings to those for whom his theological significance in continental philosophy has been overlooked.

Prior to Fabro's groundbreaking work, it was difficult for some Catholic readers of Kierkegaard to see his compatibility with Catholicism due to the misperception that Kierkegaard was a representative of atheistic existentialism and irrationalism. Fabro's work corrects this misunderstanding by reading Kierkegaard closer to the Aristotle of St. Thomas, and by showing that Kierkegaard's Lutheran critique of the State Church did not amount to an anti-ecclesiology but rather to a fruitful resource for ecumenism. In this article, I introduce and explore the constructive features of Fabro's theology to discern Fabro's contemporary relevance. In this endeavour I will briefly situate Fabro in his Leonine context and within the emergence of the European reception of Kierkegaard in order to then underscore how Fabro's work overturns the influence of both Neo-Scholasticism and modern atheism.

The distinctiveness of Fabro's project comes into focus when we read his works alongside several works from the Thomist revival after Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879).¹¹ Wayne Hankey has described *Aeterni Patris* as 'the courageous war plan of an embattled church' that engendered a movement that fatefully mirrors the philosophical context which it endeavoured to supplant.¹² Pope Leo XIII set two aims for his theologians and

philosophers: to use St. Thomas to separate philosophy from, and subordinate it to, theology. As Hankey persuasively argues, separating theology from philosophy required an emphasis on 'the Aristotelian aspects of Thomas' thought' with 'its Platonic elements played down' in order to allow the sciences to become independent from each other. Whilst subordinating philosophy to theology required that once 'the ground of theology in a revelation to faith was stressed and the dependence of theology on philosophy diminished, the sciences were easily subordinated to ecclesiastical theology'.¹³ As a result, the possibility for genuine dialogue with the modern world became more difficult, if not impossible. Pope Leo's dilemma generated various genres of Thomism that internalised the dilemma all the way down.¹⁴ It was not until Fabro's project that the Neoplatonic metaphysics of participation in Thomas came to the fore in an engagement with continental philosophy, which receives a distinctively Kierkegaardian, rather than Kantian, presentation.¹⁵ Indeed, it was precisely Kierkegaard's critique of rationalism that was attractive to Fabro at a time when Neo-Scholasticism could not manage such a critical distance.¹⁶

After Kierkegaard's death in 1855, it took many years for his writings to emerge in translation outside of Denmark.¹⁷ By 1922 only twelve volumes (out of twenty-eight)¹⁸ were translated into German.¹⁹ In Europe this reception was known as the *Kierkegaard Renaissance*, and it categorized Kierkegaard as either a Romantic literary figure or as a Hegelian forerunner of existentialism, occluding the theological import of Kierkegaard's writings—notably in the work of Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Karl Jaspers.²⁰ Prior to 1948 Italian Kierkegaard scholars struggled to distinguish themselves from the interpretive strategies of their French and German predecessors, which were constructed upon only a portion of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings. It was not until Fabro's introduction and translation of Kierkegaard's *Journals and Papers* (1948–65) that the theological aspects of Kierkegaard's writings began to come into focus for many Catholic readers.²¹ According to Andrea Scaramuccia, Fabro's translation of the *Journals* 'was at the time the most extensive edition in translation, surpassing those of Haecker in German, Dru in English, and Tisseau in French. Even today it is second only to the collection by the Hongs'.²²

UNCOVERING KIERKEGAARD

In his account of his own intellectual development, Fabro recalls his first encounter with Kierkegaard as 'partly a disgrace' [*una mezza disgrazia*] due to Christoph Schrempf's 'unintelligible jargon' in the German translation of *The Concept of Anxiety*, which Fabro read in the National Library of Rome in 1940—a year after publishing his dissertation on Thomas' metaphysics of participation.²³ Fabro was drawn to this book because it was 'in vogue', and since the 'Kierkegaard' he first encountered was through second hand knowledge, it led him to see how Kierkegaard was being 'exploited to negate philosophy and deviate from theology, in order to give a free pass to the latest forms of French and German immanentism and various dialectical theologies'.²⁴ Fabro identifies two obstacles that prevented Kierkegaard's writings from taking on a more prominent role in Italy:

On one hand, the obstacle of secularisation—whether socialist or liberal—which cannot receive the Christian message of Kierkegaard and continues to overwhelm the culture of Italy, already guided by [Benedetto] Croce or [Giovanni] Gentile at the time of fascism and now continued especially by cultural centres and social-communist publishing houses. On the other hand, there is the obstacle of the deafness of the Catholic environment.²⁵

It was Fabro's newfound commitment to reading Kierkegaard in Danish, and to recovering a more theological reading of Kierkegaard that enabled Fabro 'more than anything else, to endure the enormous hardship of the war'.²⁶ But most of all, it was his

friendship with Prof. [Erik] Peterson that matured during the war, which was the decisive stimulus for knowing the authentic Kierkegaard as theologian and philosopher, essayist and polemicist. It was [Peterson] that recommended to me the itinerary of *Papirer* as the first and only hermeneutical guide, which made me read in the German translation the celebrated essayist, writer and theologian Theodor Haecker, his personal friend who also, like him, was received into Catholicism under the decisive influence of the great Dane.²⁷

Through such a connection to both Erik Peterson and Theodor Haecker, Fabro comes closer to the circle of influential friendships connected to *ressourcement* figures like Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Joseph Ratzinger. Importantly, Fabro sees himself as inheriting the earlier Kierkegaardian Catholic tradition of Theodor Haecker, Erik Przywara, Romano Guardini, and Erik Peterson.²⁸ It is a tradition that Fabro says

vigorously stimulated the German soil for a renewal in Catholic thought from a Kierkegaardian perspective but ... after the war, the influence of Kierkegaard on Catholic theology was suffocated by the invasion of the anti-metaphysical ontology ... [of] Heidegger, [by] more boisterous [*chiassoso*] and influential representatives like Karl Rahner.²⁹

Hence, Fabro emphatically states that his 'encounter with Kierkegaard has been no less decisive than that of St. Thomas'.³⁰ Fabro goes on to say that

just as the metaphysics of Thomas forever liberated me from the formalism and emptiness of scholastic controversies, so Kierkegaard's Christian existentialism liberated me from an inferiority complex toward thought; or to be more precise, toward the babble of the continuous stream of systems in modern and contemporary philosophy, revealing to me their anti-human and anti-Christian background.³¹

Fabro is drawn to Kierkegaard's work because 'it is realist, without falling into dogmatism; it is dialectical, without falling into scepticism; it is phenomenological with an exceptional intuition, without falling into nihilism'.³² Fabro attributes these desirable aspects to the fact that Kierkegaard sat at the feet of the Greeks and Fabro sees Kierkegaard as explicitly 'reclaiming the classic realism' of Plato and Aristotle.³³ It is for this reason that Fabro detects a conceptual affinity between Kierkegaard and Thomas.³⁴ Thus, Fabro claims that Kierkegaard's writings rise 'above the arid confines of the Reformation' and offers

to the Catholic theologian precious resources for the preparation of a phenomenology of theological problems, in particular those related to faith: it could therefore lead to a renewal of traditional theology and offer to the modern person an integral theology *cordis et mentis*.³⁵

Fabro writes during a time when the emergence of existentialist thought in Italy carried on despite Pope Pio X's previous condemnation of modernism in *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (1907). But Fabro seeks to uphold the fundamental principles of Thomism as well as engage the pressing issues of contemporary modernity in dialogue between these two worlds.

In short, Fabro's re-discovery of Kierkegaard and Thomas reveals four 'Kierkegaardian' features of Fabro's contribution to twentieth century Catholic theology: first, Fabro vindicates the religious instances of Kierkegaard's thought;³⁶ second, Kierkegaard provides Fabro with a positive alternative to materialist notions of history in Marxism;³⁷ third, Fabro disassociates

Kierkegaard's theological and philosophical positions from Hegel;³⁸ and finally, Fabro combines Kierkegaard's thought with Aristotelian realism.³⁹ In this way, Fabro's Thomism gains a deepened sense of the metaphysical structure of the finite that exists through time, such that theology does not reduce itself to accumulating proofs that demonstrate either the rationality of the act of faith, or the supernatural transcendence of that same act of faith.⁴⁰ Fabro emphasises that 'the "overcoming of metaphysics" does not put metaphysics completely aside'.⁴¹ Hence, Fabro claims that 'the theological shape of ontology does not rest upon the fact that Greek metaphysics has been assumed by the ecclesiastical theology of Christianity and elaborated from this' but rather it 'rests upon the way in which it has, from the beginning, uncovered the *ens* as *ens*'.⁴² The Kierkegaardian insight here has been recently stated succinctly by George Pattison:

Kierkegaard never denies that human beings *are* creatures, but he does not define this creatureliness in terms of some ontological essence: the human being is not an individual substance of a rational essence but a being in dynamic and temporally charged ecstatic and open dependence on God and this dependence first becomes actual in the individual's concern for the good. It is neither solely nor primarily in terms of our ontological status but in terms of our hyper-ontological freedom ... that we become *capax dei*, open to the possibility of the God-relationship.⁴³

Although Pattison moves to relate this Kierkegaardian stance to Rahner, it is actually Fabro that fleshes this position out more explicitly. So far, I have shown how Fabro incorporates some of Kierkegaard's insights in his version of Thomism, but what is it about Kierkegaard's writings that lends itself to such appropriation?

In the first part of this article, I focused on how Fabro brings both Thomas and Kierkegaard together making a genuine contribution to Thomism in the twentieth century. In this second part, I want to turn the question around by exploring what aspects Fabro sees in Kierkegaard's writings that reveal a distinctive Catholic sensibility. It has long been suggested by some Catholic readers of Kierkegaard that had he lived longer, he would have become a Roman Catholic. Fabro takes this suggestion as a humorous joke; and instead of speculating about Kierkegaard *himself*, Fabro takes very seriously the intelligibility of the joke by interrogating a Catholic sensibility in Kierkegaard's *writings*.⁴⁴ To support this claim, I will spend the rest of this article looking at Fabro's emphasis on Kierkegaard's Mariology and Ecclesiology.

KIERKEGAARD'S MARIOLOGY

In this section, I will show how Fabro draws upon Kierkegaard's high regard for Mary to illustrate his account of the relation of human and divine freedom. In this way, Fabro attempts to make Kierkegaard more palatable to Catholic readers. Indeed, for Fabro

Freedom is the basis for truth, and in this, in the choice and decision of one's own purpose [*proprio scopo*] and in the qualification of one's own being [*proprio essere*], there is no difference between human freedom and that of God. For this reason, in the annunciation to Mary, God waited to hear her response ... But Mary also waited to respond, in order to respond as she should with the freedom that is ordered toward the good.⁴⁵

Here Fabro latches on to human freedom, which is one of the key themes in Kierkegaard's theological anthropology, and connects it with the human desire for the good.⁴⁶ Significantly, Fabro illustrates this point with the first disciple of Jesus: Mary, his mother. For Fabro, this is not a passing illustration that grafts a Catholic sensibility on to Kierkegaard's writings. On the contrary, Fabro draws this illustration from *Kierkegaard*. For those who read Kierkegaard

through Karl Barth, it may be alarming that a ‘hyper-protestant’ like Kierkegaard would have anything good to say about the veneration of the Virgin Mary.⁴⁷

Tucked away in the appendix of Walter Lowrie’s translation of Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling*, Lowrie observes that ‘It would be interesting and edifying to make an anthology of the passages in which Søren Kierkegaard speaks of the Blessed Virgin’, because, Lowrie continues, ‘surely no Protestant was ever so much engrossed in this theme, and perhaps no Catholic has appreciated more profoundly the unique position of Mary’.⁴⁸ Now, much has been written on Kierkegaard’s theology of the Incarnation,⁴⁹ but Fabro’s scholarship directly responds to Lowrie’s clarion call for Italian Catholics to reinvigorate the Catholic world with Kierkegaard’s thought.⁵⁰ So, the distinctive theological feature that Fabro identifies in his reading of Kierkegaard is not just the Incarnation, but also the Annunciation. Fabro says that the Gospel writer portrays the Virgin Mary as receiving ‘a request from Above that was both a consensus but also a supreme risk of freedom for both of them, as the Christian tradition has clearly seen, and which has found a profound echo again in Kierkegaard’, whom Fabro calls, ‘the poet and theologian of the Annunciation’.⁵¹ For Fabro, Kierkegaard writes in the stance of *expectancy*, which, after Mary’s ‘Yes’, becomes a constitutive feature of Christian discipleship.⁵² Fabro’s observation here is valid today in Kierkegaard studies, as the prominent place of Mary continues to be overlooked.⁵³

In response to Lowrie’s request, Fabro catalogues how Kierkegaard constantly refers to Mary in his *Journals* as ‘full of Grace’, ‘the pure Virgin’, the ‘faithful Virgin’, the ‘Madonna’, and the ‘Mother of God’.⁵⁴ Yet it is not just the use of the Catholic titles that Fabro is interested in, but rather Fabro observes how Kierkegaard focuses on the ‘existential situation’ of ‘the divine maternity of Mary’.⁵⁵ For instance in *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard’s fictive author Johannes de Silentio contrasts the distinctive faith of Abraham and Mary.⁵⁶ Commenting on de Silentio’s comparison between the existential situation of the maternal faith of Abraham and Mary, Stephen Mulhall wonders whether Abraham’s

title ‘father of faith’ has a less honorific and more productive (or rather, reproductive) sense—that to call him a father of faith means not so much that he is exemplary of faith as that true faith is something that he fathered, something represented not so much in him as in his offspring (both immediate and ultimate)?⁵⁷

Later, Mulhall says that the upshot of de Silentio’s comparison is that Abraham’s ‘fatherhood is dependent upon another’s acceptance of motherhood’, which confirms Kierkegaard’s earlier point in the book that ‘the maturity of faith is reached in identification with femaleness rather than maleness’.⁵⁸ It is interesting that St. Thomas Aquinas also reaches for the figure of Isaac when he talks about hope as being *born* by faith.⁵⁹

Now, Fabro is alive to this theological point and says that by holding Mount Moriah and the Annunciation together, Kierkegaard presents his reader with ‘two decisive points in the story of humanity that indicate the extreme limit of dedication to which the creature, supported by Grace, may never traverse’.⁶⁰ Fabro concludes that for Kierkegaard, Mary is

the “prototype” of the “Extraordinary”, and her *fiat*, which the same God awaits for the fulfilment of the Incarnation and salvation of humanity, is a completely voluntary and free *fiat* in the acceptance of divine maternity, that makes Mary the model for every Christian in the acceptance of the divine will.⁶¹

It is this aspect of the interaction of human and divine freedom that Fabro draws upon in Kierkegaard’s work in order to illuminate Thomas’s theology of participation. And it is

precisely this concrete example of humility that Kierkegaard is after in his attempt to help his readers understand what it means to imitate Christ. Kierkegaard knows that his reader needs such concrete examples, and this is why he turns to not only Mary, but also to the saints for moral guidance on how to lead one's own life as a Christian. This insight leads Fabro to reconsider Kierkegaard's Ecclesiology in comparison with the writings of John Henry Newman. Fabro's pairing of Newman and Kierkegaard may seem strange to some readers. Especially in light of Bernard Reardon's observation that Newman is 'the outstanding religious figure of his century, with the sole exception of Kierkegaard, a man of whom he himself had probably never heard'.⁶² To see how and why Fabro held these seemingly disparate figures together, we must now turn to the Ecclesiology of Newman and Kierkegaard.

THE ECCLESIOLOGY OF NEWMAN AND KIERKEGAARD

After the Second Vatican Council, Fabro saw some of his fellow theologians (like Hans Küng and Karl Rahner) falling prey to a non-explicit faith that Fabro understood as inadvertently endorsing the dissolution of dogmatic faith and the Church.⁶³ In his 1976 article, 'The Problem of the Church in Newman and Kierkegaard', Fabro argues that the problem facing the Catholic Church is not a rejection of this or that particular dogma, but rather the overcoming of the need for faith itself.⁶⁴ Thus, Fabro draws on the shared commitments of Søren Kierkegaard and John Henry Newman in order to find the resources necessary to confront what he sees as the secularising tendencies at work in post-conciliar Catholic theology.

However, comparing Newman and Kierkegaard may seem counter-intuitive: since Newman was eventually received into Roman Catholicism and Kierkegaard remained outside the Church as a critic. Yet, Fabro describes their resemblance in terms of their shared critique of the established Church as perpetuating the process of secularisation, which he sees extending into late 20th century post-conciliar theology through the writings of Hegel and Heidegger. In doing so, Fabro seeks to recover Newman and Kierkegaard's emphasis upon the Church Militant—that is, the Church that struggles against sin and the principalities and powers on earth, as opposed to the Church triumphant in heaven. Although Fabro uses this medieval terminology to make sense of the ecclesiology of Newman and Kierkegaard, the term can be better understood by what *Lumen Gentium* describes as the 'pilgrim people of God'.⁶⁵

Now, Fabro characterises Newman's response to secularisation with Pascal's existential dilemma: either atheism or the Roman Catholic Church.⁶⁶ Moreover, Fabro says that for Newman, both the existence of God and the unity of the spiritual life are connected in an existential commitment.⁶⁷ This is evident in the opening of Newman's book on the Church Fathers:

The Church is ever militant; sometimes she gains, sometimes she loses; and more often she is at once gaining and losing in different parts of her territory. What is ecclesiastical history but a record of the ever-doubtful fortune of the battle, though its issue is not doubtful? Scarcely are we singing *Te Deum*, when we have to turn to our *Misereres*: scarcely are we in peace, when we are in persecution: scarcely have we gained a triumph, when we are visited by a scandal. Nay, we make progress by means of reverses; our griefs are our consolations; we lose Stephen, to gain Paul, and Matthias replaces the traitor Judas.⁶⁸

Here Newman offers us an understanding of the Church militant as moonlit—sometimes in full view, other times not visible.⁶⁹ Newman wants to emphasise that this sporadic appearing represents failures to be what the Church claims to be in *this* world, which is always about

anticipatory living out of what is already but not fully yet. What Newman offers the contemporary Church is a view of Christian existence in the modes of *appearing, showing, discerning, witnessing* to that which is real.

In support of this view, Fabro points to the back story of Newman's conversion in *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*⁷⁰ and his letter to the Duke of Norfolk in defence of papal infallibility as two indications of Newman's ecclesiological commitment to remain *inside* the Church. Based on these texts, Fabro mentions three fundamental principles that Newman upheld: 1) The primacy of Revelation and Dogma against construing faith as weak reason or prejudice; 2) An emphasis on the Church militant with its sacraments and rites as conduits of grace; 3) A Critique of the established Church through a *retrieval* of the faith of the Fathers.⁷¹ For John Macquarrie, the parallel between Kierkegaard and Newman can best be seen in their writings on the problem of 'faith and reason and defending the autonomy of faith against the encroachments of those rationalists who claimed an omni-competence for reason'.⁷² Likewise, Fabro portrays Kierkegaard's response to the elimination of the Church as a dilemma between 'either the Church militant or paganism', which is not entirely unrelated to Fabro's portrayal of Newman's dilemma of 'either Roman Catholicism or atheism'.

However, George Pattison has recently framed the shared theological question between Kierkegaard (in *Philosophical Fragments*) and Newman (in *University Sermons*) as primarily 'Christological: how might human beings living under the sway of sin come to recognize and receive the revelation of a sinless human life in Christ?'. Only subsequently does their question become ecclesiological: 'how might that revelation be communicated to others by those who first received it?'.⁷³ To answer the ecclesiological question, both Kierkegaard and Newman point to the concrete moral example of the martyrs—the witnesses to the Truth—as the means of transmission.⁷⁴ Yet, the answer to the Christological question is inferred from the ecclesiological problem for Newman, but for Kierkegaard, the original transmission of faith to the saints cannot be wholly self-evident, that is, 'derived from a purely empirical or *a posteriori* knowledge of the Church's history'. Pattison says that for Kierkegaard, 'the individual's relation to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ must have a basis other than the mere fact of participation in the life of the Church'.⁷⁵

Now, this is not to say that Kierkegaard lacks or even shuns sacramental theology—a cursory reading of his *Communion Discourses* would dispel such a hasty conclusion. Rather, returning to Fabro's interpretation, Kierkegaard emphasises the Church Militant, rather than the Church Triumphant. In other words, Kierkegaard anticipates the view stated in *Lumen Gentium*: 'the life of the Church is hidden with Christ in God until it appears in glory with its Spouse' (n. 49). It is this hiddenness of the Church in Christ that prevents Kierkegaard from prematurely privileging Newman's claim of historical continuity. The theological upshot of Kierkegaard's epistemic humility is not to approach life in resentment, but gratitude. Or to say, with George Pattison, since 'there can be no inerrant historical transmission of Christianity that acquires its validity from anything other than the commitment of each individual Christian', then we must, 'receiv[e] our lives—as do the lilies and the birds—direct from God's hand as a good and perfect gift, a gift of love'.⁷⁶ Although some may construe this divergence between Newman and Kierkegaard as irreconcilable, Fabro attempts to show how it can be construed as a difference in emphasis.

In this light, Fabro observes that both Kierkegaard and Newman level their critique of Christendom from the standpoint of the Church militant as described in the New Testament (for Kierkegaard) and Tradition (for Newman).⁷⁷ Rather, Fabro points to *Practice in Christianity*, where Kierkegaard's fictive author, Anti-Climacus opposes the State to the Church to say that the Church militant is not the Church triumphant.⁷⁸ Moreover, Kierkegaard says that since Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6), this implies that 'the truth does not naturally consist in

knowing the truth, but in *being* the truth' which is not 'a product or result of history'.⁷⁹ So even though Pilate can claim historical continuity with Christ, even to physically *see* Christ, but despite being in full possession of historical continuity, Pilate still fails to *directly recognise* the truth (PC 214). For Anti-Climacus, truth is not a *result* that is already achieved like the invention of gun powder—with a predecessor who spends twenty years inventing it and a successor that spends much less time improving that invention. Rather for Anti-Climacus, truth is the *way*:

only the person who has travelled the way can triumphally celebrate; but he is no longer in this world, he is now on high, as Christ was indeed also the way when he ascended to heaven ... [so] a Church triumphant in this world is an illusion, that in this world we can truthfully speak only of a militant Church. But the Church militant is related, feels itself drawn, to Christ in lowliness ... [thus] a Church triumphant is always understood [as] a Church that wants to be the Church triumphant here in this world. (PC 209)

Anti-Climacus does not jettison the theological category of the Church triumphant all together, but rather places it in its proper context, saying 'a Church triumphant in eternity is entirely in order, corresponding to Christ's being raised on high' (PC 209). The problem for Anti-Climacus is that once it is established that truth is a result that has already been achieved, then i) faith becomes a mode of social morality, and ii) everyone is already a Christian by virtue of being human, hence the struggle is over and we can all carry on with the next novelty as a matter of course. Anti-Climacus' problem is that this triumphalistic attitude actually undermines Christianity in particular and religious faith in general: 'In the Church militant, it was piety to confess Christianity; in established Christendom, it is piety to conceal it' (PC 217).

Now Fabro detects here a 'a very precise Catholic demand for the Church' as described in the New Testament, which is that the Church militant empowers the single existing individual to imitate Christ in the world.⁸⁰ Fabro also says that Kierkegaard's 'rupture with established Christendom' is not provoked by Kierkegaard's despair, but rather an acute critical gesture that is bound up with his understanding of the Church militant as the Church of the martyrs who bore witness to Christ.⁸¹ By comparing Newman and Kierkegaard, Fabro overturns one of the more prevalent misconceptions of Kierkegaard which has deterred Catholic theologians from serious engagement—that is, his negative view of the Church.⁸² However, Fabro's claim is that both Newman and Kierkegaard are 'without a doubt prophetic thinkers for us today' who both offer a critique of Christendom that should be read in light of 'the continuity of thought and life between the contemporary Church and the ancient Church'.⁸³

After Henri de Lubac opened up the possibility of a critical and theological engagement with modern atheism in *Drama of Atheist Humanism* (1944)—an approach that Pope Pius XII subsequently condemned in *Humani Generis* (1950)—Fabro's work brings the much needed proficiency with the history of atheism to re-frame the terms of debate for Catholic engagement with the contemporary world. In 1959, Fabro's work on atheism led him to establish the European Institute of the History of Atheism at the Pontifical Urbaniana University. Fabro's *God in Exile* (1968)⁸⁴ began as a set of lectures that Fabro gave as a visiting professor at Notre Dame University from February to May in 1965.⁸⁵ Rosa Goglia says that Fabro had about 30–40 students signed up for his class entitled, 'Principles of Immanence and the Genesis of Atheism'.⁸⁶ *God in Exile* is an updated translation of Fabro's earlier two-volume work, *Introduzione all'ateismo moderno* (1964)⁸⁷ and represents over a decade of his engagement with figures like Marx, Feuerbach, Hegel, and Heidegger.

Fabro's massive tome comprises of over 1200 pages and is divided into nine parts. The English subtitle aptly depicts the central thread of Fabro's book: A Study of the Internal Dynamic of Modern Atheism from Its Roots in the Cartesian *Cogito* to the Present Day. Fabro's

argument is that the Cartesian *cogito* is the seed that contains and yet evolves into modern atheism. Although this claim is anachronistic in respect to the faith of Descartes himself, what Fabro latches on to here is how the quest for certainty after Descartes divides the mind from the world in terms of inner and outer, bracketing the creative activity of God by focusing instead on the productivity of human rationality. In Fabro's own words, he says that the 'chief aim of this volume is to chart the main thrust of the void gouged by the Cartesian *cogito* insofar as it has driven man to that blank despair'.⁸⁸

Fabro arrives at 'the inner nucleus of modern atheism' by first defining the phenomenon, and then showing how it came to be by charting important philosophical controversies in a *tour de force*: examining the work of figures like Descartes and Spinoza, to Hobbes, Locke and Berkeley, up to d'Holbach, Lessing, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Feuerbach Engels, Marx and Lenin, to Bradley and Dewey, on into Nietzsche, Jaspers, and Heidegger, to the dialectical theologies of Barth, Bultmann, Tillich, and Bonhoeffer, to the radical theologies of Robinson and Altizer. At the end of each part of the book, the translator Arthur Gibson has attached some of Fabro's clippings in the form of appendices. Gibson also provides a helpful introduction that summarizes the book, which helps orient the reader. It is worth noting that against the claim of 'death of god' theologians, Fabro says that

Kierkegaard does indeed stand at the antipodes of the latest Protestant theologizing of the Altizer sort, the theology that that desists from any critique of modern atheism and indeed claims to start from it ... Kierkegaard does categorically reject the "death of God" and he refutes the negative conclusions of Hegel and Feuerbach; and this not only [stems] from theological motives [but also] because of his own deep religious aspiration.⁸⁹

In some respects, Fabro's genealogy of atheism stands unrivalled until its argument was further nuanced by Michael J Buckley's *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (1987),⁹⁰ or Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (1989).⁹¹ Indeed, prior to Taylor's monumental work, it would be difficult to find in the English speaking world a more resourceful compendium of the history of modern atheism, than Fabro's *God in Exile* (1968). For it was Fabro's staunch resistance to Neo-Scholasticism and its rationalistic orientation⁹² that led him to encounter Kierkegaard and incorporate Kierkegaard's critique of modern philosophy into his own thinking as a way of overturning 'the dominate interpretation of the Scholastic and Neo-Scholastic tradition which portrayed Aquinas as an Aristotelian'.⁹³ Although Fabro is not typically associated with the *ressourcement* movement in pre-conciliar theology, there is enough evidence to include Fabro in this renewal movement, indeed furnishing the groundwork for some of its central insights.

Now, Secular/radical theologians have often laid claim to extending Kierkegaard's work in pronouncing the death of God,⁹⁴ but this is a common misreading of Kierkegaard asserts that his critique of Christendom implies an anti-ecclesiology.⁹⁵ But Fabro seeks to correct this misunderstanding by saying:

The Kierkegaardian principle simply says that in order to be a Christian, it is not enough to accept a creed from a church in which one is baptised as a member. To be saved, one needs to live in the every day reality of this faith because Christianity is not a doctrine but a communication of existence that must separate us from collusion with the aspirations of worldly gain: career, wealth, pleasure, prestige. It is this that constitutes *in concreto* the Imitation of Jesus Christ. Through this principle, the Church has its basis for Kierkegaard, and explains his polemic against the situation of the State Church.⁹⁶

Fabro reminds us that one cannot be a second generation Kierkegaardian because one cannot perform the critical abseil without depending upon the structure which one criticises. Hence for

all of his critical remarks, Kierkegaard *presupposes*, indeed *loves* the Church. So, Kierkegaard's criticism of the Church is best understood as finding fault with the Church for not being what it really should be, and claims to be. By declaring this in terms of the Church being absent, Kierkegaard thereby reinforces the underlying assumption that the Church is being what it is not and not being what it *is*. Thus, Kierkegaard's problem with the Church is *disappointment* not disbelief; he believes *too much* not too little.

In the face of the contemporary crisis of faith, Fabro puts Kierkegaard before us because Fabro values how Kierkegaard, albeit as some kind of Lutheran, still possesses a strangely Catholic sense of the Church—in terms of its structure, performance, sociality, and sacraments.⁹⁷ Indeed, Fabro turns to Kierkegaard's writings in order to break-up an overly secure notion of ecclesial presence, and Fabro turns to Newman as one who had embraced the church, but who gets his view of the Church from his wrestling with being an *Anglican*—a view of the church that Catholicism typically finds difficult to sustain as fluidity cools into solidity of structure and category. With both Kierkegaard and Newman, Fabro is resourcing Catholicism not simply with its own internal resources—as most of the other *ressourcement* theologians tended to do—but instead, Fabro resources Catholicism with the broader catholicity of the Christian tradition that had been lost to view. In this light, Fabro is a fellow traveller with someone like Yves Congar, but because Congar read Kierkegaard too closely to Luther, Congar failed to see the resemblance between Kierkegaard and Newman.⁹⁸ In the end, Fabro's comparison between Kierkegaard and Newman highlights the need for reform and renewal in light of the Catholic tendency to think in terms of stable structures of grace which can be seen to under-emphasise human action and needs to be rejuvenated by an emphasis on grace as a continually renewed act.

CONCLUSION: EXPANDING *RESSOURCEMENT*

Neglecting the twentieth century Catholic reception of Kierkegaard leads to some negative consequences. First and foremost, overlooking Kierkegaard's reception in Catholic theology is symptomatic of restricting the available resources of Catholic theologians to *only* those figures from the fourteenth century and earlier. This negative consequence is borne out in several contemporary accounts of *ressourcement* theology, which restrict its focus in just this way. For instance, Jürgen Mettepenningen describes *nouvelle théologie* as a 'return to the thirteenth-century Thomas Aquinas' that 'served as the preparatory step and permanent support in a return to the sources of the faith'.⁹⁹ Hans Boersma describes the primary task of *nouvelle théologie* as 'taking seriously Christianity's encounter with Platonism' in order 'to recover the church fathers, particularly the Eastern theologians, well known for their Platonist-Christian proclivities'.¹⁰⁰ Even John Milbank says of *nouvelle théologie* that the 'initial aim was *ressourcement*—a recovery of the riches of Christian tradition, especially prior to 1300'.¹⁰¹ Finally, Charles Taylor says that *ressourcement* is primarily 'a return to the Patristic sources, particularly the Greek fathers'.¹⁰² Although these descriptions rightly highlight the recovery of the patristic material, it only tells part of the story. Indeed, Catholic engagement with Kierkegaard reveals that there were contemporary resources available to Catholic theologians which allowed them to resist the undesirable effects of the Enlightenment, which manifested in the form of Neo-Scholasticism and modern atheism.

A second negative consequence is a distortion of the basic aims of *ressourcement*: what has been widely asserted as the goal of *ressourcement* amounts to only one of the original stated aims of Jean Daniélou's programme.¹⁰³ According to Daniélou, a return to the Fathers was a

necessary *but not sufficient* resource for engaging contemporary issues. Indeed, Aidan Nichols says that Daniélou held that it is increasingly important for Catholic theologians to follow ‘these alien philosophers onto their own home ground, the better to respond to them’.¹⁰⁴ So from its inception, *ressourcement* was an engagement with contemporary philosophers as much as it was an historical retrieval of the Fathers, Liturgy, or Scripture. The specific importance of Kierkegaard as one of the contemporary philosophers can be seen in the favourable place he is given in Daniélou’s original essay.¹⁰⁵ It is in light of this that the need for an account of the Catholic reception of Kierkegaard becomes increasingly clear.

In this article, I have shown the distinctive contribution that Fabro offers not only to Thomist studies, but also to Kierkegaard studies. To do this, I have shown what Fabro learns from Kierkegaard and the Catholic sensibility Fabro identifies in Kierkegaard’s writings. My study of Fabro here has not been an exhaustive attempt, but rather a representative one that shores up for the English-speaking world the originality of Fabro’s approach. As a result, my hope is that readers engaged in Catholic studies and Kierkegaard studies would turn to Fabro’s work in order to further flesh out a mutual exchange that benefits both disciplines. To accomplish this, more of Fabro’s writings must be translated into English. But this task must be left for another day. For now, it has been my claim that Kierkegaard was just as influential for Fabro as Thomas, and this was not merely circumstantial, but *necessary* to the ongoing development of Catholic theology and Kierkegaard studies. Jamie Ferreira has it right when she concludes that

An appreciation of the significance of Kierkegaard’s writings will, therefore, have to include his reception by very different kinds of audiences ... much of the lasting impact of Kierkegaard’s writings will be on readers who find in these writings something that resonates with them, that provokes them in profound ways, that awakens them to something of value in themselves, and helps them revision and cope with their lives.¹⁰⁶

Notes

1 Section 9 of the Preface to Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* unpublished translation by Terry Pinkard, 2008.

2 Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas* (London: Gollancz, 1957), 368.

3 Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 39–56.

4 For instance see, John J. Davenport et al., *Kierkegaard after Macintyre: Essays on Freedom, Narrative, and Virtue* (Chicago: Open Court, 2001). John Lippitt, ‘Getting the Story Straight: Kierkegaard, Macintyre and Some Problems with Narrative,’ *Inquiry* 50, no. 1 (2007), 34–69. John J. Davenport, *Narrative Identity and Autonomy: From Frankfurt and Macintyre to Kierkegaard* (London: Routledge, 2012). Anthony Rudd, *Self, Value, and Narrative: A Kierkegaardian Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). See also, Eleanor Helms, ‘The Objectivity of Faith: Kierkegaard’s Critique of Fideism,’ *Res Philosophica* 90, no. 4 (2013), 439–460.

5 Cornelio Fabro, *La Nozione Metafisica Di Partecipazione Secondo San Tommaso D’aquino* (Roma: EDIVI, 2005). Fabro finished his dissertation in 1937 and published it in 1939. For more, see Alain Contat, ‘L’étant, L’esse Et La Participation Selon Cornelio Fabro,’ *Revue Thomiste* 111, no. 3 (2011), 357–403. See also, Alain Contat, ‘Le Figure Della Differenza Ontologica Nel Tomismo Del Novecento (Prima Parte),’ *Alpha Omega* 11, no. 1 (2008), 77–129. Alain Contat, ‘Le Figure Della Differenza Ontologica Nel Tomismo Del Novecento (Seconda Parte),’ *Alpha Omega* 11, no. 2 (2008), 213–250. Also, see the excellent collection of essays edited by Ariberto Acerbi, *Crisi E Destino Della Filosofia: Studi Su Cornelio Fabro* (Roma: Edizioni Università della Santa Croce, 2012). Gabriele De Anna, *Verità E Libertà : Saggi Sul Pensiero Di Cornelio Fabro* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2012). Perhaps the only chapter-length treatment of Fabro’s Thomism in English is in Helen James John, *The Thomist Spectrum* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966), 87–107.

6 Fabro was nominated as a member of the preparatory commission and *peritus* for the Second Vatican Council in 1960. He contributed a study on atheistic existentialism to the schema for the Constitution *De*

deposito fidei pure custodiendo, which, in the end, did not make it past the chief censor: Prof. Joseph Ratzinger. See, Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II: Announcing and Preparing Vatican Council II*, vol. 1 (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1995), 241, 410–429. See also, Jared Wicks, ‘Six Texts by Prof. Joseph Ratzinger as *Peritus* before and During Vatican Council II,’ *Gregorianum* 89, no. 2 (2008), 233–311.

7 Rosa Goglia, *Cornelio Fabro: Profilo Biografico, Cronologico, Tematico Da Inediti, Note Di Archivio, Testimonianze* (Roma: EDIVI, 2010), 190.

8 John Paul II says that Kierkegaard shows us how ‘faith liberates reason from presumption, the typical temptation of the philosopher’ (n. 76). <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_15101998_fides-et-ratio_en.html>. It is worth noting that the proper relationship of faith and reason is often cited as an issue that Catholic readers have used to dismiss Kierkegaard’s writings. Fabro was aware of this negative preconception and attempted to overturn it in, Cornelio Fabro, ‘Kierkegaard E San Tommaso,’ *Sapienza* IX (1956), 292–308. See also, Fabro’s article ‘Faith and Reason in Kierkegaard’s Dialectic’ in Howard A. Johnson and Niels Thulstrup, *A Kierkegaard Critique: An International Selection of Essays Interpreting Kierkegaard* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 156–206. Rather than rehearsing Fabro’s arguments in these two essays, this article will take Fabro’s view for granted and develop further avenues of interest.

9 Cornelio Fabro, *God in Exile: Modern Atheism*, trans. Arthur Gibson (Westminster: Paulist Newman, 1968). For more, see Andrea Robiglio, ‘La Logica Dell’ateismo: Il Principio Di Non Contraddizione Secondo C. Fabro,’ *Divus Thomas* 102, no. 1 (1999), 120–143. See also, Andrea Robiglio, ‘Aspetti Di Introduzione All’ateismo Moderno Di Cornelio Fabro,’ *Divus Thomas* 100, no. 3 (1997), 139–164. For more on Fabro’s American reception, see my chapter entitled ‘God in Exile in the USA’ in *Fabro e Brentano: per un nuovo realismo*, ed. Antonio Russo (Roma: Studium, 2013) pp. 245–252.

10 Cornelio Fabro, Rosa Goglia, and Elvio Celestino Fontana, *Appunti Di Un Itinerario : Versione Integrata Delle Tre Stesure Con Parti Inedite* (Roma: EDIVI, 2011), 85. In Fabro’s personal library, there are 312 Kierkegaard-related titles and only 185 titles related to St. Thomas, see Goglia, *Fabro: Profilo Biografico*, 162. Fabro had always wanted to write an introduction to Kierkegaard but never did, even though he continued to write about Kierkegaard until the end of his life (cf. Goglia 2010: 60).

11 For more on the background of Neo-Scholasticism and Pope Leo XIII’s relation to that movement, see Gerald A. McCool, *Nineteenth-Century Scholasticism : The Search for a Unitary Method* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1989), 17–36; 226–228. See also, Gerald A. McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism* (Fordham University Press, 1989), 5–35. Gerald A. McCool, *The Neo-Thomists* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994), 25–40. For an assessment of Fabro’s distinctive contribution to these debates, see Parts I and II of George Lindbeck, ‘Participation and Existence in the Interpretation of St. Thomas Aquinas,’ *Franciscan Studies* 17 (1957), 1–22; 107–125.

12 Wayne Hankey, ‘Making Theology Practical: Thomas Aquinas and the Nineteenth Century Religious Revival,’ *Dionysius* 9 (1985), 90.

13 Hankey, 93.

14 Recently the unintended consequence of various Thomism(s) has been deftly examined, see Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas : Versions of Thomism* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2002). Notably, it is Mark D. Jordan who draws inspiration from the *form* of Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms in order to assess ‘the rhetorical force’ involved in twentieth century Thomism’s claim to an authoritative rewriting of Thomas, see Mark D. Jordan, *Rewritten Theology : Aquinas after His Readers* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 3. Also see, Mark D. Jordan, ‘The Modernity of Christian Theology or Writing Kierkegaard Again for the First Time,’ *Modern Theology* 27, no. 3 (2011), 442–451. For Jordan’s dependence upon Fabro, see Mark D. Jordan, ‘The Grammar of *Esse*: Re-Reading Thomas on the Transcendentals,’ *The Thomist* 44, no. January (1980), 1–26. For a good introduction to Fabro’s version of Thomism, see Guido Mazzotta, ‘Ipotesi Su Fabro,’ *Euntes Docete* 50 (1997), 213–231.

15 See Wayne Hankey, ‘Denys and Aquinas: Antimodern Cold and Postmodern Hot,’ in *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric, and Community*, ed. Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones (Routledge, 1998), 147–148. Wayne J. Hankey, ‘From Metaphysics to History, from Exodus to Neoplatonism, from Scholasticism to Pluralism: The Fate of Gilsonian Thomism in English-Speaking North America,’ *Dionysius* 14 (1998), 157–188. Hankey sees Fabro’s work as a genuine advance in twentieth century Thomist thought. Others have criticised Fabro’s interpretation of participation, see Rudi A. te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 147, 151, 158 n. 155, 170 n. 118, 184–146, 222. However, recently some Thomists have come to the defence of Fabro against Rudi te Velde’s judgment, see Gregory T. Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 237–243. See also, Jason A. Mitchell, *Being and Participation: The Method and Structure of Metaphysical Reflection According to Cornelio Fabro*, 2 vols. (Roma: Ateneo Pontificio Regina Apostolorum, 2012), 485–492. For more on Kant’s

influence on Neo-Scholasticism and Neo-Thomism, see Norbert Fischer, *Kant Und Der Katholizismus : Stationen Einer Wechselhaften Geschichte* (Freiburg: Herder, 2005), 485–496; 515–552. For the Scholastic inheritance of Kant's own thought, see Cornelio Fabro, 'Il Trascendentale Moderno E Il Trascendentale Tomistico,' *Angelicum* 60 (1983), 534–558. For a more recent account, see Christopher J. Insole, *Kant and the Creation of Freedom: A Theological Problem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

16 For more on Neo-Scholasticism, see Ulrich Gottfried Leinsle, *Introduction to Scholastic Theology* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), ch. 7.

17 Habib C. Malik, *Receiving Søren Kierkegaard: The Early Impact and Transmission of His Thought* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), xvii.

18 This number is based on the latest Danish edition published by the *Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre* in Copenhagen. <<http://www.sk.ku.dk/eng.asp>>.

19 Søren Kierkegaard, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Christoph Schrempf, vol. 12 (Jena: E. Diederichs, 1922).

20 For more, see Heiko Schulz, 'A Modest Head Start: The German Reception of Kierkegaard,' in *Kierkegaard's International Reception*, ed. Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 307–419.

21 Franca Castagnino, *Gli Studi Italiani Su Kierkegaard, 1906–1966, Collana Del Centro Di Ricerche Di Storia Della Storiografia Filosofica 2* (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1972), 5–29. See also, Cornelio Fabro, *Problemi Dell'esistenzialismo* (Editrice del Verbo Incarnato, 2009). For more, see ch. 1 of the recent PhD thesis by Marco Strona, 'Verità Dell'essere E Metafisica Della Libertà: Cornelio Fabro Interprete Di Kierkegaard' (Pontifical Atheneum of St. Anselm, 2013), 17–54. See also, Ingrid Basso, 'Cento Anni Di Studi Kierkegaardiani in Italia: 1904–2004,' in *L'edificante in Kierkegaard*, ed. Isabella Adinolfi and Virgilio Melchiorre (Genova: Il Melangolo, 2005), 305–326.

22 Andrea Scaramuccia, 'The Italian Reception of Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers,' *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook*, no. July (2003), 367. Fabro worked from the more complete and accurate second edition of Kierkegaard's *Samlede Værker* (eds. Drachmann, Heiberg, & Lange: 1920–1936), which contained a glossary and index. Fabro also used the 1869 Reitzel, as well as Thulstrup's 1968 edition of *Papier*, see Goglia, *Fabro: Profilo Biografico*, 163. It is worth noting that Bompiani's 2013 edition of *Søren Kierkegaard: Le Grandi Opere Filosofiche e Teologiche* is over 2500 pages, and it still uses Fabro's authoritative translation and substantial introduction.

23 Fabro, Goglia, and Fontana, *Appunti*, 83.

24 Ibid.

25 For Fabro's own account, see Cornelio Fabro, 'Kierkegaard in Italia,' *Il Veltro* 25, no. 1–3 (1981), 89.

26 Fabro, Goglia, and Fontana, *Appunti*, 85.

27 Ibid.

28 Fabro has in mind the translations and essays of Theodor Haecker, Erik Przywara's essay comparing Newman and Kierkegaard (1948), Erik Peterson's essay on Existentialism and Protestant Theology (1947), and Romano Guardini's essay on the origin of Kierkegaard's thought (1927). For more, see Theodor Haecker and Alexander Dru, *Søren Kierkegaard* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 33, 39, 58. Theodor Haecker and C. van O. Bruyn, [*Der Buckel Kierkegaards*] *Kierkegaard the Cripple* (London: Harvill Press, 1948), 20. Theodor Haecker, *Journal in the Night* (London: Harvill Press, 1950), 140, 170–171. See also, Alexander Dru, 'Haecker's Point of View,' *Downside Review* 67, no. 209 (1949), 267. Alexander Dru, 'On Haecker's *Metaphysik Des Gefühls*,' *Downside Review* 68, no. 211 (1949), 39–41. For more on the importance of Haecker and Dru, see John Heywood-Thomas and Hinrich Siefken, 'Theodor Haecker and Alexander Dru: A Contribution to the Discovery of Kierkegaard in Britain,' *Kierkegardiana* 18 (1996). George Pattison, 'Great Britain: From "Prophet of the Now" To Postmodern Ironist (and after),' in *Kierkegaard's International Reception*, ed. Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 250. See also, Markus Kleinert, 'Theodor Haecker: The Mobilization of a Total Author,' in *Kierkegaard's Influence on Literature, Criticism and Art*, ed. Jon Stewart (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 91–114.

29 Cornelio Fabro, *Søren Kierkegaard: Opere* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1972), lxi. Fabro's first problem with Rahner is that he characterises the metaphysics of St Thomas as a 'metaphysics of cognition' in the Kantian vein of Joseph Maréchal, which ultimately extracts Thomas from his historical situation. Fabro's second problem with Rahner is his attempt to update this Kantian characterisation of Thomas with the idiom of Martin Heidegger so as to conflate the *actus essendi* with the 'presence of consciousness' of *Dasein*, resulting in an idealism which equates being and thinking. For more, see Cornelio Fabro, *La Svolta Antropologica Di Karl Rahner* [1974], vol. 25 (Roma: EDIVI, 2011). See also, Karen Kilby, *Karl Rahner : Theology and Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004), 13–48. Similar to Fabro's review in the same year, compare Hans Urs von Balthasar, 'Review of Karl Rahner's *Geist Im Welt*,' *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 63 (1939), 371–379.

Cf. Rowan Williams and Mike Higton, *Wrestling with Angels : Conversations in Modern Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 92–93.

30 Fabro, Goglia, and Fontana, *Appunti*, 85.

31 Ibid. For more on scholastic controversies, see Leinsle, *Introduction to Scholastic Theology*, ch. 4.

32 Fabro, Goglia, and Fontana, *Appunti*, 86.

33 Ibid. For a more recent argument along these lines, see Rudd, *Self, Value, and Narrative : A Kierkegaardian Approach*, chs. 2 & 6.

34 For more, see Fabro, 'Kierkegaard E San Tommaso,' 292–308. See also, Cornelio Fabro, 'L'esistenzialismo Kierkegaardiano,' in *Storia Della Filosofia Vol. 2*, ed. Cornelio Fabro (Roma: Colletti, 1959), 839–867.

35 Cornelio Fabro, *S. Kierkegaard Diario (3rd Ed.)*, vol. 1 (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1980), 130. As cited in Scaramuccia, 367.

36 Cornelio Fabro, 'Influssi Cattolici Sulla Spiritualità Kierkegaardiana,' *Humanitas* 17 (1962), 501–507.

37 Cornelio Fabro, *Tra Kierkegaard E Marx: Per Una Definizione Dell'esistenza*, ed. Christian Ferraro (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1952).

38 C. Fabro and C. Ferraro, *La Prima Riforma Della Dialettica Hegeliana* (Editrice del Verbo incantato, 2004).

39 Goglia, *Fabro: Profilo Biografico*, 227. For more on the influence of Aristotle on Kierkegaard, see Cornelio Fabro, 'La 'Pistis' Aristotelica Nell'opera Di Søren Kierkegaard,' *Proteus: Rivista di Filosofia* 5, no. 13 (1974), 3–24. Cornelio Fabro, 'Actuality. Reality,' in *Concepts and Alternatives in Kierkegaard (Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana, 3)* (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 1980), 111–113. See also, Fabro's extended analysis 'Aristotle and Aristotelianism' in Niels Thulstrup and Maris Mikulová Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard and Great Traditions [Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana 6]* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1981), 27–53. For a comparison of Thomas and Kierkegaard on infused virtues, see Mark A. Tietjen's essay in Robert L. Perkins, *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Christian Discourses and the Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress*, vol. 17 (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2007), 165–190.

40 Cornelio Fabro, 'L'assoluto Nel Tomismo E Nell'esistenzialismo,' *Salesianum* 13 (1951), 198–199.

41 Fabro, 'L'assoluto Nel Tomismo E Nell'esistenzialismo,' 199.

42 Fabro, 'L'assoluto Nel Tomismo E Nell'esistenzialismo,' 200.

43 George Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Theology of the Nineteenth Century : The Paradox and the 'Point of Contact'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 100.

44 Cornelio Fabro, 'Kierkegaard E Il Cattolicesimo,' *Divus Thomas* 19, no. 1 (1956), 67–70. See also, Fabro's comment in Johnson and Thulstrup, *A Kierkegaard Critique: An International Selection of Essays Interpreting Kierkegaard*, 193. 'I have no intention of trying to make a Catholic, much less an unconscious Thomist, out of Kierkegaard'.

45 Cornelio Fabro and Ariberto Acerbi, *L'io E L'esistenza E Altri Brevi Scritti* (Roma: Università della Santa Croce, 2006), 198.

46 For more, see C. Fabro, *Riflessioni Sulla Libertà* (Editrice del Verbo Incarnato, 2004), chs. 6–8.

47 Cf. Karl Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I, 2, 153–157.

48 Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling ; the Book on Adler*, trans. Walter Lowrie, *Everyman's Library* (London: Random House Publishing, 1994), 288. n. 50.

49 For instance, see David R. Law, *Kierkegaard's Kenotic Christology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). See also, Murray Rae, *Kierkegaard's Vision of the Incarnation : By Faith Transformed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). Cornelio Fabro, 'Cristologia Kierkegaardiana,' *Divinitas* 16, no. 1 (1972).

50 See Walter Lowrie, 'Søren Kierkegaard,' *Religio* XI (1935), 1–15.

51 Fabro, *Riflessioni Sulla Libertà*, 11. For more, see Cornelio Fabro, 'Kierkegaard Poeta-Teologo Dell'annunciazione,' *Humanitas* III (1948), 1025–1034.

52 For more, see Cornelio Fabro, 'Kierkegaard E La Madonna,' *Mater Ecclesiae* 7, no. 3 (1971), 132–144. For a more recent Catholic Feminist perspective corroborating this point, see Tina Beattie, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate : A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation* (London: Continuum, 2002).

53 For instance, Wanda Berry's essay on 'The Silent Woman' in Kierkegaard overlooks Fabro's theological point, see Céline León and Sylvia Walsh, *Feminist Interpretations of Søren Kierkegaard* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 287–306.

54 See *Pap.* I A 68, 172, 190, 232; II A 31, 68; VIII A 338; X² A 64; X³ A 57; X⁴ A 454, 521, 572; XI¹ A 40, 45, 141, 184; IX A 12. See also, Cornelio Fabro, 'Spunti Cattolici Nel Pensiero Religioso Di Søren Kierkegaard,' *Doctor Communis* 26, no. 4 (1973), 269–270.

55 Cornelio Fabro, *Kierkegaard, poeta teologo dell'Annunciazione*, as cited in: <<http://www.corneliofabro.org/documento.asp?ID=552>>.

56 Søren Kierkegaard, Howard V. Hong, and Edna H. Hong, *Fear and Trembling ; Repetition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 58; 64–65. Hereafter, FT.

57 Stephen Mulhall, *Inheritance and Originality : Wittgenstein, Heidegger, Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 375.

58 Mulhall, *Inheritance and Originality*, 377.

59 ST II-II q. 17 a. 7 obj. 3.

60 Cornelio Fabro, *Kierkegaard, poeta teologo dell'Annunciazione*.

61 Ibid. Cf. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling ; the Book on Adler*, 154. See also, Søren Kierkegaard, *Without Authority*, ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 149. See also, PF 34; CUP 260.

62 Bernard M. G. Reardon, *From Coleridge to Gore : A Century of Religious Thought in Britain* (Harlow: Longman, 1971), 127.

63 Cornelio Fabro, 'Il Problema Della Chiesa in Newman E Kierkegaard,' *Internationale Cardinal Newman Studien* (1978), 132.

64 Fabro, 'Newman E Kierkegaard,' 120.

65 <http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html>.

66 Fabro, 'Newman E Kierkegaard,' 123. Fabro refers to §547–549 of Pascal's *Pensées*.

67 Fabro, 'Newman E Kierkegaard,' 125.

68 John Henry Newman, *The Church of the Fathers* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2002), 1.

69 Cf. Henri de Lubac and James R. Dunne, *The Church : Paradox and Mystery* (Shannon: Ecclesia Press, 1969), 16–17, 64 n. 140. See also, Joseph Ratzinger's comments on the image of Church as moon in Hans Urs von Balthasar and Joseph Ratzinger, *Two Say Why* (London: Search Press, 1973), 76–79.

70 John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, ed. I. T. Ker, *Penguin Classics* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 182–183.

71 Fabro, 'Newman E Kierkegaard,' 126–127.

72 John Macquarrie, 'Newman and Kierkegaard on the Act of Faith' in *Newman and Conversion*, ed. Ian T. Ker (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 82.

73 Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Theology of the Nineteenth Century*, 195. As Pattison rightly says, Kierkegaard argues that the claim of historical continuity between the contemporary and early Church depends upon 'a decision as to what counts as relevant to faith and this decision is—epistemologically if not temporally—prior to any act of reading', in other words, the claim of historical continuity 'would itself need to be demonstrated historically, but this must rely on criteria that are essentially non-historical, that is, that concern the individual's own understanding of faith and what it requires of us' (193–4).

74 John Henry Newman, *Fifteen Sermons Preached before the University of Oxford between A.D. 1826 and 1843*, ed. Mary Katherine Tillman, 3rd ed. ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 91–92.

75 Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Theology of the Nineteenth Century*, 197. Newman emphasises the historical continuity of the primitive and contemporary church in terms of its tradition and liturgy; whereas from Kierkegaard's perspective, matters of faith—whether the infallibility of the Bible or Magisterium—cannot be decided upon historical grounds alone.

76 Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Theology of the Nineteenth Century*, 212.

77 For more on Newman's critique of Christendom and its influence on Vatican II, see I. T. Ker and Terrence Merrigan, *Newman and Faith, Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs 31* (Louvain: Peeters Press, 2004), 117–142.

78 Søren Kierkegaard, Howard V. Hong, and Edna H. Hong, *Practice in Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). 'Lord Jesus Christ, it is indeed from on high that you draw a person to yourself (Jn 12:32), and it is to victory that you call him, but this of course means that you call him to struggle and promise him victory in the struggle ... Keep us from ... delud[ing] ourselves into thinking ourselves to be members of a Church already triumphant here in this world. Your kingdom certainly is not here in the world; there is room for it only if it will struggle and by struggling make room for itself to exist. But if it will struggle, it will never be displaced by the world either; that you will guarantee' (PC 201).

79 Fabro, 'Newman E Kierkegaard,' 129. Cf. PC 205.

80 Fabro, 'Newman E Kierkegaard,' 129–130.

81 Fabro, 'Newman E Kierkegaard,' 138. Cf. JP X3 A 415–416.

82 Fabro, 'Newman E Kierkegaard,' 120–139. Although Fabro is not mentioned in recent Kierkegaard scholarship, his insightful comparison has been corroborated, see M. Jamie Ferreira, 'Leaps and Circles: Kierkegaard and Newman on Faith and Reason,' *Religious Studies* 30, no. 4 (1994), 379–397.

83 Fabro, 'Newman E Kierkegaard,' 133. In fact, as George Pattison has shown, although he was not technically a reformer himself, 'Kierkegaard's "attack on Christendom" would become central to twentieth-century theological debates about the nature of the Church and its relation to society and, especially, to modern society', see Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Theology of the Nineteenth Century*, 199.

84 Fabro, *God in Exile: Modern Atheism*. For more on Fabro's American reception, see my chapter entitled 'God in Exile in the USA' in *Fabro e Brentano*, ed. Antonio Russo (Roma: Studium, 2014) pp. 245–252.

85 Fabro, Goglia, and Fontana, *Appunti*, 75. n. 67.

86 Goglia, *Fabro: Profilo Biografico*, 131.

87 Cornelio Fabro, *Introduzione All'ateismo Moderno* (Roma: Editrice Studium, 1964). For more on this text, see Robiglio, 'Aspetti Di Introduzione All'ateismo Moderno Di Cornelio Fabro,' 139–164. See also, Robiglio, 'La Logica Dell'ateismo: Il Principio Di Non Contraddizione Secondo C. Fabro,' 120–143.

88 Fabro, *God in Exile*, xli.

89 Fabro, *God in Exile*, 1040–1041.

90 Michael J. Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

91 Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

92 Fabro, Goglia, and Fontana, *Appunti*, 29. In fact, Elvio Fontana calls for a study to be done just on this topic alone in his essay 'Fabro e il Neotomismo Italiano alla Soglia del Concilio' in Giampietro De Paoli, ed., *Cornelio Fabro E Il Neotomismo Italiano Dopo Il Concilio* (Roma: Bibliotheca Edizioni, 2011), 107–135.

93 Fabro, Goglia, and Fontana, *Appunti*, 32.

94 For a critique of secular theologians' appropriation of Kierkegaard, see Pattison, *Kierkegaard and the Theology of the Nineteenth Century*, 202–213. See also, George Pattison, 'From Kierkegaard to Cupitt: Subjectivity, the Body and Eternal Life,' *The Heythrop Journal* 31, no. 3 (1990), 295–308.

95 For an endorsement of reading Kierkegaard's writings as anti-ecclesiology, see David R. Law, 'Kierkegaard's Anti-Ecclesiology: The Attack on "Christendom", 1854–1855,' *International journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 7, no. 2 (2007), 86–108.

96 Fabro, 'Newman E Kierkegaard,' 128.

97 For more on where Kierkegaard gets this Catholic sensibility, see Christopher B. Barnett, *Kierkegaard, Pietism and Holiness* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011). See also, Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard and the Patristic and Medieval Traditions*, vol. 4 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008). Also, Fabro, 'Spunti Cattolici,' 251–280.

98 Yves Congar, 'Actualité De Kierkegaard,' *La Vie Intellectuelle* 25 (1934), 9–36. See also, Yves Congar, 'Notes Bibliographiques: Kierkegaard Et Luther,' *Foi et Vie* 57 (1934), 712–717.

99 Jürgen Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie – New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 11. This perspective is echoed in Reinhard Hüter and Matthew Levering, *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life: Essays in Honor of Romanus Cessario, O.P.* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

100 Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 12.

101 John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri De Lubac and the Debate Concerning the Supernatural* (London: SCM Press, 2005), 2.

102 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 848. n. 39.

103 Jean Daniélou, 'Les Orientations Présentes De La Pensée Religieuse,' *Études* 249 (1946), 5–21. In his essay, besides a summons to Scriptural, Patristic, and Liturgical renewal, Daniélou devotes an entire section to a call for an engagement with contemporary philosophy.

104 Aidan Nichols, 'Thomism and the Nouvelle Théologie,' *The Thomist* 64 (2000), 4.

105 Daniélou, 'Les Orientations Présentes De La Pensée Religieuse,' 13–16. Daniélou mentions Kierkegaard five times in this essay.

106 M. Jamie Ferreira, *Kierkegaard, Blackwell Great Minds* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 196.