



Crossroads Cultural Center and Columbia Catholic Ministry

In collaboration with the Center for the Study of Science and Religion

“WHAT’S FAITH GOT TO DO WITH IT?”

FAITH AND ROMANCE: Are they a good match?

November 5, 2008 at 7:00 pm, Columbia University, New York, NY

Speaker: Msgr. Lorenzo Albacete

**transcript not reviewed by the speaker*

Crossroads: Good evening, and welcome on behalf of Crossroads Cultural Center. We would like to thank our co-sponsors: the Columbia Catholic Ministry and the Center for the Study of Science and Religion at Columbia. Tonight we are pleased to have with us again Msgr. Lorenzo Albacete who will give the fourth and final lecture in the series “What’s faith got to do with it?” (If you were unable to attend the previous lectures in this series, you can find the transcripts on our Web site.) As you know, this series of four lectures is dedicated to the relationship between faith and life in four important human phenomena (politics, science, economics, affectivity). We think that this relationship (or lack thereof) should not be taken for granted. Rather, one should verify experientially whether faith can have an interesting, positive, valuable, impact on these aspects of daily life.

The intuition behind this series is: How does faith shed new light on each of these four realities? Does faith reveal something new and previously unnoticed about these things? Does it change the way we should think about them? And then, *as a result*, does it change the way we *live* them?

Tonight we want to focus in on the question of human affectivity and how it relates to our faith. Is faith just a source of rules, as many people think? Or does it give us a different perspective on what the whole business of sex, romance, love is all about?

Having read *God at the Ritz*, we know that Monsignor Albacete is the right man to address these questions. He holds a degree in Space Science and Applied Physics as well as a Master’s Degree in Sacred Theology from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He holds a doctorate in Sacred Theology from the Pontifical University of St. Thomas in Rome. He is co-founder and has been a professor at the John Paul II Institute in Washington, DC. He has taught at St. Joseph’s Seminary in Yonkers, NY, and from 1996 to 1997 served as President of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico in Ponce. He is a columnist for the Italian weekly *Tempi*, has written for *The New Yorker*, and has been Advisor on Hispanic Affairs to the US National Council of Catholic Bishops. He is the Responsible of the Fraternity of Communion and Liberation in the United States and Canada. Msgr...

Albacete: “I have seen the stars./I went up to the highest tree/In the whole poplar grove,/And saw thousands of eyes/In my own darkness.” Garcia Lorca’s poem “The Encounters of an Adventurous Snail” is about a snail, somewhat serene, kind of the gentleman of the forest, but not somebody over-excited about anything. He keeps running into various animals. The first is a bunch of frogs who engage him in a very advanced discussion about the existence of God, and by itself that would have been fascinating to consider that, but then he moves on and runs into this bunch of ants, and they are beating up one of the ants, and are about to kill her. And he says, “Ladies, what’s wrong? What has she done? Why are you doing this?” And it turns out that this ant had disappeared from the colony for a while because apparently she didn’t see a tree coming or something, and

when the tree arrived, she just went up the tree. She looked only straight ahead, but when she was going up the tree, she could see the sky, and she saw the stars. For the first time in her life, she saw stars. She finally came down and could not hold in the news of what she had discovered, that would be awesome, thinking (the poor thing) that those who heard her would make an effort to see the stars themselves and ask for details—What are stars? What is this?—and instead they are furious. Because she has done this with this stupid talk about stars, she has broken the law of work. The ant’s usefulness, like all members of an ant colony, is to be a worker, and she had interrupted that for a moment of doing something the others considered absolutely outrageous, irrelevant, stupid—looking at the stars! Of course the snail himself has no idea what stars are because he’s never looked up, but he’s intrigued and asks the dying ant, “What are stars?” She has no words to describe them—“They’re like little eyes,” or something like that, and it’s very beautiful, but then, of course, she dies and the ants move on. But while there, the snail wonders about the meaning of what has happened, but he’s just too tired to look up. Instead he continues his walk. In the distance you hear the bells of the church ringing. The snail majestically, slowly, serenely just continues on without ever seeing the stars. It’s a lovely poem.

It’s a poem that was a favorite of Msgr. Luigi Giussani’s, the founder of Communion and Liberation, who one day was walking around some area looking for a parking space, I don’t know, and there were two people making out. What the heck! That’s why I thought about a parking space, I don’t know, whatever you want. But they were at it rather intensely and Msgr. appears in his cassock and everything and says, “Hello.” Well, you can imagine! When they saw him he said, “I hate to interrupt; I just have one question to ask you: What you’re doing now, what does it have to do with the stars?” And he had in mind this poem in which the stars represent infinity. This is not exactly a confession of faith, it’s the fact that what we can grasp, what we can be related to... The word “grasp” is already too much of a claim. But “what we can be related to” is this mystery, the unknowable of Dr. Pollack’s fame. We have this relation, are capable of this relationship and if that is the case then certainly this is bound to have some kind of impact on every activity that you perform that is really an expression of yourself because our self is constituted by relationship and certainly you can discover yourself capable of that inexpressible relationship with infinity, with the mystery, with the stars, with the unknowable. This is bound to affect the way you live your humanity in those areas where you engage it as such. And we have chosen these four areas because they are areas where our humanity is very much engaged in a creative work, in a work that expresses oneself. So in each area we have addressed the question, “What does it have to do with the stars?”

I wanted to remain at that point. The topics that have been discussed have enormous literature, enormous interest and it would take a long time, a course, perhaps more, to understand all the dimensions and aspects, say, of the relation between faith and politics or faith and science. I wanted to stick to the point of departure because I think that this will determine everything else. We could be wasting our time thinking and discussing the subject if we have not zeroed in on the very point where the subject becomes an interesting question, a determining factor in one’s life. In this way the unpleasantness and the inhumanity of a kind of dualistic life in which you live your life according to the faith and at other times according to your work, your interests. Who would want to live such a life? But to sustain this dualism you would need too much—usually one of the sides gets ignored anyway.

So I would search for the point of entry where the reality of what we call “the stars,” the presence of the relationship of the mystery to us enters into our human life, into our attempts to live the human life. And following the magisterium of Pope Benedict, but also before him I have embraced, because it corresponds—not because the Pope says it, I don’t care!—but because it corresponds to my understanding and my own experience of this. I have chosen the term “the broadening of reason” as in fact the point of contact, the immediate effect, the fruit of the impact between the stars and the human person.

So we have attempted to see how what we call “reason”—what it is and what does it consist of—can be impacted by faith in the areas of politics, science, the economy and tonight I would like to do exactly the same

thing. This is a sex talk, but it's really about the broadening of reason, exactly the same thing. But this time we want to put on affectivity—a fancy word. (One of my charisms is to vulgarize fancy words.) Everybody here knows what affection is, affectivity. I'm sure if you look up "affectivity," you'll find page after page of some kind of encyclopedia which will quickly remove your affectivity for the subject matter at hand. It's sympathy. It's good stuff. See? That's what I mean. It means what happens when you say, "You know, that's good stuff." This good stuff, judgment, has two parts to it really, two aspects to it. Number one, it's a judgment; it's an affirmation of reason. That's good stuff. And the other, it's an affirmation of affection. The same subject, the same face. You look at it from one way, it is a judgment; this is so, and therefore a work of reason. With what else do you make judgments? And then, sympathy—yeah, wow! Oooh, man...whatever. I've underlined there so you could see that reason and affectivity are very much interrelated in our daily experience. So therefore the broadening of reason must touch the broadening of affectivity in the impact of the stars, of faith, the unknowable. Reason is somehow a broadening, an expansion of scope on various levels. If that's what it is, well it is the same for this sympathy, for this affectivity.

My point is, the first point, is that it brings us to not be separated from affectivity. I guess it isn't. If you are not prejudice, examine yourself, what is happening to you when you make a statement like (grant you, it is a vulgarization) "good stuff." But you know what that means. So therefore, all other things being equal, the effect the faith, or again I could just say, "the stars," or the unknown, the effect on our affected sense, our affectivity is a kind of broadening of reason. What could it be like to have one's affectivity broadened? Again I can't imagine that you cannot search through your own experiences and see that there's something you can only describe as a broadening, an intensification—let's try it that way. Does it intensify this thing that we call affectivity? I would say certainly yes. Does it make you, therefore, care more about whatever is provoking this affectivity? I would say yes. The broadening of affectivity involves an increasing care, an increasing intensity. But remember it should not be detached from the reason part. It is also an intensity in your ability to see what's there. Affectivity alters or impacts what you see, and it happens all the time. You come and say that you have fallen in love with so-and-so—I'm going crazy about her. This is it! And the person says, "What the hell does he see in her?" They use the word "see."

You have Garcia Lorca. But leave Garcia Lorca; that's a fancy reference. Even too fancy for me! Let's go to *West Side Story* which, by the way, is opening again. Those of you who are trying to think of a present to give me, buy me the best tickets possible for the re-opening of *West Side Story*. Right before the song *Tonight* recall the word "see" comes up. Her concern is, when she looks at him, he's an American and a white person full of discrimination towards her because she's a dark Puerto Rican. And she says, "No, when I look at you, I see only you." And then he says, "See only me, Maria." And then she launches into the song. Lovely stuff. In better days I might even sing the song for you, but that's for follow-ups.

Affectivity and seeing, as we will see in a moment, are inseparable. The claim is that the stars broadens what you see and intensifies your caring about it, and in a sense guides it. In so doing it, it guides it. Guiding what determines behavior is an ethical thing, values. When our life, according to an ethical system, doesn't correspond to our affectivity, it's a disaster. It's an imposed morality. It's inhuman. So you see, in the search for an ethical basis in the world today to help us tame power and guide in ways that are not destructive of human reality, we talked about that before and we saw that the proposal of the Church is this broadening of reason, so this includes the question of affectivity because the whole idea of values is related to affectivity; you care about it. What you value is what you care about, and it is in that area—what you see, what you care about, and how much you care about it—I propose to you that the intersection occurs between the stars and the human, between faith and life.

With that in mind, here I'm guided by the thought of Fr. Giussani. Immediately we run into a problem. Reason has been detached from affectivity. Well Giussani goes further and tries to look for an earlier disaster that leads to that. For the moment, that doesn't interest us. It is the detachment of affectivity from reason that detaches.

What does it mean? It means that your experience of caring for, your experience of meaning, of value, of purpose, of that which gives intelligibility to life and makes life something worthwhile, that accounts for the experience of saying “worthwhile,” the sense of purpose, destiny. what moves me—that reality has been separated from reason. And so the moment that I am going through now, I discover two possibilities kept separate. One is the demands of pure, non-affective intelligence, and the second one, sheer, non-reasonable affectivity. You see, in both, freedom disappears and you find, as we saw in the last section what John Paul II called in that play, “the tyranny of intelligence.” Well, when that separation occurs, you get first of all the tyranny of emotions, and the separation, therefore, between reason and affectivity shows itself sooner or later in the manifestation of these two tyrannies.

I want to introduce another term. When they are together, when reason and affectivity are not separated, there occurs what you can call your experience. This is the word I want to talk about, *experience*. Experience is the way reality emerges in your consciousness. Reality becomes transparent when an authentic human experience occurs. Again, human experience is born of this wedding between reason and affectivity. Experience tells us the reality that we are, the reality in which our presence is immersed. This is how that broadening occurs, by first becoming aware of the intensity of the real as something that has an impact on us, that we have encountered, that we did not create. The little ant who saw the stars knew very well they were not a product of her imagination. So we have not invented or created. My experience occurs because these two, reason and affectivity, are together. What happens is the emergence, the taste, the grasping of real otherness. What is there is other. If these two, reason and affectivity, are separate, the experience of otherness is not possible. Everything is the projection of yourself. It is the experience of otherness that is at the origin of the experience of responsibility. It is the recognition of this reality, grasped through reason and affectivity working together that makes the sense of responsibility be born in me. If that experience is absent, if reason and affectivity have been separated, then responsibility is imposed on me. But perhaps I’m scared by that, I would not like to say that; I want to consider myself basically a responsible person, an ethical person, so I try to do my best. That’s moralism. If it is not born from the real recognition, an affective recognition, an affective, reasonable recognition of the other, this disappearance of responsibility in the area of friendship and love shows itself in what the Bible calls “lust.”

Remember the play that we talked about by Karol Wojtyla last time, *Our God’s Brother?* Go back to it. Remember the encounter he had with this character called “the Other” who presents himself as a Pure Intelligence. Recall how Adam, the main character, was struggling to get a sense of what responsibility means in the light of social injustice, in the light of the fact that he has run into these people that have completely just blown his mind because he didn’t realize there was such inhuman poverty in the world which he loves, and this awakens his sense of responsibility, but he doesn’t know what to do. The discussion is about responsibility and in it, in this play, all kinds of people pop up with various proposals, as we said last time. According to the author, these are not real characters; these are aspects of himself that he is working through within him. These dialogues are occurring within himself. So he is talking with this Pure Intelligence character. Again, he is really talking about an aspect of himself. Remember his words: “I have been an intelligence whose entire task is to reveal the true image of the world and not care for the rest.” (We are looking at the relation between caring and the intellect.) “You are an intelligence,” says this character to the main character, “that means you are subject to the lawful intelligence. It is enough to hold the image of the world in your thought. You have no place to put its heavy burden on your back.” Adam becomes aware...again when there is this man who ran into a poor man reclining against a lamppost, and Adam points to him, to Intelligence, and Intelligence cannot see him; he’s not interested in this concrete individual. His gaze goes past him. Adam says to Intelligence, “There is a fear in my sphere, in my thought that you who possess, you who are pure, cold, detached-from-affectivity intelligence...there is this fear in my thought, in my own intelligence, if you wish, that you do not possess,” which means that you do not grow out of my mind like my own thoughts. “I have exposed you. I have done so with this image and likeness that you do not want to know.” A little fancy here...let’s minimize it and vulgarize it. The argument is that aware of this “more” that Adam is aware of, there is more that he has to see, know, take

into account more, and all these explanations, all these plays of responsibility are away from him that tempt him. See, he has, in a sense, through the encounter with the poor, seen the stars, and he simply cannot get rid of that experience. And Pure Intelligence is asking him to. “I am Intelligence,” he says, “that is enough.” Adam says, “But the facts are reduced. You do not see that man against the lamppost.” And the Other says, “He does not attract my intelligence; he has ceased to be an issue for me; I can go past him.” Adam replies, “There is so much missing in you. You miss too much.”

Later on when Adam is going to confession, he says to the priest, “My greatest temptation is the thought that one can love with the intelligence only and that this will suffice.” The split between intelligence, reason, affectivity, the reduction of what we call experience shows itself as a limitation of vision, as a narrowing. It doesn’t allow us to see the concrete. It only allows us to see the generic. We saw how the vision of the stars (remember last time?) frees us from the tyranny of intelligence in addressing the problem of social justice, away from the ideologies that are pure creations of intelligence. In this case we see the same thing on the level of caring, about affectivity, this split as the defect; it reduced everything to the tyranny of just sheer emotions that are, in fact, just that. That is why Adam’s decision following the advice of some other character is expressed as “to allow myself to be molded by God.”

Today the issue of faith and affectivity, the difficulty we have in arriving at a satisfactory basic common ground for a way of life that responds to our affectivity and our sense of responsibility, “this problem,” affirms Fr. Giussani, “is above all a crisis of reason.” Until this is dealt with, a split will occur between the subject of action—I, myself, who I am—and reality, whether it’s in politics, in economics, in science or in personal relations, because it has to do with the use of reason.

We suffer from three great reductions of reason today. The proposal is going to be that the stars, the birth of faith, addresses this problem and begins to heal us from it. The first reduction: ideology takes the place of reality as an event. An event attracts our affectivity and reason, but here, when the split occurs, ideology takes the place of reason. We saw it last time. The experience of faith, the appearance of the stars, is a response. It comes from that discovery of otherness, from something that enters your life, an event. And it will free reason from this reduction to ideology. It will configure, guide us, if you wish. It will configure a way of standing before reality. The way in which we look—at the end I want to emphasize how much this is related to the question of seeing—the way in which we look, it is an expansion of our looking, a change in our gaze before reality. This is the contribution. This is what happens. Recall the broadening of reason. Fr. Giussani describes ideology as “the logical discourse that starts with a prejudice and wishes to retain it and impose it.”

The second reduction is the reduction of the sign, an appearance, the reduction of the sign to mere appearance. A sign is when a reality you grasp, you see, points toward an other, and in that sense the path of your deeper growth, both knowledge and affectivity is from sign to sign. But when the split occurs, the sign, in fact, disappears or just simply stays at the level of an ever changing superficiality, with no content. We are caught in the tyranny of appearance. And yet sign, the ability to grasp the sign, to follow a path, is the only way you will reach the mystery since mystery is the depth of the sign. “Mystery,” says Fr. Giussani, “becomes experience through the sign.” When we have lost the ability to grasp the sign, and instead it’s total conventional things for us, then there’s no reality that the sign points to, and then the objectivity of the mystery, if you wish, also disappears, and the mystery question, the stars question is pure abstract discussion.

And finally, the third reduction is a reduction of the heart, what the Bible calls the heart, to pure feelings. It’s sentimentalism. It rules over our personal dedication and fidelity. Sentiments cannot guide us along the path of dedication and fidelity. Love, in fact, becomes an expression of sentimentality. Instead the heart is precisely reason through objectivity. The broadening of reason intensifies, purifies our affectivity.

I talked about looking, affectivity, caring for, attraction, sentiments; all of this can all be brought together by

talking about looking, about the way we look at reality. Our *outlook* which means *looking out*, the way I look away from myself if I can. That is the stage, I propose to you, where the impact between faith and affectivity takes place. That is the particular stage that belongs to this topic, the stage where our looking is the decisive part.

One of the best proposals of how the stars affect our looking on the level of affectivity, personal love relationships, etc...is found again, (it's not surprising given the plays of Karol Wojtyła) in the now-famous book that was for many years ignored, *Theology of the Body*. This is making the rounds. Basically I discourage anyone to listen to any lecture on the subject that is not given by me. I'm the only one who knows what it says there... *Theology of the Body*, in particular, the discussion about lust...The Pope was going on and on and on with his Wednesday meetings, reading this stuff...He had been prevented from publishing it when he became Pope. Well, this book was so good, he planned on publishing it anyway, his own books. The Pope here had developed his whole thought, his whole idea of the body and science—it's packed with that kind of stuff. Nobody understood a word. People packed up St. Peter's Basilica or out in St. Peter's Square for the Wednesday audience where the Pope would generally say a beautiful, inspired thing or two, and then that's that! But he sat there and read this philosophical treatise, and then I remember somebody asked him, "Aren't you concerned? Nobody understands anything." And he said, "They only come for the show. I can do that and in the meantime I get this stuff out and it can be published." Anyway, let's not go into the whole thing. It's awesome.

But at one point he was discussing the words from the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus says, "If you look at a woman lustfully, you have committed adultery in the heart." Do you remember that? That was made popular by Jimmy Carter, those of you who are old enough. And the Pope was examining that verse, especially the phrase, "looking with lust." What does that mean? And how does it happen? How do we get out of it? In it he said two things: First of all, it's not only a problem of men, although in the Sermon on the Mount it's a man looking at a woman with lust. But he said, "It applies in reverse; it also means a woman looking at a man with lust." Looking with lust is not just a prerogative of guys. Point Two: It is not limited to a question of looking at somebody else who's not your wife, an extra-marital problem. It occurs within marriage. Within marriage a man can look at a woman with lust, and vice-versa. And that is the same as adultery, adultery in the heart. Well, when the Pope said that, the whole world...what the heck now?! The Catholic Church once again goes crazy against sexual pleasure, human sexuality. Now even in marriage you can have that thought. There were some serious editorials and some funny columns making fun of the Pope and the Church, so much so that the Vatican felt it had to issue a clarification. And the next week, the Pope himself said, "Stop it. I didn't mean this!" So it was a famous discussion about what "looking with lust" might mean. But just listen to the words that describe this phenomenon of "looking with lust." My proposal is that this is the outcome of the separation between reason and affectivity and it is the way the broadening occurs. Faith is exactly to struggle against this look of lust in the area of affectivity.

Looking with lust he calls, "a deception of the human heart in the perennial call of man and woman..." It's an attraction, a perennial call of sexual attraction. Let's put it that way without even mentioning men and women. We could say that looking with lust is a deception, "a lack of the human heart in the personal call of love, a call revealed in the mystery of creation itself." That's interesting. The mystery of creation is perceptible through faith. When we use the word *mystery*, we mean that. So it's interesting that even the reality of this call is the fruit of faith. Anyway, that can be skipped. "A call to communion by means of mutual giving, a call inscribed in the heart itself is the attraction of this union that occurs through a mutual gift of self." This is what is affected by this lust. He calls it (surprise, surprise) a reduction and then chooses fancy words—"an intentional reduction." You want it better? An axiological intention. This is good stuff. When you are attacked by a profound lust, sit down and read this stuff. "Ah, my dear, I have suffered from a huge axiological..." You should do these things. Look, it isn't a waste of time. Learn all of this to write little cards to people that you want to attract. "My Dear Cynthia," using a fountain pen, of course. Don't dare use anything else! "My Dear

Cynthia, I am moved by a profound axiological intentionality. Let us meet at our usual table at the Cafe des Artistes. Ercole.” Cynthia will fall!

“An intentional reduction”—what the hell is he talking about? “A restriction,” he says, “of closing the doors of the horizon of man and his heart.” This is amazing. It is that lust closes the door to the horizon of man, and “heart” is the I, is the self; it’s everything. This is “a reduction of the other to being simply a suitable object for gratification. It is the reduction of sexuality itself; it is an obscuring of the significance of the body, and of the person itself. Lust has the internal effect of obscuring the significance of the body. Femininity and masculinity thus cease being a specific language of the spirit.” They lose their character of being a “sign.” An axiological intentionality means how you value things, how you look at things. What is it worth? Does it attract me? What is it worth to me? The way you look at it determines that. He says, “This takes place in the sphere of a purely interior path.” It’s something that happens within, in the heart, an act that is expressed by your look. They’re his words. I’ll repeat them: “This reduction takes place in the sphere of a purely interior path expressed by the look. The look itself is a cognitive act.” You see, this is the problem because we have separated reason from affectivity, looking, its cognitive dimension, the fact that it is an act of reason, how I look. Well, it’s not. And we call it then, “well that’s your perspective,” so look becomes purely individual perspective. Whereas, he insists, “it is a cognitive act.” It is the outcome of a judgment. This is the proposal. It’s where faith intervenes, (the stars) and broadens. It first purifies...

It’s interesting because here it is proposed that what we call faith above all (I want to make sure I don’t fall into heresy) it has its effect on the human; that is to say, it is the healing of the human. What we suffer from, whatever its origin, (that’s another question) we must overcome this wound, this disaster, this separation. Remember? The claim is made of all the subjects we have had to understand that faith has anything to do with X, it is important to realize that X, all the places we have gone, manifest the same problem. And so, the problem is a problem of reason, and it’s a separation from affectivity. This is the proposal. If faith in some way, whether you believe in it or not, heals things...of showing itself in the change it causes in your look and your sense of responsibility, you can see reality in a different way. You can see, for example, something going wrong, like in this case of the play, a group of inhumanely poor people that are present therefore invisible. You can see them and that seeing is also accompanied by your caring. And this is the origin of ethics. I know, for example, that Prof. Pollack is very concerned about the environmental crisis. For most people it isn’t even seen. You can see what is happening and you care. Faith...and it’s the claim to the end, I can’t prove it to you, brings about this deeper seeing and more intense caring. There is the level of the environment or the level of politics, or economics, or even science, certainly the level of affective human relationships—love, for example. So the pieces into which everything is broken into, it’s an interesting proposal.

To conclude, I’m going to make a reference to the first reference I made four weeks ago, *Deus Caritas Est*, the encyclical of Benedict XVI in which he talked about the intersection between faith and politics. It was the second part. The first part is a discussion of love, and it is fascinating. Once again it deals with this split, but it identifies precisely how faith begins to affect the experience of affectivity and love by going over the two classical words, *eros* and *agape*. He gives also the Hebrew words. Human love begins with an understandable attraction. The sexual is always in it. It begins that way and it undertakes a path. Remember we saw that it is a path from sign to sign? That word, *eros*, and the other, *agape*, which is a divine love, translated in many places as *charity*, in *Deus Caritas Est* it is the stuff of love that defines God. It’s about the mystery and the stars; you can use these words and indicate the need to go always beyond, but I don’t see that you can go beyond *caritas*. For him, the impression that our faith considers these two as opposed is wrong, although many times the Church may have expressed herself in such a way as to give that appearance. That was Nietzsche’s great accusation against Christianity, to have destroyed *eros*, the erotic, for this spiritual abstraction called *agape*, charity, love, divine love. So the whole first part of the document is to propose that that isn’t so, that, in fact, the purpose of revelation grasped by faith is in fact the presence of the divine in the erotic, and (at this point I should veil my face) the presence of the human in the divine.

