编者絮语：

"Logos"的界限

——基督教传统中的理性与神秘

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在西方思想研究领域，尤其是基督教文化研究中，"理性和信仰"之辩是一个经常被提及的话题。从2世纪拉丁教父德尔图良（Tertullianus）"雅典和耶路撒冷何干？"的发问，到19世纪教会史家哈纳克（Adolf von Harnack）的"去希腊化"（De-Hellenization），基督教思想史中一直贯穿着理性和信仰的紧张。在主张"祛魅"的现代社会，理性和信仰的对立已成为一种思维惯例和常态。这背后隐含着现代性对理性的特定理解，信仰被有意无意地划为"非理性"的范畴，即便不是一种"迷信"，至少也带有玄之又玄的"神秘"色彩。信仰一旦被认为是蒙昧时代的残留，甚至和神话混为一谈，不仅会产生"解神话"的要求，也使信仰很难得到严肃和公正的对待。辨析理性与神秘的关系，有助于全面理解基督教传统，对批判地理解当代文化处境也不无裨益。

一、成问题的对立

理性和信仰的张力来自圣经信仰和希腊文化的相遇。基督信仰无法回避其同希腊文化的关系。虽然福音时期的基督徒生活在强烈的末

世情绪中，忽视并质疑系统的思辨，[1]然而正是因为和希腊思想的结合，基督教才演化为一个普世宗教。毕竟是通过希腊范畴，基督信仰第一次得到系统、理性的表达。随着基督论、三一论等基本教义的奠定，不仅基督神学内在地和希腊哲学关联，教会生活也不可能和"学园"无关了。随之而来便有了"理性与启示""自然神学和启示神学""教义神学与神秘神学"等一系列对立。这几组概念之间既相互关联，不乏语义的交叠，又有一些细微的差别。由于在长期历史演化中的语义积累，这些看似基本的概念恰恰最难予以清晰的界定，导致在一系列使用中充满了歧义。很大程度上，这些对立是因为认知的"范式转换"（Paradigm shift）所造成，突出表现在前现代和现代社会对理性及其在真理评价体系中角色的不同理解。现代世界对托马斯·阿奎那（St. Thomas Aquinas）神学的评判或许是一个很好的例子。

尼采和海德格尔之后，克服或反思形而上学成为当代西方哲学和基督神学无法忽略的主题，作为经院神学代表的阿奎那更是首当其冲。通常认为，阿奎那的神学过度依赖亚里士多德哲学，加剧了神学的理性化和上帝的实体化，是神学形而上学化的典型。[2]在当今学界，阿奎那神学还常被视作自然神学的代表。事实上，阿奎那神学在何种程度上是自然神学，完全取决于对自然神学这一概念的理解。宽泛意义上，通过理性对自然和神圣之间联系的系统探究均可称为自然神学。严格意义或现代意义上的自然神学出现于17、18世纪以后，[3]主张理性有能力可证明上帝的存在，而无需诉诸任何宗教信念和前设。英国自然神

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[1] 阿尔贝·加缪：《理性与神秘：新柏拉图主义与同时代思想》，朱佳琪、叶仁杰译，上海：上海人民出版社，2020年。[Albert Camus, *Métaphysique chrétienne et néoplatonisme,* trans. ZHU Jiaqi & YE Renjie (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2020).]

[2] 在海德格尔看来，经院神学是典型的"制造形而上学"，是"存在的遗忘"在神学中的反映。神学界对海德格尔的挪用自然聚焦于神学中的"存在"语法。马里翁的《没有存在的上帝》（*Dieu sans l'être*）即明确以托马斯主义为标靶。结合其神学言说的整体和历史语境，阿奎那对上帝的理解并非现代批评者所言的"本体-神学"（Onto-theology）。

[3] 以佩利（William Paley）的《自然神学》（*Natural Theology*）为代表，并以此得名。

论甚至将理性作为证明上帝存在的唯一有效工具。① 所以，不仅阿奎那的神学，甚至柏拉图和亚里士多德的哲学也可称为自然神学，早期教父对自然神学也有丰富的阐述。② 在当代语境中，自然神学却饱受质疑，尤其经过巴特的批判，某些新教神学家甚至视之为"异端"，是对神圣启示的颠覆。③ 自然神学和启示神学的对立源自于对"理性"和"自然"理解的转变。其中的关节在于现代启蒙理性对"自律"的高扬，理性被理解为认识和改造现实的工具。与此"技术理性"相关联的是作为客体和资源的"自然"。如此意义的自然神学甚至被等同于形而上学的一个分支。④

阿奎那的神学显然不是现代意义上的自然神学，因其对自然和理性的理解在基督信仰的解释构架之中：理性证明的上帝是创造和道成肉身的上帝，而非泛而言之的神圣。作为上帝的造物，理性及自然分享了神圣的逻格斯，并因道成肉身的启示而转变。基督信仰——同启蒙理性一样——规定了理性的自我理解，并赋予理性某种观看自然的特定方式。对早期教父而言，哲学理性没有信仰和启示的帮助是不完整的。阿奎那虽认为理性可以证明上帝的存在，但有关上帝本质和属性的知识只能基于启示。启示是理性的补充和完成，自然理性对"自然之书"（Book of Nature）的认识是启示的合理后果，二者处于从自然之光（lumen naturale）到信仰之光（lumen fidei）终至荣耀之光（lumen gloriae）运动的不同阶段。

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① Anthony C. Thiselton, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002), 196.

② 卡帕多西亚教父关于"作为护教学的自然神学"及"作为前设的自然神学"的探讨，详见Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture*: *The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1993)。

③ Alister E. McGrath, *The Open Secret: A New Vision for Natural Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 2-3.

④ 尼古拉斯·布宁、涂纪元编著：《西方哲学英汉对照辞典》，北京：人民出版社，2001年，第658-659页。[Nicholas Bunnin & TU Jiyuan, eds., *Dictionary of Western Philosophy: English-Chinese* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2001), 658-659.]

现代性的另一个后果就是教义神学和神秘神学的对立，似乎一个属"理性"，另一个属"灵性"。事实上，神秘神学和教义神学皆成形于5世纪之前，本是神学无法分离之一体两面。本质上讲，神秘经验是人们对道成肉身上帝感知的语境，教义则是神秘体验的理论化，进而藉此激起对上帝的神秘经验。5世纪前的教父神学中，虔信和理性维持了很好的平衡。现代性导致二者的分立，神学研究更重教父神学的思辨维度，却有意无意忽略了他们数量众多的神秘主义写作。[①]同样，通常被贴上自然神学或形而上学标签的阿奎那和神秘神学也有紧密的关联。阿奎那吸纳了托名狄奥尼修斯（Pseudo-Dionysius,以下简称狄氏/Denys）关于上帝知识的所有自然哲学方法，[②] 其神学在形而上学之外有着丰富的神秘主义元素和可能性，作为其继承者的艾克哈特（Meister Eckhart）将这种可能性推向了极致。[③]如果将理性和神秘简单地对立，显然无法理解阿奎那神学的丰富性。以上所言之诸种对立为当代社会之常识，细究之下又颇成问题，其根源当是现代性对理性之特定理解。

二、神秘主义的logos

神秘主义是几乎所有宗教文化中的普遍现象，而我们讨论理性与神秘的出发点，并非宽泛意义上的宗教经验或"神秘学"（Esotericism），而是专指基督教传统中的神秘主义传统。然正如禁欲主义一样，神秘主义并非基督宗教之专属，印度教、佛教、犹太教、伊斯兰教都有自己的神秘主义传统。基督教神秘主义也不是一种（One）神学，在不同历史时期形态各异，然其共同特点可以概括为

[①] Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition: from Plato to Denys* (Oxford University Press, 1981), xi-xii.

[②] Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 3.

[③] John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), 246-287.

寻求与上帝合一，以及对这种合一的经验。虽然对“合一”的解释或有不同，灵魂与渴求之对象——上帝或终极——的合一似可视作神秘主义的核心。[1] 神秘主义作为一种神学，也有自己的“逻格斯”与言说方式。

基督教神秘主义经常被等同于柏拉图主义，此说殊可争论，然其柏拉图主义背景似无可否认。柏拉图主义作为基督教神秘主义的源头，为其言说提供了基本的范畴和语法。柏拉图哲学赋予“理念”或“理式”世界以神圣的地位，灵魂在“爱欲”（Eros）的驱动下，通过道德和智力的双重净化，追求与终极现实的合一。寻求神圣是灵魂从感觉世界向灵性世界上升的过程。灵魂追求的目标，无论名之为“至善”还是“美”，都具备某种超越的属性。终极现实是一切存在和知识的来源，但本身超越包括理念世界在内的一切存在和知识，因而含有对经验知识（Doxa）和话语（Logos）的“否定”。灵魂追求的不是关于终极现实的知识，而是“参与”（Participation）其中并与其“合一”（Union）。灵魂的激情并非出于自身，而是被“唤醒”，在一种“出离”（Ecstasy）中体验与神圣的合一。可以看到，柏拉图哲学几乎具备了后世神秘主义神学所有基本元素：终极现实的不可知性、灵魂的上升、出离、合一等，而作为灵魂运动准备的自我“净化”也化身为“禁欲主义”和神秘神学相伴。有学者指出，在神秘主义合一理念背后，是古希腊人对“努斯”（Nous）的理解。努斯比现代人理解的“心灵”（Mind）或“智能”（Intellect）更丰富，是一种对现实的直觉性把握，因而更像一个神秘合一的器官。灵魂通过努斯感、触到另一鲜活的生命，并与之渗透和融合。这种非概念的直觉思维也为普洛提诺哲学传承，成为神秘主义言说的核心。[2] 新柏拉图主义融合了亚里士多德和斯多亚学派的观点，建立了一个“太一、智能、灵魂”三层结构的存在等级秩序，也可看做是对自我的内省式理

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[1] Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition*, xv.
[2] Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition,* xv-xvii.

解。最高是最内在的一种隐喻，灵魂向"太一"提升的过程，即是自我深入的过程。只有放弃感官和理性的"自我"，才能发现真正的自我。自我知识和关于终极的知识最终连接在一起。

虽然从奥利金、奥古斯丁到狄氏的神秘神学都有很深的柏拉图主义印记，新/柏拉图主义毕竟不是基督教神秘主义。柏拉图主义的本体论差异是感觉和理念世界，而基督教哲学的本体论差异是创造和被造。柏拉图哲学并无创造和上帝概念，理念即神圣。灵魂本身具有神圣属性，向理念世界的上升是灵魂的回家。上帝从虚无中创造（ex nihilo）的圣经信仰从根本上否定了灵魂的神圣属性，灵魂和肉体一样，从属于造物的秩序。4世纪教父完成了对希腊哲学传统的挪用与改造，谈论灵魂的出离及其与终极现实的合一便有了不同的含义。

基督教神秘主义与柏拉图主义传统的不同主要体现于上帝概念、灵魂与上帝的关系，以及对道德的理解。[1] 柏拉图的终极现实，无论是作为"至善"（《理想国》）还是"美"本身（《会饮》），都不同于基督教的人格神。新柏拉图主义的"太一"也不具任何人格化的范畴，甚至无视较低层次的存在。作为灵魂追寻的目的，"太一"本身并不参与其中。教父神学虽然也强调上帝是至善、是美本身，和上帝的"不动情"（Impassibility），在对神秘经验的描述时却使用了人格化语言。神秘主义追求的不是终极原则和某种理念，而是人格化的上帝。简言之，基督教神秘主义虽然采纳了新柏拉图主义的构架，但灵魂追寻的终极现实明确指向《圣经》中启示的上帝。此外，柏拉图主义仅止于承认神秘经验并非灵魂自身之力，而基督教神秘主义强调上帝的恩典。上帝本身是灵魂超越运动的发动者。如奥古斯丁所持，"唯独恩典"（Sola gracia）是灵魂超越之爱背后的动力。[2] 狄氏也认

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[1] Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition*, 191-199.
[2] 东方教会传统所持的"合力说"（synergism）也以恩典为前提。除非将上帝理解为某种外在于造物的存在，很难说对上帝之爱的"回应"不是一种"协作"，某种意义上，"合力说"和"唯独恩典"并不对立。

为"上帝的出离"是灵魂"出离"的前提。[①] 上帝之爱满溢而出，从至尊之超越地位下降到万有。灵魂对上帝之爱是对道成肉身的回应。更重要的区别是，柏拉图主义的灵魂上升是逐步回归自我并神圣化的过程，教父们则强调被造的灵魂和超越的对象之间的根本异质性。灵魂和上帝的合一要经历对自身的否定。所以灵魂越是接近上帝，越陷于一种"神圣的黑暗"（Divine darkness）或者"灵魂的暗夜"（Dark night of soul）。[②] 这意味着灵魂和上帝之间有无法穿越的鸿沟。在柏拉图传统中，道德净化是灵魂超越肉体及感觉世界的手段和必要前提。基督教神秘主义则认为人之道德行为是灵魂和上帝合一的结果，是圣灵结出的生命之果。

尽管人们可以谈论教父神学之间、教父和中世纪神秘主义，甚至拉丁教会和东方教会神秘主义的差异，基督教神秘主义仍有其"家族相似性"。一个显著也颇多争议的特点就是其"否定的语法"，[③] 以致人们常会在神秘神学和否定神学之间划等号，德里达更据此以为神秘神学的否定是一种变形的肯定。[④] 据悉，教父希腊语中接近五分之

[①] Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, "Divine Names," IV. 13:712AB, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: the Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid (London: SPCK, 1987), 82.

[②] 尼撒的格列高利和狄氏都以神圣的黑暗隐喻上帝本质的不可知性，而16世纪教会"神秘博士"（doctor mysticus）十字架上的约翰认为，灵魂须经历"暗夜"方可与上帝合一。灵魂暗夜的观念不见于东方教会传统。奥立金虽偶尔也谈及上帝隐藏于黑暗之中，其神秘神学更倾向于一种"光明的神秘主义"。参Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition*, 179-190 & 72-74。

[③] 神秘神学之间的差异主要表现在如何理解灵魂与上帝的合一，是完全的合一还是有距离的参与；通过智性还是灵性的方式合一，通过沉思还是爱和祈祷；对灵魂出离的理解；神-人关系问题上，是成为基督还是效仿基督；对待洗礼的态度；上帝的可知性以及东西方传统的表达风格等等。关于否定语法，奥立金可算一个例外，他倾向认为上帝是可知的。然此背后关于灵魂和圣言关系的观点恰最不能为后世神学家接受。

[④] 对德里达来讲，不管否定神学如何否定，其最终目的仍然是对上帝的肯定，是对超本质存在（hyper-essential being）的超越性的宣称。否定不过是一种"投资"，目的是为了以更高的方式回到"超本质"（hyperousios）。参Jacques Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," in *Derrida and Negative Theology*, eds. Harold Coward & Toby Foshay (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 73-142。

一的词汇以否定性前缀开头。[1] 语言中的否定用法凸显了人类语言/理性面对超越性上帝的困境，"经由否定"（via negativa）便成为一种不得已的选择。因为否定和肯定同属人的理性范围，否定之路仍是必须被超越的阶段。狄氏非常明确，上帝"作为万物唯一和完美的根基，超越一切肯定；并且因其超绝的简朴性和绝对本性，没有任何界限、超越一切界限，也超越一切否定"。[2] 所以，狄氏神学的现代诠释者马里翁（Jean-Luc Marion）认为，神秘神学有"超越"（Eminence）肯定与否定之外的第三条道路，[3] 最终指向人与上帝直接的合一关系。不可否认，此合一中仍然含有强烈的否定性：以不可知的方式和不可知的上帝的合一，故常被冠以否定之名（Apophaticism）。与此类似，正教神学家常指拉丁神秘神学为"本质的否定主义"（Apophaticism of essence），东方教会传统则是"位格的否定主义"（Apophaticism of person）。[4] 如果否定神学像德里达所理解和批评的那样，只是通过否定而达到对更高层次本质或"超本质存在"的肯定，就仍未脱离认识论的范畴。以此解读柏拉图《理想国》中的"超本质"（epekeina tes ousias）概念，神秘神学就向一种形而上学解释开放。究竟是认识论意义上的"双重否定"，还是全身位的合一，是理解神秘神学的关键，与此相关的是对神秘神学语言属性和神学"知识"的理解。

柏拉图神秘主义更多是少数精英个体的追求，思辨优先于实践行

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[1] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 40.

[2] Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, "Mystical Theology," V. 1048AB, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: the Complete Works*, 141.

[3] 针对德里达对"否定神学"的批评，马里翁认为神秘神学的第三条道路是"非名化"（de-nomination）：命名的同时又否定所有名称，其关键在于严肃地对待语言的实际应用。神秘神学是祈祷和赞美语言的"践行式"（Performative）的使用。Jean-Luc Marion, "In the Name," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds. John D. Caputo & Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 24-30 & 46.

[4] Christos Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God*, trans. Haralambos Ventis (London & New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 28-29. 正教神学家如洛斯基、杨纳罗斯常以此强调东西方神秘神学的不同，以拉丁神秘主义为一种"理智的合一"而非"位格的合一"。东西方神秘主义究竟是质的不同，抑或仅是对神秘经验解释的视角不同，联同与之相关的东西方教会三一论的差异，仍是有争议的话题。

动。上帝之爱不仅激发个体的"爱欲"，更将人们统一为一个团契。基督教神秘主义本质上是教会论的，是受洗的生命参与教会这一"基督的奥体"（Mystical Body）的结果。从使徒保罗到中世纪晚期的基督教神秘主义都和教会论联系在一起。[1] 现代人通常从个体意识层面理解神秘经验，例如詹姆斯（William James）。然而"神秘"一词在早期教会中的使用并非和某种出奇的个人体验，而是和对整个教会身体的经验联系在一起。当代正教神学家济宙拉斯（John Zizioulas）认为，"基督的奥体"分别有基督论（基督个人的、尤指复活的身体）、教会论（教会作为基督的身体）和圣餐（圣餐中被分享的基督身体）三种含义。这三种含义在早期教会中是统一的。13世纪经院神学之后，作为"神秘身体"的教会和圣餐分离，圣餐成为教会众多礼仪中的一项，教会也变得机构化。[2] 可见，神秘神学本不只是对上帝的沉思，而是和灵修、祷告等教会生活密不可分。如洛思（Andrew Louth）所言，教父时期的神秘神学本质上是一种礼仪神学，礼仪邀请人开放自己去响应上帝之爱，在礼仪中与上帝合一。[3] 神秘神学的首要关切并非认识上帝的本质，而是如狄氏所言，要赞美（hymnein)上帝。只有被视作一个研究对象时，神秘神学才是知识性和学术性的，就是自身而言，它是造物以赞美和崇拜对上帝之爱的回应。

三、不可知性与logos的界限

任何信仰都不会以反理性自居，缺乏理性的信仰实际上是对信仰对象的贬低，基督信仰亦是如此。理性和神秘的关系完全可以是内在于信仰的讨论。信仰不仅寻求理解，而且寻求表达。古希腊哲学家

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[1] Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition*, 199-203.

[2] John Zizioulas, "The Church as the Mystical Body of Christ," in *Communion and Otherness* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2006), 286-307. 济宙拉斯的这种观点来自天主教神学家吕巴克（Henri de Lubac）。参Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Fairfax: Eastern Christian Publications, 2006)。

[3] Andrew Louth, *Denys the Areopagite* (London and New York: Continuum, 1989), 104-109.

早已意识到思维与存在的同一，以及语言与理性的关系。海德格尔认为，"logos"的首要含义是"揭示和显现"（making manifest），通过话语揭示所言之物，使某物显现为现象意味着将其从隐藏状态置于光照之下。[①] 理性和语言一样，具备把多样性的事物"聚集"在一起的作用，故"logos"既有"话语"又有"理性"之意，二者又都和"光"的意象相连。任何言说都传达着某种理性，信仰中的神秘和理性也可以还原为语言问题：信仰应遵循何种理性/言说？

康德对纯粹理性的批判，尤其是"智思之物"（Noumena）或"物自体"（Ding an sich selbst）和现象界（Phänomena）的区分可为我们思考上帝和神秘问题提供一个参照。[②] 上帝作为"智思之物"不是纯粹理性的认识对象，只有在现象中对我们显现时才可以被认识。即使上帝在现象中显现，仍有一个不为理性认知的"物自体"维度。因为上帝的超越性和不可知性，神学严格说来并不是关于上帝自身的知识，而是上帝启示给我们（for us）的知识。人们可以通过上帝的创造或"能"（Energy）认识上帝，这为自然神学或肯定神学提供了合法性。但上帝在现象世界显现的同时又退隐，和上帝合一的愿望必然超越肯定言说导向对自然理性和人类语言的否定和超越。肯定神学关注上帝在创造中的外在显现，否定神学关乎灵魂朝向上帝自身的内向运动，然否定之路在神秘主义言说中更具优先性。如果上帝如托马斯所言是"纯粹的存在自身"（Esse ipsum subsistens），那么同时也是艾克哈特布道中神圣的"虚无"（das Nichts）、被存在者遮蔽的"深渊"（Abgrund）、没有概念可以生长的绝对荒漠（Wüste）。在此，所有人类的概念建构都将失效，神圣的上帝从一切名称中退隐。为了迎接神圣的上帝，灵魂必须剥离一切造物的属性、所有关于上帝的思想和

[①] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 51-58.

[②] "智思之物"和"物自体"的含义虽有重合，但并不完全一致。"智思之物"完全不能被感知，"物自体"则指自在之物，可被感知的现象中的不可知维度。

个人的欲望，同时也剥离我们赋予上帝的所有属性，处于一种"泰然任之"（Gelassenheit）的状态。[①] 这种精神在德国古典哲学中也得以延续。谢林（F.W.J. Schelling）在对人类自由的本质研究中指出，人的自由始于将上帝从各种形而上学和道德神学中解放出来，从而拒绝所有形式的上帝之名，因为它们不是说的太多就是说的太少。上帝超出包括"存在"在内的所有偶像。[②] 所有关于神圣的语言都是匮乏的，无论肯定还是否定，神学只能以类比或隐喻的方式使用人类语言。

理性和神秘的对立是一个"现代性事件"。问题是现代理性和神学理性是否共享一个概念基础，是否为同一种理性？现代"主体性哲学"将知识建立在作为主体的"自我"之上，从主/客体对立的先验结构出发认识现实，是一种"再现式思维"和寻求概念掌控的"技术理性"。在这样一种含有"距离"的理性主导下，包括世界和自我在内的所有经验都被化约为一种客观现象，导致世界的对象化和去价值化；或者将所有价值都理解为人类的构造，导致一种"太人性"（all too human）的极端人文主义。正如康德的批判所示，纯粹理性只能认识作为现象世界的"存在者"，而无法认识超越存在的上帝自身。神秘神学以肯定之路容纳了有限的人类理性，并以否定之路揭示了理性的界限，在对语言类比式的理解中，上帝的超越性得到保护。晚期经院神学背离了存在的类比原则，导致上帝与造物被置于一个共同的概念或视域之下思考，其对确定性的追求也影响了现代哲学的产生。[③] 神秘与理性本非对立，信仰

[①] John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics,* 274-278.

[②] David L Clark, "Otherwise than God: Schelling, Marion," in *Trajectories of Mysticism in Theory and Literature*, ed. Philip Leonard (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 133-176.

[③] 依巴尔塔萨（Hans van Balthasar），现代哲学或现代性的兴起源于对托马斯类比原则的背离。司各脱（Duns Scotus）在神学中采用了阿维洛伊主义（Averroism）的观点，认为存在是一个单义的概念，苏亚雷斯（Francisco Suarez）将单义性强化为确定性和可证明的基础。这种对确定性的追求直接影响了笛卡尔哲学。Gavin Hyman, *The Predicament of Postmodern Theology* (Louisville & London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 33-37.

也不意味着反智或放弃哲学思考，需要的是明确人类理性的边界。

基督神学作为一种言说，遵循一种更高的理性，马里翁认为，这种理性来自成为肉身的圣言，通过基督启示为一种爱的理性。上帝之爱是无条件的，能够战胜死亡和一切不可能性，同时是认识自我和他者的唯一途径。在基督（圣言）身上，爱展示为首要和最终真理。因此，神学中的知识问题不再是主体的意向性行为，而意味着爱的交通（Communion）：通过爱而被所爱者转化。因为对神圣逻格斯（同时是神圣智慧）的信靠，基督徒有义务将爱的真理诉诸逻格斯/理性。神学言说/理性因此获得了合法性，言说不仅成为可能，而且是一种义务。如此理解的神学首先是圣言的自我言说，基督言自身为圣言。神学的理性来自圣言，以圣言之名传圣言之言。[1] 信仰要求放弃以自我为中心的理性，和更高的逻格斯合一。

综上所言，基督教神秘主义的意义至少有三。之于基督教传统，其对上帝超越性的维护是对形而上学神学的矫正和反拨。基督信仰在现代主义中太容易和"本体—神学"（Onto-theology）融为一体，因此被后现代当作本体—神学而拒绝。在"上帝之死"之后，神秘神学中不可知的上帝成为基督信仰自我更新的动力和源泉。之于对理性和知识的理解，神秘主义有助于反思对理性的单一理解，摆脱启蒙理性关于认识和知识的定见，并在此基础上重塑理性与信仰的关系。如马里翁所言，现在的问题不再是对所有事物给出理性的说明（giving reason to all things），而是对理性本身给出说明（giving reason for rationality）。[2] 之于当代哲学，神秘神学揭示了人类理性的界限和不可知性的维度，促生了对"神秘"和宗教问题的思考。如扬纳罗斯（Christos Yannaras）所言，神秘神学首先是一种立场，是对概念偶像、心理学自我中心、概念确定性的否定。[3] 这种立场在后形而上学语境中更加彰显。

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[1] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, trans. Christina M. Gschwandtner (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 146-154.
[2] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, 154.
[3] Christos Yannaras, *On the Absence and the Unkonwablity of God*, 17.

海德格尔认为，存在并非传统形而上学意义上的持久在场呈现，而是一个从缺席和遮蔽中显现的过程。原初意义的真理（aletheia）意味着"去蔽"（unconcealment）、在"澄明"（Lichtung）中的显现，指向显现中"光"的维度。这一过程被"遮蔽"（lethe）所保守，指向显现中"无"的维度。存在的显现是一个神秘的"缘构发生事件"（Ereignis）。人作为"此在"（Dasein）是存在显现的空间，对应着自我清空的灵魂。思之任务即是向显现开放并使存在自我显现。此处明显有艾克哈特的"深渊"和"泰然任之"之印记。对神学家而言，存在的显现以上帝为前提，对海德格尔而言，只有在"缘构发生"开启的空间里"上帝"才能出场。存在是显现和缺席、光明和黑暗的自由游戏。世界本身被不透明的"大地"（earth）所保守，而"此在"不是主体的建构，总是早已（always already）存在于世界之中。即使在康德哲学中，自然和自我也保持了不可知的维度。虽然理性为自然立法，但"物自体"却不是知性的对象，现实世界永远无法被人类概念所穷尽。同样，人的自我认识不能被化约为一种简单的经验知识。因为"先验自我"是一切认识的可能性前提，但无法成为自身直观和内在感知的对象。自我知识只可能是关于"经验自我"的知识，即"人"或"自我"作为一个对象向超验自我显现。对康德而言，人的自由和价值恰恰不由其自然属性决定，人自身作为目的绝不能被物化。以"人是什么"这一康德论题为出发点，马里翁重提奥古斯丁关于自我的困惑："我对于自己变成了一个巨大的问题"（Factus eram ipse mihi magna quaestio），即我经验到自己对自我是不可知的。马里翁对主体性哲学主导的知识理念提出了质疑：是否所有知识都必须用同一套单义（univocal）的概念达成？用概念认识一个产生概念的自我是否可能，甚至是否可欲？人和上帝一样无法命名，哲学必须承认并尊重人的不可知性。[1]

彻底的神秘主义形式上接近一种"神秘的无神论"，终将打破了

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[1] Jean-Luc Marion, "*Mihi Magna quaestio factus sum*: The Privilege of Unknowing," *Journal of Religion* 85, no.1(2005):1-24.

人类概念清晰性和确定性的幻相，指向世界和自我的不透明性。当代哲学中的"既予性现象学"（Phenomenology of givenness）[1]、新柏拉图主义在当代法国哲学和神学中的复兴[2]，以及对"赠礼""主体之后是什么？"的讨论皆针对形而上学传统导致的现代性问题，与神秘主义传统有着内在的关联。在当代神学和宗教哲学关于"他异于存在的上帝"（God as Otherwise than Being）"没有存在的上帝"（God without Being）[3]"没有上帝的宗教"（Religion without God）和"没有宗教的宗教"（Religion without religion）的讨论中，[4] 都可发现神秘主义的踪迹。尽管未必都是基督教神秘主义的，此类言说确乎是神秘经验的种种后现代修辞。

结　语

神秘主义问题的复杂性在于其涉及语言、经验和现实的关系。是否有一种独立于语言之外的经验，究竟是现实决定了语言，还是语言构建

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[1] 马里翁的"既予性现象学"上承胡塞尔和海德格尔，以"满溢现象"（Saturated phenomena）批判主体性哲学，是对其神学思想的哲学注解，狄氏的神秘神学是其神学的主要源头。

[2] 新柏拉图主义在20世纪法国哲学中复兴的显著特色之一，即是将感官和肉身性和某种超越的不可知性直接联系在一起。参：Wayne J. Hankey, "Neoplatonism in Contemporary French Philosophy," *Dionysius* 23(2005): 161-190。

[3] 如列维纳斯主张以伦理学为基础，史拉格（Calvin O. Schrag）和马里翁则试图从"赠礼"的视域谈论上帝，皆为克服"存在"语法的尝试。参见 Emmanuel Levinas, *God, Death*, and Time, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Calvin O. Schrag, *God as Otherwise than Being: towards a semantic of Gift* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002); Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995)。

[3] 德沃金（Ronald Dworkin）和泰勒（Mark C. Taylor）分别从不同角度谈论"没有上帝的宗教"，瓦蒂莫（Gianni Vattimo）有"非宗教的基督教"之说，德里达则提出"没有宗教的宗教"。参Ronald Dworkin, *Religion without God* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2013); Mark C. Taylor, *After God* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2007); John D. Caputo & Gianni Vattimo, *After the Death of God*, ed. Jeffrey W. Robbins (New York, Columbia University Press) 2007; Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone," *Act of Religion*, ed., Gil Anidjar (New York & London: Routledge, 2002), 40-101; John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 1997。

了现实，语言和思的关系如何？对这些问题的认知决定了对神秘问题的不同理解。与欧陆哲学不同，英美分析哲学的通行观念是：任何经验都是人类的经验，因此需要经过语言的调停，没有独立于语言之外的"纯经验"。林贝克（George A. Linbeck）的"文化-语言"模式（cultural-linguistic model）宗教观认为，宗教经验源于包括礼仪在内的语言符号系统，有独特的文化编码和"语法"。在此意义上，包括基督教神秘主义在内的所有神秘经验都源自某种特定语言形式提供的解释结构，并借助特定的语言而发生。[①]这似乎支持了德里达对否定神学的批评。不可言说的上帝是《圣经》中的上帝，有其确定的文化属性。然而，这是否意味着语言之外无物存在，世界仅止是人类的建构？

如前所述，这种观点无法回避一个基本的事实，人的生存总是早已在世界之中了，这是最基本也是最大的神秘。语言不是某种独立存在的意义之简单对应，意义也不是语言的发明。语言总要指向超越自身的所指，也无法完全表达人类的思想和经验。按照海德格尔的语言观，人类语言的可能性在于聆听存在的声音。"缘构发生"比意义和语言更本原，在此事件中人和存在彼此相属（belonging together），没有任何最终的根基，也没有任何概念。只有在对此事件的回应中，才产生出不同的文化-语言模式。语言在解释中赋予经验某种属性，并不意味着经验是语言的构造。保持沉默之处是语言和神秘的边界，而非经验的尽头。

神秘向语言敞开，故此神秘经验可以表述为不同的形态：未必是基督教的，也未必是人格化的，未必以上帝之名，甚至未必一定是宗教的。神秘可以是佛教的"空"，道家的"道"，海德格尔的"缘构发生"，或是纯粹的未知。当然，基督教神秘主义也是这诸多可能的一种。

[①] George Pattison, "What to Say: Reflections on Mysticism after Modernity," in *Transcending Boundaries in Philosophy and Theology,* eds. Kevin Vanhoozer & Martin Varner (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007), 192-194.

The Boundary of Logos: Reason and Mysticism in the Christian Tradition

Abstract

The dialectic of faith and reason has always been the driving force of Western thinking ever since the Christian encounter with Greek culture. The tension becomes more obvious in modernity dominated by a philosophy of subjectivity which delimits a determinate understanding of knowledge and rationality. The conventional oppositions between natural and revealed theology, dogmatic and mystical theology, result from the paradigm shift in truth and knowledge. By tracing its origin back to Platonism, this paper focuses on the grammar of mystical theology in Christian tradition, aiming to show the boundary of human reason and language in the face of the transcendent God and the unknowability. As a stance against the self-centered reason and conceptual idols, mysticism preserves the transcendence of the absent God in the post-metaphysical milieu and opens a space for thinking the unknowable.

Key words: Mysticism, Platonism, Logos, Reason, Unknowability

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Editorial Foreword

The Boundaries of Logos: Reason and Mysticism in the Christian Tradition

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The conflict between reason and faith is a perennial topic in Western thought, especially in the study of Christian culture. From the second-century Latin Father Tertullian's famous question "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" to the nineteenth-century church historian Adolf von Harnack's idea of "de-hellenization," the history of Christian thought has been marked by the tension between reason and faith. In an age of "disenchantment," the opposition between reason and faith has become a convention and a norm of thinking. This implies a specific understanding of rationality in modernity. Faith has been intentionally or unintentionally viewed as "irrational," if not altogether "superstition," or at best, no more than an esoteric "mystery." Once faith is regarded as a remnant of the age of obscurantism, or even on par with myth, "demythologizing" is required in return; it also makes it difficult for any faith to be treated seriously and fairly. Discerning the relationship between reason and mysticism can therefore contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the Christian tradition and to a critical understanding of the contemporary cultural situation.

I. The problematic dichotomy

The tension between reason and faith arises from the encounter

between biblical faith and Greek culture. The Christian faith cannot announce a divorce from Greek culture. Although the earliest Christians were convinced they were living in the end times, and ignored or questioned the importance of philosophical speculation,[①] it was the union with Greek thought that allowed Christianity to evolve into a universal religion. It was, after all, through the Greek philosophical terms that the Christian faith established its first systematic and rational expression. With the formation of fundamental doctrines such as Christology and the Trinity, Christian theology was not only intrinsically linked to Greek philosophy, but church life could no longer be separated from the "Academy." This led to a series of opposing ideas such as "reason and revelation," "natural and revealed theology," and "doctrinal and mystical theology." These groups of concepts are interrelated, with no shortage of semantic overlap, but also show some subtle differences. These seemingly basic concepts turned out to be the most difficult to define clearly, due to the process of semantic accumulation over a long period of time across history, resulting in countless ambiguities in their usage. To a large extent, these contradictions were the result of a "paradigm shift" in cognition, highlighted by the different understandings of reason and its role in systems of truth evaluation in pre-modern and modern societies. The modern world's critique of Thomas Aquinas's theology is perhaps a good example.

After Nietzsche and Heidegger, the overcoming or rethinking of metaphysics became a theme that could not be ignored in contemporary Western philosophy and Christian theology. Thomas Aquinas, as a representative of Scholasticism Theology, has borne the brunt of the criticism. It is often argued that Aquinas relied excessively on Aristotelian philosophy, extended the rationalization of theology and the substantialization of God, and was typical example of Onto-theology.[②] In academia today, Aquinas's theology

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[①] Albert Camus, *Métaphysique chrétienne et néoplatonisme*, trans. ZHU Jiaqi & YE Renjie (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2020).

[②] In Heidegger's view, Scholasticism is a typical "metaphysics of making," a reflection of the "oblivion of being" in theology. The appropriation of Heidegger by the theological circle naturally focuses on the grammar of "*being*" in theology. Jean-Luc Marion's *Dieu sans l'être* (God without Being) explicitly takes Thomism as its target. Combined with the historical context and richness of his theological discourse's, Aquinas's understanding of God is not what modern critics would call "Onto-theology."

is also often seen as a representative of natural theology. In fact, the extent to which Thomism is natural theology depends entirely on the definition of natural theology. In a broad sense, any systematic inquiry into the connection between nature and the divine through natural reason can be called natural theology. Natural theology in the strict or modern sense has emerged since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,[1] asserting the ability of reason to prove the existence of God without recourse to any religious beliefs or presuppositions, or even, as in English Deism, reason as the only valid tool to prove the existence of God.[2] Thus, not only Thomism, but even the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle could be called natural theology. The early Fathers also wrote widely on natural theology.[3] In the contemporary context, however, natural theology has been called into question, especially following Karl Barth's critique, and even regarded as "heresy" and subversive of divine revelation in some Protestant circles.[4] The dichotomy between natural and revealed theology stems from a shift in the understanding of "reason" and "nature." The key factor lies in the exaltation of autonomy by Enlightenment mentality, regarded as a tool for knowing and controlling reality. Associated with this "technical rationality" is "nature" as an object and resource. Natural theology, in this sense, is even seen as a branch of metaphysics.[5]

Aquinas's theology is clearly not natural theology in the modern sense, for its understanding of nature and reason is within the interpretive framework of the biblical faith: The God attested by reason is the God of creation and incarnation, not "the divine" in general terms. As God's creation, natural reason and nature both participate in the divine Logos and are transformed by the revelation of the Incarnation. Christian faith — like the reason celebrated by the Enlightenment — prescribes the self-understanding

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[1] It is represented by William Paley's *Natural Theology*, for which it is named.

[2] Anthony C. Thiselton, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2002), 196.

[3] For a discussion of the Cappadocian Fathers on "Natural Theology as Apology" and "Natural Theology as Presupposition," see Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity, and Classical Culture: The Metamorphosis of Natural Theology in the Christian Encounter with Hellenism* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1993).

[4] Alister E. McGrath, *The Open Secret: A New Vision for Natural Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 2-3.

[5] Nicholas Bunnin & TU Jiyuan, eds., *Dictionary of Western Philosophy: English-Chinese* (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2001), 658-659.

of reason and gives it a particular way of seeing nature. For the early Fathers, philosophical reason was incomplete without the help of faith and revelation. While Aquinas believed that reason could prove the existence of God, knowledge of God's nature and attributes could only be based on revelation. Revelation is the complement and completion of reason, and the knowledge of the "Book of Nature" through natural reason is the logical consequence of revelation. Reason and revelation for Aquinas are more like different stages of a movement from *lumen naturale* to *lumen fidei* and finally to *lumen gloriae*.

　　Another consequence of modernity is the dichotomy between dogmatic and mystical theology as if one were "rational" and the other "spiritual." In fact, mystical theology and dogmatic theology both took shape before the fifth century and were originally two inseparable components of theology. In essence, mystical experience is the context in which people perceive the God Incarnate, while doctrine is the theorization of mystical experience, which in turn inspires a mystical experience of God. In the pre-fifth century *Patristic Theology*, piety, and reason maintained a good balance. Modernity has led to a separation of the two, and theological studies have placed too much emphasis on the speculative dimension of patristic theology while intentionally or unintentionally ignoring their numerous mystical writings.[1] Likewise, Aquinas, usually labeled as a representative of natural theology or metaphysics, is closely associated with mystical theology. Aquinas incorporated all the natural philosophical approaches of Pseudo-Dionysius (hereafter Denys) regarding the knowledge of God, [2] and his theology is rich in the mystical and possibilities beyond metaphysics, which Meister Eckhart, his successor, pushed to the extreme.[3] It is clear that the richness of Aquinas's theology cannot be grasped if reason and mysticism are simply seen as opposed to each other. The dichotomies mentioned above have been widely accepted in contemporary society, but

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[1] Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition*: From Plato to Denys (Oxford University Press, 1981), xi-xii.

[2] Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 3.

[3] John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), 246-287.

they are quite problematic on closer examination. The misconception lies in modernity's particular understanding of reason.

II. The logos of mysticism

Mysticism is a common phenomenon in almost all religious cultures. Our starting point for the discussion on reason and mystery is not religious experience or "Esotericism" in the broad sense, but mysticism in the Christian tradition. Like asceticism, mysticism is not exclusive to the Christian religion: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam all have their mystical traditions. Christian mysticism is not a monolithic theology either, although there are some common features, which can be summarized as a search for union with God and the experience of that union. Although the interpretation of "union" may vary, the union of the soul with the object of longing — God or the Ultimate — seems to be at the heart of mysticism.[1] As a kind of theological discourse, mysticism also has its own "logos."

Christian mysticism is often equated with Platonism. This is highly questionable, but its Platonic background is undeniable. Platonism, as the source of Christian mysticism, provides the basic categories and syntax for its discourse. Platonism has attributed divine status to the world of "ideas" or "forms." The soul, driven by *Eros*, seeks union with ultimate reality through moral and intellectual purification. The search for the divine is the soul's ascent from the world of the senses to the world of the spirit. The goal that the soul seeks, whether called "the highest Good" or "Beauty," has some transcendent attributes. The ultimate reality is the source of all existence and knowledge, but it transcends everything, including the world of ideas. Thus, it contains a "negation" of empirical knowledge (*Doxa*) and discourse (*Logos*). The soul does not seek knowledge of the ultimate reality but "participation" in it and "union" with it. The soul's passion is not of itself but is "awakened" to experience union with the divine in its "*Ecstasy*." Plato's philosophy has almost all the essential elements of later mystical theology: the unknowability of the ultimate reality, the soul's ascent, ecstasy, union, etc. The "self-purification" as a preparation for the movement of the soul has evolved into asceticism, a companion of mystical theology. Scholars

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[1] Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition*, xv.

have pointed out that behind the mystical idea of union was the ancient Greek understanding of *Nous*, a term richer than the modern understanding of "mind" or "intellect." Its way of perception implies an intuitive grasp of reality and thus is more like an organ of mystical union. The soul feels, touches, penetrates, and merges with another living being through *Nous.* This non-conceptual intuitive thinking was also inherited by Plotinus' philosophy and became the core of mystical discourse.[①] Neoplatonism, which combines Aristotelian and Stoic views, establishes a hierarchy of existence with a three-level structure of "the One, intelligence, and soul," which can also be seen as an introspective understanding of the self. Since the highest is also a metaphor of the innermost, the soul's ascension to "the One" is also the process of deepening the self. Only by giving up the sensual and rational "ego" can the true self be discovered, and knowledge of the self and knowledge of the ultimate are finally connected.

Although mystical theology from Origen and Augustine to Denys has a deep Platonic imprint, Platonism and Neoplatonism are not, after all, Christian mysticism. The ontological difference in Platonism is between the world of senses and the world of ideas, while the ontological difference in Christian philosophy is between the creator and the created. Platonic philosophy has no place for the concepts of creation, for the idea is divine. The soul itself has divine attributes, and the ascent to the world of ideas is the soul's homecoming. The biblical belief that God created out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) fundamentally denies the divine attributes of the soul, which, like the physical body, is part of the order of creation. As the fourth-century Fathers completed their appropriation and adaptation of the Greek philosophical tradition, discourses on the ecstasy of the soul and its union with ultimate reality took on a different meaning.

The differences between Christian mysticism and the Platonist tradition lie mainly in the concept of God, the relationship between the soul and God, and the understanding of morality.[②] Plato's ultimate reality, both as the "supreme Good" (*Republic*) and as "Beauty" itself (*Symposium*), differs from the personal God of Christianity. The "One" of Neoplatonism does not have

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① Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition*, xv-xvii.
② Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition*, 191-199.

any degree of personhood. On the contrary, it does not even concern itself with the "lower levels" of existence. Although it is the goal of the soul's search, the "One" itself is not at all involved in the process. Patristic theology, on the other hand, honors God as supreme Good and Beauty and does not deny the Impassibility of God, yet still uses a personal language in its description of mystical experience. Mysticism seeks not an ultimate principle or an idea but a personal God. In short, while Christian mysticism adopts a Neoplatonic structure, the ultimate reality of the soul's quest is clearly identified as God as revealed in *the Bible*. Moreover, while Platonism also holds that the mystical experience does not originate from the soul's own power, Christian mysticism clearly emphasizes the Grace of God. God is the initiator of the soul's transcendental movement. As Augustine held, "*Sola gracia*" (grace alone) is the driving force behind the transcendent love of the soul.[①] Denys also considers the "ecstasy of God" a prerequisite for the "ecstasy of the soul."[②] The love of God overflows and descends from the transcendent status of the Supreme Being to all creation. The soul's love for God is the response to the Incarnation. The more important difference is that while the Platonic ascent of the soul is a gradual return to the self and its divination, the Fathers emphasize the fundamental heterogeneity between the created soul and the transcendent being. The union of the soul with God requires a negation of the self. Therefore, the closer the soul gets to God, the more it is surrounded by the divine darkness, or the "dark night of the soul."[③] This means that there is an impassable gulf between the soul and God. In the Platonic tradition, moral purification is the means and necessary prerequisite for the soul to transcend the sensual world. Christian mysticism,

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[①] The synergism held by the Eastern Church tradition also presupposes grace. For unless God is understood as some kind of Being external to creation, it is difficult to say that the "response" to God's love is not a "collaboration." In a sense, "synergy" and "grace alone" are not opposed to each other.

[②] Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, "Divine Names," IV. 13:712AB, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: the Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid (London: SPCK, 1987), 82.

[③] Gregory of Nyssa and Pseudo-Dionysius both use divine darkness as a metaphor for the unknowability of God's nature, while John of the Cross, the sixteenth-century "*doctor mysticus*" of the Church, believed that the soul had to go through a "dark night" in order to be united with God. While also emphasizing the unknowability of God, the idea of the dark night of the soul is not found in Eastern Church tradition. Although Origen occasionally speaks of God hidden in darkness, his mystical theology tends to be more of a "mysticism of light." See Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition*, 179-190 & 72-74.

on the other hand, believes that moral behavior is the result of union between the soul and God, the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Although Christian mysticism takes many different forms, and one can speak of differences among the Fathers and between patristic theology and medieval mysticism, and even between the mystical traditions of the Latin and Eastern Churches, Christian mysticism still shows "a family resemblance." A distinctive and controversial feature is its "grammar of negation," so that people often equate mystical theology with negative theology. [1] Derrida, for example, assumes that the negation of mystical theology is actually affirmation in disguise.[2] It is known that nearly one-fifth of the words in patristic Greek texts begin with a negative prefix.[3] The use of negation highlights the dilemma of human language/reason in the face of a transcendent God, and the "via negative" becomes an expedient. Since negation and affirmation belong to the same realm of human reason, the path of negation is still a stage that must be transcended. Denys is very clear that God, "as the only and perfect foundation of all things, transcends all affirmation; and, by virtue of his transcendent simplicity and absolute nature, has no boundaries, transcends all boundaries, and transcends all negation."[4] Thus, according to Jean-Luc Marion, the modern

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[1] The differences between mystical theologies are mainly in the ways of understanding the union of the soul with God. That is to say: whether it is a complete unity or a distant participation; through intellectual or spiritual means, through contemplation or love and prayer; the understanding of the ecstasy of the soul; the relationship between God and human, whether to become Christ or to imitate Christ; the attitude towards baptism; the knowability of God and the style of expression of the Eastern and Western traditions, etc. Concerning the grammar of negation, Origen can be considered an exception, as he tends to believe that God is knowable. However, this view of the relationship between the soul and the Word was the most unacceptable to later theologians.

[2] For Derrida, the ultimate goal of negative theology, no matter how negative it may be, is still the affirmation of God, the transcendent claim to hyper-essential being. The negation in mystical theology is merely an "investment" in order to return to the *hyperousio*s in a superior way. See Jacques Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," in *Derrida and Negative Theology*, eds. Harold Coward & Toby Foshay (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 73-142.

[3] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture*, 40.

[4] Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, "Mystical Theology," V. 1048AB, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: the Complete Works*, 141.

interpreter of Denys' apophatic theology, mystical theology is "Eminence," the third way apart from affirmation and negation, ultimately pointing to a direct union between humans and God.[1] Admittedly, the union with the unknowable God in an unknowable way still contains a strong denial and is therefore often labeled as Apophaticism. Similarly, Orthodox theologians often refer to Latin mystical theology "Apophaticism of essence" and the Eastern Church tradition as "Apophaticism of person."[2] If negative theology, as Derrida understands and criticizes it, is only a means of reaching a higher level of affirmation through negation or of acquiring some kind of *hyperousios*, it is still within the realm of epistemology. If we interpret the concept of *epekeina tes ousias* in Plato's *Republic* in this way, then mystical theology opens up to a kind of metaphysical interpretation. Whether it is a "double negation" in the epistemological sense or the union of the whole person is the key to understanding mystical theology. Another issue related to this is how to understand the language of mystical theology and the "knowledge" of theology.

Platonic mysticism is more of a pursuit of a few individuals or elites, in which the speculative life takes precedence over practical action. The love of God not only inspires individuals' "eros" but also unites people into one fellowship. Therefore, Christian mysticism is essentially ecclesiological, the result of the participation of a baptized life in the "Mystical Body of Christ." Christian mysticism from the Apostle Paul to the late Middle Ages has always

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[1] In response to Derrida's criticism of negative theology, Marion argues that the third path of mystical theology is "de-nomination": the naming of names while denying all names, the key to understanding this third path is to take the practical application of language seriously. Mystic theology is *a "performative" use* of the language of prayer and praise. Jean-Luc Marion, "In the Name," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds. John D. Caputo & Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 24-30 & 46.

[2] Christos Yannaras, *On the Absence and Unknowability of God*, trans. Haralambos Ventis (London & New York: T & T Clark International, 2005), 28-29. Orthodox theologians such as Vladimir Lossky and Christos Yannaras often use this to emphasize the difference between Eastern and Western mystical theology, with Latin mysticism as a "union of intellect" rather than a "union of person." Whether Eastern and Western mysticism is qualitatively different, or whether it is simply a different perspective on the interpretation of mystical experience, and the associated differences between the Eastern and Western churches regarding the Trinity, remain a controversial topic.

been associated with ecclesiology.[1] The modern understanding of mystical experience is usually at the level of individual consciousness, as in the case of William James. However, the use of the word "mystery" in the *Early Church* was not associated with a surprising personal experience but with the experience of the body of the Church. According to a contemporary Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas, the "mystery of Christ" has three layers of meaning: Christology (the person and especially the resurrected body of Christ), Ecclesiology (the Church as the body of Christ), and the Eucharist (the body of Christ shared in the Eucharist). In the Early Church, these three meanings were unified. After the scholasticism of the thirteenth century, the Church as a "mystical body" was separated from the Eucharist. The Eucharist became only one of the many liturgies of the Church, and the Church became institutionalized.[2] It is clear that mystical theology is not just a contemplation of God, but is inseparable from spiritual exercise, prayer, and other aspects of church life. As Andrew Louth argues, the mystical theology of the patristic period was essentially a liturgical theology, where the liturgy invites a person to open themselves to respond to the love of God and to be united with God in the liturgy.[3] The primary concern of mystical theology is not to know the nature of God, but — as Denys says — to praise (*hymnein*) God. Mystical theology is intellectual and scholarly only when it is seen as an object of study, that is, in itself, a response of creation with praise and worship to the love of God.

III. The unknowability and the boundary of logos

No faith claims to be irrational. A faith that lacks rationality is a devaluation of the worshipped one. Christianity is no exception. The relationship between reason and mysticism is entirely internal to the discussion of faith. Faith seeks not only understanding but also expression.

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[1] Andrew Louth, *The Origin of Christian Mystical Tradition*, 199-203.

[2] John Zizioulas, "The Church as the Mystical Body of Christ," in *Communion and Otherness* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2006), 286-307. This view of Zizioulas comes from the Catholic theologian Henri de Lubac. See Paul McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Fairfax: Eastern Christian Publications, 2006).

[3] Andrew Louth, *Denys the Areopagite* (London and New York: Continuum, 1989), 104-109.

The ancient Greek philosophers were already aware of the identity of thinking and existence, as well as the relationship between language and reason. According to Heidegger, the primary meaning of "logos" is "to reveal and make manifest," i.e., to reveal what is said through words. Making something visible as a phenomenon means bringing it out of concealment and into the light.[1] Reason, like language, has the function of "bringing together" the diversity of things, so "logos" means both "discourse" and "reason." Both are linked to the image of light. Thus, any discourse conveys some kind of reason, and the question of mysticism can be reduced to the question of language: what kind of logos/reason should faith apply?

Here, Kant's critique of pure reason, especially the distinction between the *Noumena* or "thing-in-itself" (*Ding an sich selbst*) and the phenomenal world (*Phänomena*), can provide a reference for our thinking about God and mystery.[2] God as *Noumena* is not a cognitive object of pure reason but can be known only when He appears to us in phenomena. Even if God is manifest in phenomena, there is still a dimension of "thing-in-itself" that cannot be known by reason. Because of God's transcendence and unknowability, theology is not strictly speaking knowledge of God Himself, but knowledge of God as revealed to us. One can know God through His creation or "energy," which gives legitimacy to natural or affirmative theology. But God Himself is not in the phenomenal world. He appears and withdraws from time to time. The desire to be united with God must go beyond affirmative speech to the negation and transcendence of natural reason and human language. Affirmative theology is concerned with the outward presence of God in creation, while negative theology is concerned with the inward movement of the soul toward God Himself. However, the path of negation has its priority in mystical discourse. If God is the Thomistic "subsisting being itself" (*Esse ipsum subsistens*), He is at the same time Eckhart's divine "nothingness" (*das Nichts*), the "abyss"

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[1] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 51-58.

[2] The meanings of "*Noumena*" and "thing-in-itself" overlap but are not identical. "*Noumena*" cannot be perceived at all, while the "thing-self" refers to the self-existing thing, the unknowable dimension of perceivable phenomena.

(*Abgrund*) concealed by existence, the absolute desert (*Wüste*) where no concept can grow. Here all human conceptual construction will fail, and God recedes from all names. In order to encounter the divine, the soul must divest itself of all the attributes of creation, all thoughts about God and personal desires, as well as all the attributes we have attributed to God, and be in a state of "letting-be" (*Gelassenheit*).[1] In his study of the nature of human freedom, Schelling points out that human freedom begins with uplifting God from every metaphysics and moral theology, thus rejecting all names of God, which either say too much or too little. God is above all idols, including "being."[2] All languages about the divine are impoverished, whether affirmative or negative. Theology can only use limited human languages in an analogical or metaphorical way.

The opposition between reason and mystery is a "modern event." The question is whether modern reason and theological reason share a conceptual basis, whether they are the same kind of reason? The modern "philosophy of subjectivity" bases knowledge on the "ego" and comprehends reality from the transcendental structure of the subject/object. This is a kind of "representational thinking" and "technical rationality" seeking conceptual mastery. Under the domination of such a "distanced" rationality, all experiences, including that of the world and the self, are reduced to an objective phenomenon, leading to the objectification and de-valorization of the world. Or, all values are understood as a human construction, leading to an extreme humanism that is "all-too-human." As Kant's critique shows, pure reason can only know "entities" in the phenomenal world, but not God Himself, who is beyond being. Mystical theology accommodates limited human reason *via affirmativa* and reveals the limits of reason *via negativa*, retaining the transcendence of God in an analogical understanding of language. Later scholasticism departed from the principle of the analogy of being, leading to a common concept or horizon under which God and creature were placed on a par. The quest for certainty

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[1] John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics,* 274-278.

[2] David L Clark, "Otherwise than God: Schelling, Marion," in *Trajectories of Mysticism in Theory and Literature*, ed. Philip Leonard (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 133-176.

also influenced the emergence of modern philosophy.[1] Mysticism and reason are not antithetical, nor does faith imply anti-intellectualism or the abandonment of philosophical reflection. What is needed is to clarify the boundaries of human rationality.

Christian theology as a discourse follows a higher reason, which, according to Marion, comes from the Word that became flesh, revealed through Christ as a reason of love. The love of God is unconditional, is able to overcome death and all impossibilities, and at the same time is the only way to know the self and the other. In Christ (the Word), love is revealed as the primary and ultimate truth. Thus, the question of knowledge in theology is no longer an intentional act of the subject but implies the communion of love: transformation by the loved through love. Because of its faith in the divine Logos (who is also the divine wisdom), Christian theology is obliged to appeal to the logos/reason for the truth of love. Faith gives legitimacy to theological discourse/reason. Theology so understood is first of all the self-utterance of the Word, Christ asserts himself as the Word. The reason of faith comes from the Word, and transmits the word of the Word in the name of the Word.[2] Faith requires the renunciation of self-centered reason and the union with the higher Logos.

In summary, the significance of Christian mysticism is at least threefold. In the Christian tradition, its defense of God's transcendence is a corrective and a counterpoint to metaphysical theology. Christian faith was too easily integrated with Onto-theology in modernism and was therefore rejected by the postmodern. After the "death of God," the unknowable God of mystical theology became the driving force and source of the self-renewal of Christian faith. Mysticism contributes to the rethinking of a single understanding of reason and knowledge and to the reshaping of

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[1] According to Hans van Balthasar, modern philosophy or modernity emerged from a departure from the Thomistic principle of analogy. Duns Scotus adopted Averroism in his theology, which considers existence as a univocal concept, and Francisco Suarez reinforced univocity as the basis for certainty and provability. This quest for certainty directly influenced Cartesian philosophy. Gavin Hyman, *The Predicament of Postmodern Theology* (Louisville & London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 33-37.

[2] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, trans. Christina M. Gschwandtner (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 146-154.

the relationship between reason and faith based on a departure from the stereotypes of Enlightenment reason about knowing and knowledge. As Marion says, the problem now is "no longer a matter of giving reason to all things, but of giving reason for rationality."[①] In contemporary philosophy, mystical theology reveals the limits of human reason and the dimension of unknowability and gives rise to thinking about "mystery" and religion. As Christos Yannaras argues, mystical theology is primarily a stance that rejects conceptual idols, psychological egocentricity, and conceptual certainty.[②] This stance has been characteristic of post-metaphysical philosophy.

According to Heidegger, being is not a persistent presence in the sense of traditional metaphysics but a process of presence out of absence and concealment. Truth in its original sense (*aletheia*) means unconcealment, presence in *Lichtung*, which is in itself preserved by lethe, the dimension of "nothingness" in presence. The presence of being is a mysterious "*Ereignis*" with *Dasein* as the locus and space of the presence. The task of thinking is to open to presence and let "being" show itself. Here one can discern a trace of Eckhart's "*Abgrund*" and "*Gelassenheit*." For theologians, the presence of "being" presupposes God. For Heidegger, "God" can only appear in the space opened by *Ereignis*. "Being" is a free play of presence and absence, light and darkness. The world itself is perserved by the opaque "earth," and *Dasein* as always already in the world is not a construction of the subject. Even in Kantian philosophy, nature and the self also maintain the dimension of unknowability. Although reason legislates nature, the "thing-in-itself" is not an object of knowledge, and the real world can never be exhausted by human concepts. Similarly, the knowledge of self cannot be reduced to simple empirical knowledge. For the "Transcendental I" is a precondition for all knowledge but cannot be the object of one's own intuition and inner perception. Knowledge of the self can only be knowledge of the "empirical me," that is, the person or the self as an object appearing to the transcendental self. For Kant, the value and dignity of human beings are not at all determined by their natural properties, and humankind as end in itself must not be objectified. Taking the Kantian thesis of what the

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[①] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, 154.

[②] Christos Yannaras, *On the Absence and the Unkonwablity of God*, 17.

human is as a starting point, Marion recalls Augustine's confusion about the self: "I had become to myself a huge question" (*Factus eram ipse mihi magna quaestio*), that is, I experience that I am unknowable to myself. Marion questions the idea of knowledge dominated by the philosophy of subjectivity: does all knowledge have to be reached with the same set of univocal concepts? The human, or even desirable, to use concepts to know the self that produces them? The human, like God, cannot be named, and philosophy must recognize and respect the unknowability of humans.[1]

A radical mystical theology, seemingly similar to "mystical atheism," would ultimately break the illusion of human conceptual clarity and certainty, pointing to the opacity of the world and the self. Instead, there are now discussions on questions such as the "phenomenology of givenness" in contemporary philosophy,[2] the revival of Neoplatonism in contemporary French philosophy and theology,[3] the "gift," and "what comes after the subject?" They all address the problem of modernity resulting from the Western metaphysical tradition and therefore are intrinsically linked to the mystical tradition. Traces of mysticism can be found in contemporary theological and philosophical discussions of "God as Otherwise than Being" and "God without Being,"[4] as well as "Religion without God" and "Religion

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[1] Jean-Luc Marion, "*Mihi Magna quaestio factus sum*: The Privilege of Unknowing," *Journal of Religion* 85, no.1(2005): 1-24.

[2] Marion's "phenomenology of givenness," which follows the phenomenological approach of Husserl and Heidegger, criticizes the philosophy of subjectivity with a notion of "saturated phenomena." It could be regarded as a philosophical footnote of his theological thought, which takes Denys's mysticism as one of the main sources.

[3] One of the distinctive features of the revival of Neoplatonism in twentieth-century French philosophy is the direct connection between the senses, sensuality, and a certain transcendental unknowability. Cf. Wayne J. Hankey, "Neoplatonism in Contemporary French Philosophy," *Dionysius* 23 (2005): 161-190.

[4] For example, Levinas advocates an ethical basis, and Calvin O. Schrag and Marion try to talk about God from the perspective of the "gift," both of which are attempts to overcome the grammar of "being." See Emmanuel Levinas, *God, Death, and Time*, trans, Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). Calvin O. Schrag, *God as Otherwise than Being: towards a semantic of Gift* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002). Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

without religion."[1] Although they do not always involve Christian mysticism, such statements are indeed postmodern rhetorics of mystical experience.

Conclusion

The complexity of the problem of mysticism lies in the relationship between language, experience, and reality. Is there an experience independent of language? Does reality determine language, or does language construct reality? What is the relationship between language and thought? The perception of these questions determines the different understandings of "mystery." Unlike Continental philosophy, the prevailing notion in Anglo-American analytic philosophy is that any experience is a human experience and therefore needs to be mediated by language. This means that there is no "pure experience" independent of language. George A. Lindbeck's "cultural-linguistic model" view of religion holds that religious experience is derived from a system of linguistic symbols, including liturgy. It has a unique cultural code and "grammar." In this sense, all mystical experience, including Christian mysticism, derives from the interpretative structure provided by a particular linguistic form and takes place with the help of a particular language.[2] This seems to support Derrida's criticism of negative theology. The ineffable God is the God of *the Bible*, not a God without definite cultural attributes. But does this mean that nothing exists outside of language and that the world is only a human construction?

As mentioned above, this view cannot deny the basic fact that human

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[1] Ronald Dworkin and Mark C. Taylor speak of "religion without God" from different perspectives, Gianni Vattimo puts that "nonreligious Christianity," while Derrida proposes "religion without religion." See Ronald Dworkin, *Religion without God* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2013); Mark C. Taylor, *After God* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2007); John D. Caputo & Gianni Vattimo, *After the Death of God*, ed. Jeffrey W. Robbins (New York, Columbia University Press) 2007. Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone," *Act of Religion*, ed., Gil Anidjar (New York & London: Routledge, 2002), 40-101. John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 1997.

[2] George Pattison, "What to Say: Reflections on Mysticism after Modernity," in *Transcending Boundaries in Philosophy and Theology,* eds. Kevin Vanhoozer & Martin Varner (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007), 192-194.

existence is always already in the world, which is the most basic and greatest mystery. Language is not a simple counterpart of independent meaning, nor is meaning an invention of language. Language always has to point to the signified beyond itself, and cannot fully express human thought and experience. According to Heidegger's view of language, the possibility of human language lies in listening to the voice of "being." *Ereignis* is more original than meaning and language, an event in which "being" and humans belong together, without ultimate foundation and concepts. It is only in response to this event that different cultural-linguistic patterns emerge. Language gives certain properties to experience in interpretation, but the experience is not a construction of language. The realm of silence is the border between language and mystery, not the end of the experience.

Mystery is open to language so that mystical experience can be expressed in different forms: not necessarily Christian, not necessarily personal, not necessarily in the name of God, not necessarily even in religious terms. Mystery can be the Buddhist "emptiness," the Taoist "Way," the Heideggerian "*Ereignis*," or a pure unknown. Of course, Christian mysticism is one of these possibilities.

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