

RADICAL ORTHODOXY - PANEL DISCUSSION BETWEEN PROFS GRAHAM WARD, JOHN MILBANK, DANIE GOOSEN AND DR JACO KRUGER¹

D. Goosen & J. Kruger

Prof. P. Duvenage: Ladies and gentleman, as head of the Department of Philosophy, I am extremely happy to be here tonight and to see you all here. And also our distinguished guests. So, on behalf of the Department of Philosophy and the Faculty of Theology, we would like to welcome you here at the conference. And let me say right from the start, I would also like to thank both Johan Rossouw, my colleague, and Helené van Tonder for your wonderful organising. I just saw you running around for a long time, you know - it was not just for a week - they put a lot into this conference, you know. So I would really want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the wonderful work that you've done to bring this very impressive conference together.

The title of the Conference is "Religion, Politics, Community and Radical Orthodoxy in South Africa". And I would also just like to say, before I say something a little bit more, that it is the 35th anniversary of the Faculty of Theology this year, and I just wanted to mention that also. So this is a very special and important year for the Faculty, that we are also staging this Conference. For me, from a personal side, even though I would not reckon myself as an expert on Radical Orthodoxy, what has always impressed me, reading some of the figures, and reading also the work of John Milbank,

¹ Transcription of an interview held at the opening of the conference "Religion, Politics, Community and Radical Orthodoxy in South Africa". Transcriber: Ms. J.M. Kotzé. The interview can be viewed at <https://goo.gl/S1wcHm>.

is the fine historical and systematic work done by scholars in the field of Radical Orthodoxy. And not just in Theology; it is a kind of intellectual historical style that really resonates with me. I would just [like] to mention [that] maybe, Danie, you will also later go on and say something more about it. So I am not going to say much more.

There is just one point that I would like to raise as also someone working in the field of Philosophy, and therefore it is an enormous privilege for us to welcome Prof. John Milbank here tonight and also Prof. Graham Ward, amongst many of the other scholars also. If I think of my friend here, Prof. Danie Goosen, in my book one of the foremost intellectuals in South Africa, and then also Dr Jaco Kruger. Thank you very much for being here.

So once again, welcome, and enjoy the conference. As I have said, the title is “Religion, Politics, Community: Radical Orthodoxy in South Africa”.

Now, before I give Danie Goosen the chance to set the ball rolling, I just want to read the CVs of our four panellists here tonight, given to me kindly by my colleague Johann Rossouw. I start off here directly alongside me.

Danie Goosen is professor in the Department of Religious Studies and Arabic at the University of South Africa. During the 1980s and 1990s, he became one of South Africa’s leading scholars on Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida. Partly due to his engagement with the Radical Orthodox movement Goosen, in a number of articles and books published locally and internationally in the last ten years, developed a tradition-based critique of these thinkers and of modernity itself. His latest book, *Oor gemeenskap en plek: Anderkant die onbehae* (“On Community and Place: Beyond the discontent”), has just been published and advocates a community-based mediation between tradition and modernity that steers clear of nostalgia, fundamentalism and ethnocentrism. So this is our first panelist tonight, Danie Goosen.

Then alongside him, Jaco Kruger was trained as a minister in the Reformed Churches in South Africa at the North-West University. While studying Theology, he also completed a Master's degree in Philosophy and lectured for a few years in the Department of Philosophy at the same university. He obtained the degree D.Litt. et Phil. in 2012 from the University of South Africa, UNISA, in the Department of Religious Studies. His doctoral thesis attempted a conversation with Jacques Derrida from a Radical Orthodox perspective. For the past number of years, he has served as a minister in the Reformed Church, Gereformeerde Kerk Wapadrand, in the east of Pretoria. He is also a research fellow of the Faculty of Theology at the North-West University with an interest in post-secularism and the return of metaphysics.

Then alongside Jaco is John Milbank. He is professor in Religion, Politics and Ethics at the University of Nottingham. He is the author of several books, of which the most well-known is *Theology and Social Theory* and the most recent *Beyond Secular Order: The Representation of Being and the Representation of the People*. He is one of the editors of the "Radical Orthodoxy Collection of Essays" which occasioned much debate. In general, he has endeavoured in his work to resist the idea that secular norms of understanding should set the agenda for Theology and has strived to promote the sense that Christianity offers a rich and viable account of the whole of reality. At the same time, he tends to insist that Christianity is itself eclectic and fuses many traditions, particularly that of the Biblical narrative with that of Greek philosophy. In addition, he has sustained interest in developing a political and social theology critical of the liberationist current as insufficiently theological, while retaining a left-leaning perspective.

Then our last guest on the panel tonight is Graham Ward. He is Regius Professor of Divinity at Christ Church, Oxford University. He is the author of several books, of which some of the best known include *Cities of God* and *True Religion*. His most recent book is

entitled *Unbelievable*. His special interests are in the fields of Theology, Philosophy and Cultural Studies, while his wider interests include the nature of religion and its relationship to Anthropology, Sociology, Politics, Gender Theory and contemporary science. He is currently working on a three-volume work, developing a culturally engaged systematic theology.

Now, with that Danie, I am going to hand the microphone over to you, and we are looking forward to a wonderful panel discussion amongst you four. Thank you very much.

Prof. D. Goosen: Thank you, Pieter. Am I supposed to sit down ... what do you think, Pieter? Should we merely continue?

Thank you very much. It is really from our side as well an enormous privilege to have this discussion with Professors John Milbank and Graham Ward. It is really quite a remarkable event this. I think it is the first time in South Africa that we have the opportunity to introduce Radical Orthodoxy to a South African audience. So, unfortunately I don't think we have much time. We are left with about an hour's time to discuss. And I see that you have advertised it as an introduction to Radical Orthodoxy. Now, I am not sure whether we should stay at an introductory level, or should we rather delve deeper into Radical Orthodoxy? Let's see how things develop. But I think, for a start, if I may - yes, well maybe I should interrupt myself. It would have been wonderful to ask these gentlemen about the British general elections [laughter] and that speaks for itself. Anyone that is familiar with Radical Orthodoxy will know that within Radical Orthodoxy, [there is] a strong divide between, on the one hand, metaphysical and theological questions, and, on the other hand, political, social and economic issues. There are no such strong divides, so both gentlemen are well-known for commenting on contemporary issues and political issues as well.

But let's start on a very general level and just ask about the background to Radical Orthodoxy. What caused this movement? What brought it all about?

Prof. J. Milbank: Who would you like to answer this question?

Prof. D. Goosen: I think, let you start (pointing at Prof. G. Ward).

Prof. G. Ward: No, [laughing], I will fill in the gaps.

Prof. J. Milbank: [laughing] ... I think we were going mad in Cambridge, or something like that. I think there was a sort of feeling that something new was emerging - a certain, a different generation was emerging, that was articulating things in a slightly different way, shall we say. And that probably the atmosphere had been strongly informed by a reading of Barth, on the one hand, and a reading [of] Wittgenstein, on the other hand; a certain attempt from Donald MacKinnon to sort of relate Kant to Aquinas. And I think that a new generation was emerging, that began to feel that it was post-Wittgensteinian in the sense that it was more concerned with thick strong metaphysical questions. And that a certain discontent either with a sort of revelatory positivism or merely talking about language gains, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a kind of acceptance, a sort of liberal theological acceptance that secular culture set the agenda and the important thing was to sort of translate theology into the terms of the liberal culture. I think already there began to be a sense that the *Nouvelle Théologie* had sort of upset the idea that you had to choose between an approach to theology, sort of only founded on faith and revelation as against one where somehow reason, a sort of neutral humanist reason sets all the agenda, and then revelation can do very little to disturb that. I think we already had the sense and reading people like De Lubac and Von Balthasar that you did not necessarily have to have that duality of faith and reason. There was a different approach that wouldn't have that duality at all and that is strongly related, on the one hand, this idea of a natural desire for the supernatural and, on the other hand, to the notion of *de analogia entis*, a sort of mediating between reason and faith – that there is a sort of a space in the middle, if you like, that encompasses both reason and faith. And that has very much to do with analogy and participation. And I think now it is encouraging us to revisit the question of the relationship between

Christianity and Platonism and Neo-Platonism. And to take a more metaphysical view of analogy than was being taken by our immediate seniors, who were tending to read it just in a sort of rather Wittgensteinian kind of way, whereas we were tending to see this as a strong metaphysics. This is at least how it began. This was somehow an interplay with people reading a lot of what was then called postmodern philosophy, poststructuralism and postmodernism. And I think what we took from that, was the idea that humanism is being deconstructed – that you can't sort of turn from God to a strong humanist foundation. So that you know, the revival of Nietzsche, in the sense of that if God is dead then also man is dead, unto a feeling that a lot of, again our immediate seniors, were operating in a rather sort of comfortable humanist agnostic space, the kind of space common both to continental philosophy and analytic philosophy – this sort of space of a supposed third realm, where you can somehow focus on the phenomena or logic or the categories of language and you can be metaphysically agnostic, but you can somehow be epistemologically dogmatic. And I think we were beginning to see that both in the cases of, say, Derrida in relation to Husserl, Quine in relation to Frege, then leading through to Rorty that the twin foundationalisms of the supposedly secure middle realm – that was being removed. So the idea that there was this secure humanist starting point was gone. I think this has now been further clarified by people like Quentin Meillassoux who've shown there is a problem about correlation in this model of people who think in some sort of mysterious, this sort of critical realism and some mysterious way there is a correlation between what our minds think and at least the evidence of the phenomena and that this is, you know wholly without a basis – that this is utterly unrelated to natural science. It's sort of bracketing that out. That leads me on to say that I think that our reaction to postmodernism was very distinctive. On the one hand, we are saying, yeah, kind of, humanism is over. And it was trendy at that point at the AAR (American Academy of Religion) to say that everything is indecisive. So, every paper

at the AAR always concluded that everything is completely uncertain, relative and then the introducer to the session always concluded with a “Thank you for that incredible profound new insight!” [laughter]. So everybody just kept repeating that everything is undecidable, indeterminate, in flux, you know, etc. But what I think is unique to Radical Orthodoxy, is saying, well, if everything is indeterminate, you don’t have to read that in a kind of immanentistic way. As if the name of God, you know, is an uncertainty, if you like. You can go back to a certain kind of Platonism or to the patristic era and say, “Yes, because we live in time, everything is approximate, uncertain, and because we are fallen human beings,” as I assume the Afrikaans culture still knows, I hope so [laughing], that makes it all doubly uncertain still. But you can see that instead of saying, well, we’re just stuck in an uncertainty, you can say, nonetheless, there is some approximate appropriation towards the truth, if you like. And this is where something like analogy comes into the picture. And then you can say, well, if you understand that as human beings, our destiny is to mediate in the cosmos, our destiny is to be the performers and symbolic makers of this mediation, then you can bring back humanism, but only you know, only in theological guise. I am not claiming we were hugely original here, people like Jacques Maritain and De Lubac had already said that in a certain way. But what I would *now* say, is that I think Radical Orthodoxy were the first people to invent what is now called speculative realism, because precisely, we were saying that you can’t get stuck in a porous zone of uncertainties forever, you know. That just leads to a black hole. And we were the first people then to say that if epistemology is being destroyed, if the Kantian foundation has been destroyed, then you can go back to metaphysics, albeit it in a kind of existentialist speculative way, which is in a way precisely the move that people like Badiou, Meillassoux, Garcia and so on have now made, albeit in a very atheistic mode, still. But nonetheless, they have moved towards trying to make some sort of realist metaphysical statements. So,

this is how I would now historically understand Radical Orthodoxy. But we got there first.

Prof. G. Ward: [joking] This is question *one*, John. [All laughing]

Prof. J. Milbank: But I think you want a rough background of Radical Orthodoxy, and I am trying to give you that. And I think in a way that is how you can now construe things. It has also been put brilliantly well by Rowan Williams, who is a sort of somewhat semi-detached grandfather, but we're all indebted to him when he says that if language doesn't just copy reality, but nonetheless adds to reality in a way that is not just arbitrary but consistent with reality, then this suggests that there is a kind of intellectual agenda that nature is going somewhere. And it is not just an immanent god, because new things happen, new things arise. There is non-identical repetition, there is the event, and so on and this all points towards some sort of transcendent thought. So, while initially Rowan belonged to that sort of Wittgenstein, post-Barth thing, he now also, I think, slightly under our influence, is very much making these metaphysical moves, you know. So it is a strong insistence on the co-belonging of theology and metaphysics, and a sort of rethinking of the great tradition from Aquinas through to Cusa, but in some non-identical ways that I cannot completely go into now, but I can try and indicate under further questioning.

Prof. D. Goosen: [interrupting] No, that is perfect.

Prof. J. Milbank: And onto Graham, [handing the microphone to Prof Ward]

[All laughing, joking and talking simultaneously]

Prof. G. Ward: If you look at that first volume that came out, which was the collection of essays, there's no way that you can take the introduction as programmatic, because we didn't have ... there wasn't a program behind that. But there was a kind of vision that John is talking about in terms of a certain bankruptcy within theological discourse, at that time, that either moved towards Don Cupitt-liberalism, which was just milky blancmange, or you can move increasingly towards a conservatism,

based upon revelation of some kind. And try to find a way in which you didn't ... that those two were not necessarily... there was not a way beyond ... Alongside and philosophically what was happening, an anti-metaphysics was actually coming. Alongside that, some new voices – Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze and those. And from my mind, I mean, what was interesting about these people was that they were using my language. They were actually talking about mystical theology, they were actually talking about confession with Foucault. So, they were using this language but, in fact, using it [in] ways that I did not fully understand, and I still don't fully understand how they are actually using it. But they brought in a theological discourse where, in fact, the theology scene was becoming fairly bankrupt in terms of alternatives. So what we kind of looked at in that first volume and when we put the first conference ... well, it was a colloquium... together, were sites that secularism had really invested in, to say we want to do in a way a new kind of apologetics. How would you read this? How would you read music? Or the city, or the body, or language? How would you read this theologically? Why are we being told that this is the narrative – the secular narrative about the way language works through in structuralism, or the nature of the city, or the nature of the body is. When we actually arrive at what desire is, what music is. So I think there was a strong consensus of wanting to be a constructive voice that was actually trying to engage the culture in which we were working. And that apologetic... And there were precursors – I mean Stanley Hauerwas was somebody who was doing this in the States and, in fact, at the same time he and Peter Oakes established Radical Traditions that is still going as a series... And Rowan was very much... MacKinnon... These were the people who are our, if you like, forefathers, to show us a way forward. But to me, and I come back to that, it was always... So when we got the sort of criticism of nostalgia, I thought that's exactly *not* what we're trying to do. It was actually to engage the culture and that is why we chose these sites that secularism invested a

lot in, like aesthetics. But how would you read this then from a theological perspective?

Dr. J. Kruger: Thank you Danie, if I may. I am very much interested in that comment that you made about the rediscovery of metaphysics and actually post-secularism and that Radical Orthodoxy is part of a broader sort of development of post-secular and rediscovery of metaphysics. And it was especially the connection that you made with the work of Quentin Meillassoux and speculative realism. I would just like to know to what extent could these developments be seen as allies in the overcoming of Kantianism or correlationism and where would the paths also diverge from them – from this new speculative realism and so on?

Prof. J. Milbank: Well, you know, you can either give a very long answer to that, but I will try to give a brief one. I think, yes, the common ground is the sort of the extension of anti-humanism into a really anti-Kantian moment, where Jacques Derrida was still a kind of Kantian. He was still trying to say what are the transcendental limits in which we can speak. I think what's interesting in continental philosophy is the movement beyond that to saying that there simply is no ground for thinking we can have more secure knowledge about the ways in which we know – the *what* we know. Even this sort of, even the kind of, that being secure that the limits of deconstruction has gone. In a curious kind of way there is almost a half-turn back to existentialism - the sense that you are making a decision, that you are making a kind of speculative decision, I think in Badiou and his pupils. And also the sense that somehow it is very unsatisfactory for the Kantian legacy to have imagined that it could ignore the sort of naturalistic implications for what is going on in the human mind. And this is where it actually sort of connects some of [Graham's] engagement with Iain McGilchrist and things like this. And I think part of the current move is like a kind of anti-anti-psychologies. The twentieth century's philosophy is sort of founded on this idea that there is a sort of area of knowledge, sort of immune from naturalism, if you like. What is interesting is that we're now seeing that naturalism doesn't

necessarily mean reductionism, you know. We discover that you may say well the mind is brain processes - and that is what Graham has been talking about - but actually, when you look at them, they don't behave in this mechanical kind of way, at all! And equally, the question of "Does truth need a truth maker?"... The question is, you know, "Can we detach truth entirely from our minds and judgements?", which can be a naturalistic way. But actually it's also an Aristotelian or Thomist move. You can't detach, truth abides in judgement. There is no truth imaginable without the existence of the soul. Because if you like, truth is an event in the soul. And we now know, as a matter of fact, that the long-term switch from the idea that you don't need a truth maker, is to do with decadent developments in very late scholasticism itself, that comes through to Bolzano and then to modern philosophy. I think people are now questioning all that. And therefore a kind of space for a possible metaphysical realism has again opened up. So, in Tristan Garcia's recent book, for example, *Form and Object*, he rejects both materialism and idealism, on the grounds that ideas... everything is real. It's a kind of Meinongianism that may be highly debatable, but he's very open to the idea that all sorts of things are real - I mean, ideas, abstractions, acts of the imagination, and so it is this sort of very generous realism. And he is also suggesting that meaning begins out there in the world, in a way Rowan Williams does as well. In a sense, language is already there in nature, there are codes, and that form is something irreducible. Now, I think where the break comes is that the kind of manoeuvres that Garcia then has to make to avoid talking about a transcendent god are really rather extraordinary. And I won't go into the details, but they involve him in astonishing metaphysical convolutions. And it is the same with Meillassoux, he starts talking about there may be a god in some possible world. And in that possible world, there may be a resurrection. But I think once you're on the ground of metaphysical realism, you're on grounds sort of very favourable towards Christianity. It becomes possible to have a real serious debate with these people, because they are saying, "We don't... We

want to be somehow immanentist atheists, but we don't want to reduce the reality of the human subject's and the thinking, and so on..." I think a seriously interesting debate becomes possible, whereas to my mind the debates opened up by a lot of our analytical philosophy and even to some extent by a strict phenomenology, are less interesting.

Prof. G. Ward:

The worse is the move out of dualism, because that was the central... one of the central attacks of post-modern philosophy and structuralism was dualistic thinking. And what it therefore did then, was to collapse everything into immanency – everything was immanent. What it seems that what has actually happened, was that the immanency has got a lot deeper than people actually thought, to the extent that there was, within the immanent, the notion of a transcendent. I'll give you an example and it comes from the way, say, everything is all flux and materialism, Daniel Dennett's view of the brain. And what you find as you move deeper into the research to do with the brain and what's happening, is they still can't account for mind. Where does mind come in? Mind is not some kind of active phenomenon. But they are too committed to material to dismiss what this is. And you get, so you get this in Physics with quantum, you get it in Biology with Molecular Biology and the notions of emergence. What we are getting, is thicker and thicker accounts of the immanent which become so non-reductive that it becomes exceedingly complex to talk about the immanent as if it is one thing and we all know what it is. It starts to kind of implode, and you see this in someone like Catherine Malabou, for example, who comes out of that kind of thing under Derrida... [Milbank interjects: "She's a kind of speculative realist."] She *is* a speculative realist, and partly what has got her into that type of thing, is moving through Hegel into neuroscience. And now she is in fact realizing the non-reductive nature of the material. And when you start, you know as I have been talking, you start talking to some of these people who want to talk about communication and proto-intelligence at the level of the cell, and they want to talk about the receptor, they want to talk about signalling within

sounds, which create organization. Now, the interesting thing is what these people have been saying is, “Is this a metaphor?” And I’ve been raising this question, “Isn’t it a metaphor?” They would *like* it to be a metaphor, but they don’t quite know what a metaphor is. So they think that a metaphor is something that kind of allow them to speak as if it had intention when it doesn’t need to have intention. But I say to them, “Well, how do you know it’s not got intention? How can you get back to say that there isn’t? Because the only way that you are talking about this, is in terms of what we call trans-doctrine signalling. So how do you know it’s not signalling? How do you know that that’s not different from signalling that goes on anywhere?” And it’s the way in which we moved, I think, from, say, the post-war dualisms, which were Kantian-based dualisms, into the plane of immanence, you know, the Lyotard and the Deleuze and the Nancy out to this plane of immanence now has got so thick, we can’t say where it begins and where it ends, and suddenly you are back to the notion of transcendence.

Prof. D. Goosen: John, can I just return to perhaps a few remarks you made at the very beginning about your understanding of history and the history of philosophical and theological thought.

Prof. J. Milbank: Certainly.

Prof. D. Goosen: It is clear that within Radical Orthodoxy there’s an attempt to link up – and what you said, is based on that right now – link up with the participatory ontology of Platonic tradition and Christian tradition, Platonism, etc. But, in your reading of history, you make a strong distinction between, on [the] one hand – participatory ontology – and then what happened at the very beginning of modernity with the univocal ontology developed by Duns Scotus in the fourteenth... thirteenth century. What exactly – and I know it is extremely introductory this – but what exactly is the importance of this distinction between the participatory versus the univocal ontology? What is at stake within that conflict between the two? And perhaps this links up with another question about the relationship between the

tradition and modernity. You are also playing with the idea of an alternative modernity. So you are not working with the idea that there's a total exclusion of tradition and modernity – you are seeking for something beyond that duality. Can you elaborate on that?

Prof. J. Milbank: Yes, I will try to be brief. I think, one thing that's important to stress here is that Radical Orthodoxy is often not really original, with respect to genealogy. What I have been trying to do, anyway, as a theologian, is sort of respond responsibly to the most sophisticated historical research, which is mainly being done in France by people like Olivier Boulnois, Alain de Libera, and so on. Now, unfortunately in Anglo-Saxon countries this research is often not known or very well understood, in my view. And so, you know, it is not something I have made up. I am interested, you know - the view, for example, that Duns Scotus is the pivotal thinker in the history of Western thought rather than Kant, is something that has been articulated both within continental thought by people like Ludger Honnefelder in Germany, by people like... by an analytical French theologian like Frédéric Nef. Whether it comes to ontology or the question of modality, you know so whether you would want to put it in terms of the beginning of onto-theology or the beginnings of the dominance of actuality by possibility, it always seems to point back to Duns Scotus, you know. I mean, there's a lot of things that happened before Duns Scotus, you know. That's important to emphasize. But I think for me, yes, the danger with univocity of being is that you start to say that God and creatures exist in the same way. They simply exist or not. So, existence is just seen like bare being, rather than negation. And this then encourages the attitude that you can talk about the existence of things with creation bracketing that. You know, as if it makes no difference to be talking about something that is created, except the bare fact that it is causally brought about by God. Rather than the idea that creation enters into the depth of something because briefly it's the giftedness of something. And there is a sense that creatures are at the bottom of themselves nothing, that being is something they are

always receiving, and if you like in different degrees of intensity. The reason why people like Boulnois identify the beginning of onto-theology with Scotus, is that they think already, he's saying that God is a great big being, that He is in some way *the* being among beings. Now, we mustn't make that as crude. He *is* saying God is an infinite being and, therefore, a huge mystery. But the problem is also that if you sort of say that, as regards being, that God and creatures are the same - they exist - then also that can go along with having to differentiate God too much in terms of a complete infinite mystery, or God is different by virtue of His will and His self-assertion. So the one and same move - univocity and equivocity - tend to be in alliance with each other once you lose that sense of analogical mediation - we are like and not like God. Briefly, the point about a different way to be modern is, for me, unbelievably important, because this is where I think Nicholas de Cusa is so crucial for Radical Orthodoxy and we're much indebted to Johannes Hoff from Germany, who has done superb research on Cusa. And I think one of the key things about Cusa, is - and this is where we are not saying you can just go back to Aquinas from Ockham. We're not saying... I think one of the most crucial things about the advance towards nominalism is that they tend to see the crucial metaphysical moves as violating the principle of uncontradiction. The theory of universals, or the theory of real relations or analogy, is seen as somehow enunciating unacceptable paradox. And I think the important thing about Nicholas of Cusa - and I would link him up now with the work of Margaret Masterman, which Rowan is so keen on, in the 20th century - the point about Nicholas of Cusa is he says, "Okay, it really is paradoxical, and metaphysics and Christianity are about paradox," and then Kierkegaard will say this later on. If you like, they are seeing that analogy involves paradox, because if you are saying something is somehow between identity and difference, but it is not a little bit the same and a little bit different in different respects. If you're saying they coincide, if you're saying we are like God in our very difference from God or something like that, then you

are on the grounds of paradox. And then you have to do with interference of the finite with the infinite. This is why I think Cusa is so important and that he is sort of reworking both the Albertine and the Thomist traditions and blending them together. He also has a new sense of the dynamism of nature and the fact that, when we are speaking, we are shaping something, we are constructing something. That relates back, I think, to some things I am saying about Rowan Williams, so that analogy now becomes not just a creation to God, the creator, but also a dynamic self-creating creation that is most of all thrown human being. This is where we are very keen on a modern sense of making, if you like. And I think the mainline of modernity – and people like Bruno Latour are very good on this – is stuck in the contradiction of saying everything in the human world is natural, but it is *also* totally artificial. This is what you get in Hobbes. So you are always stuck in this, you know this relates to Foucault's bio-politics. You are always saying well, really it is all natural, or else it is completely arbitrary. And the point about Nicolas of Cusa, and this is later picked up by Giambattista Vico, is that they think that differently by saying that making itself can be in continuity with nature and can be a mode of participation. So, what people – and I am speaking of my own work, here – the great thing that people miss is that from my thesis on Vico onwards I am trying to rethink a different way of being modern. I am never talking about just going back. Another way, I am now saying, in which our orthodoxy is radical, is that, although I see people like Augustine and Aquinas as a point of reference, I also very much want to rehabilitate Origen, Erigena, Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa and to argue that these people were sometimes regarded with suspicion, are to my mind, ultra-orthodox, radically orthodox. So, I believe strongly, for example, that apocatastasis is a profoundly orthodox Christian doctrine, rooted in St Paul, you know. And I would say... I mean, Graham was saying quite rightly that all the boring nonsense that's been written about Paul by theologians and biblical critics and all the interesting things that's been written by Paul, even if sometimes quite strange. But I would

say there is a Paul on radicalism that we don't face up to – it's his universalism, the restoration of the whole of the cosmos, as the only thing compatible with a god who is truly in charge, if you want to be ultra-Calvinist, you know. That's what Saint Paul says and there is also a degree of anti-nomianism in Paul that we don't always face up to. It's all there, but it's kind of order beyond order in the name of charity. And that is something else that people miss in my work. Favourable illusions towards people like William Blake and [inaudible] that's just been ignored. So, although I see my vision as very, very Catholic, there is an element of radicalism that some Catholics will be upset about.

Prof. G. Ward: Let me come back to the question about modernity, and the way in which we are trying to recreate a new modernity, if you'd like. I think what's become apparent, and this was coming from various kind of sources, is that in fact that if you look at the sixties and seventies, they were still kind of working with a monolithic understanding of modern, that then the postmodern kind of even made more monolithic, because it was something that it was trying to oppose. So, in trying to oppose it, it was actually defining it more closely. Since then what we have in historians are much more awareness of what they call multiple modernities. And that comes back to there's not one narrative. And it comes back also to the genealogical work here that's been done is there are more than one narrative. There is more than one way of telling the story. So the kind of Enlightenment project was not an Enlightenment project that saw its way through simply unruffled by anything else. There were other things as well.

Prof. J. Milbank: [interjecting] There was no one Enlightenment.

Prof. G. ward: Yes, there was no one Enlightenment. So, it's within that possibility then to actually then see that there were other more poetic, *poésis*-making ways of actually looking at things, that you could actually trace through. In trying to look at the traditions and take the tradition forward – traditions are always forward-looking, it's not a backwards "in aspic, in amber." It always moves eschatologically towards a future. So, it's picking up

these people from the past, but picking them up also with a number of other kind of voices that you cannot see, you know, even with *Nouvelle Théologie*, which we mentioned. But there were voices even before *Nouvelle Théologie* in the late nineteenth-century in France, for instance, who were already beginning to actually explore some of these things, and it's almost that what you do is create the narrative which makes another kind of story. And a story in which that notion of participation, which for me particularly, is a very poor line, it's simply *en Christo*, it's all about all things being hidden in Christ, in God.

Prof. J. Milbank: [interjecting] God in whom we move, look and have our being.

Prof. G. Ward: Absolutely. It is actually working that room in a way that it is actually emphasizing that human aspect of the creativity, as well as the way in which, therefore, we create new kinds of ways of conceiving what might be.

Prof. D. Goosen: The idea of God that you have just raised, about we being within God already, that stands very much against the univocity idea that you [are] standing so to speak from the outside, that you are speaking towards [gesturing]. In terms of the opposition between Kant and Hamann – you love to refer to Hamann – exactly what is, in a certain sense you of course had already answered it, what is at stake in this opposition between Kant and Hamann?

Prof. J. Milbank: Well, I think that Hamann's metacritical move is quite simply saying that the Kantian dualism that Graham has already referred to, depends upon ignoring language, then the idea that we can sort of critically separate what the a priori contribution of our mind is – the categories within which we can understand reality from the empirical information coming in items from without, is impossible – if we think... We can only think in words, you know. To this extent, the linguistic turn can't be avoided. We are always only dealing with words or other forms of symbolisation. And the trouble is that we then arrive too late to do the kind of sifting that Kant wants to perform. You know, external reality

always comes to us somehow already categorised, you know. Either it is already structured and signalling in the way Graham is saying, and we are responding to that with our own reading and we can't say where we structure the world. Does it come just from within us or from the world? It's fused together, already, and I think that Hamann grasps that very simple point, so that where Kant is saying "Don't speculate, don't go outside the bounds," Hamann is saying that you have always already been speculating. You know, there are no bounds to establish; the bounds have always already been transgressed. So, I think again Rowan is quite correct [in] say[ing] that Kant is too great a thinker to say it doesn't make any difference, you know. It does. Because we can say that what Kant is essentially criticising are rather decadent scholastic metaphysics that thinks onto-theologically. But nonetheless, he has made us more aware of... Beware of doing that, you know... After Hamann, we are far more aware that if we are metaphysically speculating, that it is very difficult to separate that from the poetic gesture. So, this is the way he leads into early Romantic thinkers like Novalis and Schlegel who suggest that metaphysics is a kind of fragmentary enterprise to some extent – you know, it's never quite finished. So, this is again, it doesn't mean because Hamann criticises Kant, we can go back to Aristotle or Aquinas as if a lot of things haven't happened. That's absurd, you know, and we're not trying to trash modern thinkers in that simplistic way, but we are saying these metacritical moves – and Hamann is simply one example – and another example, I think, is the way in which we mean to be wrong is saying because we always think with the body and through the body, you can't make that dualistic separation either. And that leads unto people like Merleau-Ponty in the twentieth century. Whether we are thinking about language, or the body and the profound connection between the two that, again, Rowan tries to talk about, that puts us in a position of sort of returning to metaphysical speculation, but in a rather different way.

- Prof. G. Ward: One of the things that's really emerging also in Kantian scholarship and in the work of Christopher Insole, for example, is that increasingly within the Kantian corpus things start to break down...
- Prof. J. Milbank: [interjecting] Yes! You can argue that by the time of the *Opus postumum* that he already realises that Biology is a problem for his critical enterprise.
- Prof. G. Ward: So, the better we... in actually reading the whole... and the better we're understanding the whole kind of German conflicts that arose around the early post-Kantian reception, and the way in that they actually then fed through to the confluence of the faculties. It begins wanting to separate Theology and Philosophy and it actually starts to conflate them. One bleeds into the other, starts talking about philosophy as a means of grace, for example. So, the whole language starts to break down within Kantianism. There's a lot more awareness now that in fact Kant wasn't some monolith either. He was actually engaged with these people; he actually began to see himself that this wasn't actually foolproof and waterproof. And it gave rise to people like Jacobi and Schelling and the later Schelling. So, I think we have richer and better understandings now. I think that sometimes we talk philosophy as if "This is Kant," now you've got it. And, in fact, what we need to go back to – and in some ways this is what Radical Orthodoxy has been able to do in its scholarship – is actually go back to texts and read them again.
- Prof. D. Goosen: You know, at Afrikaans universities, for a long time we had the influence of the phenomenological traditions and of course hermeneutical philosophy etc., but in the background of this was a Kantian scepticism towards metaphysical speculation. That was very much part of our training. So, what I am hearing, amongst other things, is that a good phenomenology can be done when seen in close connection with the metaphysical tradition. [Milbank interjects: "Yes, this is why I feel that Merleau-Ponty is the nearest to that"] [Ward interjects: "And Jean-Louis Chrétien."] Jaco, I'm not sure whether you would like to add something to this, because I think we would very much like to move to politics and the

question of the city. Should we move in that direction? Sorry, I think the time is moving and there are still so many issues that need to be addressed.

Prof. J. Milbank: Well, I hope we can do more tomorrow.

Prof. D. Goosen: Of course, yes, that's correct. Shall we end with a few questions on politics, for, say, 10 minutes? It is well-known that Radical Orthodoxy can be described as committed to a Christian-socialist position. But, of course, this is laden with a lot of misunderstandings precisely about what is meant by Christian socialism. In a recent article, for example, John you refer to the combination between the socialist position and a preference for the free market. Exactly how do you think about this? How can the free market be accommodated within a socialist framework?

Prof. J. Milbank: Well, I don't mean the free market with its connotations with neo-liberalism, I don't mean that at all. But what I am trying to say is that I think a more authentic socialism can be about having just economic relationships, though. So, not about some state control and suspending the market. And I think that I have recently said that, in the history of socialism, you get initially socialism offered as a kind of alternative to political economy whether in the sense of state control and state organisation or in the sense of some sort of mutualism that would somehow evade the economic moment. And this is because the economy is sort of seen as brutally amoral, if you like. And then in the 1890s you get a kind of socialist acceptance of market processes understood in a sort of marginalist utilitarian calculation. What is quite bizarre is that the same model that is construed in terms of the invisible hand can be construed within the Soviet Union in terms of the visible hand. So, their attitude towards the economic is incredibly utilitarian and attached to people's wants and needs. It's very reductive. So, what I am saying now is that we need a kind of third socialism, which I want to call a civil economy socialism, which would not accept – and there is no reason to do this and I think this is were we do need to revive some traditional notions – that one doesn't need not to

think of economic contracts as inherently amoral. You know, this is what we get from Adam Smith who tells us that you and your butcher don't care about each other's welfare. What is interesting is that not just the medieval tradition, but also the Neapolitan tradition of modern political economy has never accepted that. It has always said that even an economic contract can be a site of social negotiation with the neighbour. And what I'm now discovering is not even most Scottish economists accepted what Adam Smith said – like Dugal Stewart didn't accept that. And in many ways, Adam Smith is not typical of the Scottish traditions. For Smith sympathy is outside contracts, for Smith and Hume. For other Scots sympathy can be within contracts. So it is only one economic model that says in any social contract, in any economic contract the contract can also be a social negotiation. It is because we have corralled the economy somehow, if you like. And the more local your transactions are, the more they are not ultimately separated from what anthropologists call gift exchange, you know. You are trying to say... And even in business practice as it exists, you could say that we have never been quite as capitalist as we think. I mean, other considerations do enter. And what's interesting now is that the growth around the world have increasing hybridisation of business as having some social purpose. And I find now that even people at Wellhampton are sharing what the so-called Blue Labour movement has been talking about, the idea that you require of the setting up of a corporation that it states its social purpose. You know, it becomes unacceptable just to say we exist to make money and I think again, this is not utopian. The more our economy has been financialized, the more we got away from the fact that business does think in more concrete social terms. If you like, the kind of socialism I am talking about is not sort of anti- the market or anti-business, but that doesn't mean some kind of concession, not at all! It means that I want that sphere to be socialised, if I can put it that way. And I think there is a great rediscovery going on of what socialism means. People like Jean-Claude Michéa in France are pointing out

that it was never seen as a left-wing doctrine in the nineteenth century. You know, liberalism was what defined the left and that socialism was in many ways an attempt to rediscover community that had been lost by modernity, but without simply going back to *ancien régime*-hierarchies and -injustices, but possibly rediscovering the specific duties of different social roles, and so on. And so Jean-Claude Michéa has got into a lot of trouble for saying that socialism always had some conservative dimension to it. And I think my thinking about socialism has always been in that kind of way. In a way I've always wanted to insist that Christian socialism makes a difference, that the Christian element, the metaphysical elements, the elements of saying, well, if we don't agree about what is really desirable, how can we fairly share it? That liberalism is precisely the mechanism that says "We don't agree and how can we have order despite the fact that we don't agree?" I can't see that any kind of Christianity could be at ease with that.

Prof. D. Goosen: Can you just elaborate on the emphasis on local practices? I think we in South Africa are confronted with more or less the same problem.

Prof. J. Milbank: Yes, I should let Graham get in here, but I think everywhere around the world there's a tension between globalism and the like. But you come in here, Graham.

Prof. G. Ward: All right [laughing].

Prof. J. Milbank: I am not chickening out, I have said far too much [jokingly].

Prof. G. Ward: Part of the work I've done on globalism, is to first of all trace it back in terms of – there's a very strong current, a sort of missionist element, that [is] actually theological. And that some of the language of the people who wanted globalism, had a vision for globalism, was quite an eschatologically rich... I mean of the way in which this would bring global peace, wherever the Macdonald's sign was this would actually... But what we're seeing is that's just not true. So part of what you've got to do is to deconstruct all that language. I mean, that language is... You know, where are you

getting this language from? What's the kind of rhetoric that's actually been involved here and what is it doing for you in having this kind of mystic charge? – where, you know, it becomes just obscurantism, it's ideology, quite simply. And then to bring it back then to what is actually happening, so to me what was happening, was a very clear dematerialisation of money, for example, everything was electronic. But dematerialisation and this links back to the work that was done by other people on nominalism where names mean far more than any product. I mean Starbucks wasn't selling coffee, it was selling Starbucks. Nike are not selling shoes that you can just be wearing, they are saying... And so the brand, you know, becomes the valuable thing. And that is nominalism written large – as commodity fetishism. And I still find a lot of the kind of analysis and even the language that I want to use is a Marxist analysis, particularly the first part of *Das Kapital*, which I still find gives us tools for actually now being able to think our way through where we are now. I am not sure about... The kind of co-operatism that you can get at the local level can actually work, and I've seen that work particularly where churches had become kind of involved in that kind of marketing at a local level. But it is...I'm worried that it's not enough. That is what I worry about. What I worry about, is the huge disparities that globalism is bringing in between the really, really rich and the devastatingly poor. And it was pointed out to me by an economist, he is at Edinburgh university, that 2008 was in fact some of the best, best times for some of the wealthiest people because they picked up major assets really cheap and they got vastly more wealthy. And I think whether you're in South Africa or whether you're in Britain, this huge, huge gap is opening up, in which the middle class is just being the ones that are crushed in the middle, because we are actually the ones that do pay taxes, on the whole – and can't afford not to pay, I mean can't afford the accountants that would actually get us through the loopholes... I don't earn enough to actually even warrant trying to climb through the loophole. So, we are actually kind of squeezed in the middle. And it does seem to me

that we are actually the ones with a conscience around here and I actually think this is wrong! So, in the kind of political economics that I want to do it's drawing peoples' attention to two things – 1. There is a justice issue here that we have to get a hold of, and 2. We have to get a deeper understanding about the dignity of what it means to be a human, but it cannot rest on what Charles Taylor calls exclusive humanism. That is not going to work. It seems we need a humanism and an understanding of human dignity which comes back to the sacredness of life, which maybe then we can actually say we can't allow this type of thing.

Prof. J. Milbank: One could almost suggest that all the world is now South Africa. That South Africa has in extreme forms the problems that are typical of the whole world. I mean, you have huge economic disparity, but so does the whole world. You have huge tensions between the centre and the locality, so does the whole world. You have huge tensions between different cultural and racial groups, but so does the whole world. And that should lead you to be optimistic that South Africa can be a theatre for thinking about what the solutions are – that the whole world is like that.

Dr J. Kruger: I would have loved to ask a question on this last point about the role of the global self, from a Radical Orthodoxy perspective, but I think, for the sake of the audience, I would like to conclude with a question regarding Protestantism. What is your verdict on the Protestant Reformation and on Protestantism at the moment? Let me formulate it this way: Is Protestantism irreparably contaminated by modernity, or could it be regarded as an expression of the church catholic, just as I understand the Anglican Church is seen as an expression of the Church together with Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodox? And then just finally, about John Calvin. The strain of Protestantism that we have in South Africa is very much Calvinist and there have been attempts to reread Calvin in a more participatory way. Do you think Calvin is redeemable?

Prof. J. Milbank: [all laughing] *Even* Calvin is redeemable. You know, there are some passages in Calvin that make one gasp,

“Is this seriously Christian? Is this seriously a gospel of hope?” But no, I think that it’s very important, first of all, this book called *The Unintended Reformation* is a good book in some ways, but this is not quite what Radical Orthodoxy is saying, because we are not saying that all went wrong with the Reformation. We are saying that if anything, and there is never one moment really, because I think in some ways it is the problem of the doctrine of hell behind a lot of this. But we are saying things sort of more going wrong in the late medieval period. And I think a lot of people... I mean, Catherine Pickstock’s now getting a lot of pupils from Switzerland, wanting to ask sort of RO type questions, showing that the responses of different Reformers is complex, for example, Peter Martyr Vermigli, who not accidently becomes a professor in Oxford, often show signs of a rather more Catholic, non-nominalist sort of participatory ontology. So, there never is sort of one Reformation, you know. There are endless debates about Luther, participation and does he have a totally imputational theory of attainment, and so on. And even if I think he – I think what a lot of Protestants in Europe are now saying, yes, it’s true that Protestant doctrines of grace are skewed by poor metaphysics. And this is what Protestants need to face up to, you know, the idea that there is some sort of zero sum competition between the divine and the human. Well, it’s down to a very bad theory of causality. But I think a lot of Protestants, and I was saying that, a tradition that has given a J.S. Bach, of course, it’s more than redeemable you know. There can’t be any question. And I think not just Anglicanism, but I think other Protestant denominations... I mean if you think of Jonathan Edwards, who often sort of revisited metaphysical issues, revisited questions of sanctification, and questions of the metaphysical, and so on. And I think this has been going on a lot of the time and there are ways in which, yes, I would accept that I am a Protestant, because I think you know the attitude towards marriage and so on – the acceptance that we don’t need a celibate clergy, or even a celibate episcopacy; the attempt also to sort of solve the problem of the lay vocation, which I don’t

think Protestantism fully solved, but it was part of what it was trying to do. So, you know, I think sometimes Radical Orthodoxy has polemically sounded too anti-Protestant... Well, we repent...[laughter]. Even we... [Kruger interjects jokingly: "You're not recanting?"] No, not recanting... [laughter] I think probably our strange Anglo-Catholic background has allowed us to try and craft something rather ecumenical, but look, Protestants are heavily involved now in Radical Orthodoxy and debates we've generated.

Prof. G. Ward: I suppose a part of this is because what I did actually say about the death now of Protestantism – through post-modernity, it wasn't through Radical Orthodoxy; it was questioning that close relationship between Protestantism or a certain kind of neo-conservatist Protestantism, which comes back right to the beginning, and whether that was now actually going to... whether you could actually take that forward or whether that was going to be at an end. And I think that what we've actually seen – I will say a little bit more about this – is a real kind of grassroots ecumenism. It is not an ecumenism done from the top, but it's a grassroots ecumenism where people are learning from each other's traditions. And there has been a lot of kind of movement between people and traditions recently. The Orthodox faith suddenly founded it's a conversion faith, but it never saw itself as a conversion faith. And it sometimes wakes up to the fact that people are actually coming in without any background into the Orthodox tradition and they actually need to kind of rethink that too. There is a lot of kind of movement across things at the moment. I think what I want to do, is to emphasize that these are important traditions that have got major kind of thinkers behind them, whether it is Calvin or whether it is Luther or whether it is Aquinas. And, in fact, if you want to – you don't throw over your tradition, you know, we are not trying to get to something that's colourless here. We are actually trying to deepen and enrich the traditions that we come from. And there were people before Calvin and Luther... One of the things was in the conference that we went to on Reformed theology and Radical Orthodoxy, how

many of the Calvinists wanted to expand ... a very sacramental, participatory understanding of Calvin, just as the Finnish School were actually trying to do exactly the same with Luther. And I have been trying to do that quite recently with Melanchthon to show that there is huge scope in Melanchthon for... But there is a certain hardening of a Protestant scholastics that happens in the seventeenth century. And, in fact, that kind of hardened towards the kind of neo-conservatist position which, I think, now just feels out of date unless you want to go down a kind of charismatic evangelicalism and quite a fundamentalist tradition. And I don't think most of us want to do that, because we can't do politics and culture in that manner. That's actually just trying to take yourself out of the situation.

Prof. D. Goosen: I am afraid that we have reached the end of this. Thank you very much, Professors Milbank and Ward. I am sorry that we could not involve you, the audience, in this, but let's continue the debate tomorrow. We have the whole day tomorrow to have in-depth discussions with both professors. Thank you very much for your presence.