

Theologies of Enhancement? Another Look at Oliver O'Donovan's Created Order

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Abstract: In this response to Gerald McKenny's "Evolution, Biotechnology, and the Normative Significance of Created Order," John Berkman and Michael Buttrey suggest that McKenny has not adequately substantiated his claim that O'Donovan's account of "created order" provides no objection in principle to genetically "enhancing" children. Berkman and Buttrey frame an alternative reading of O'Donovan in light of O'Donovan's emphasis on "ordered love" as the task of Christian ethics, and his resolutely Trinitarian theology of created order. Contending contra McKenny that created order inheres in human persons and not only human nature abstractly understood, Berkman and Buttrey argue that for O'Donovan an ineliminable aspect of ordered love of God and neighbour is respecting the primordial teleological order of human persons, especially parents' rightly ordered love of the children entrusted to their care. In summary, Berkman and Buttrey conclude that unless McKenny puts O'Donovan's account of created order in its Trinitarian context and connects it with O'Donovan's rich account of ordered love, McKenny cannot make his case that O'Donovan's account of created order raises no inherent moral objection to genetically enhancing our children.

Keywords: Gerald McKenny, human nature, genetic enhancement, Oliver O'Donovan, created order

Introduction

In his essay "Evolution, Biotechnology, and the Normative Significance of Created Order,"¹ Gerald McKenny argues that any Christian theology of "created order" that accommodates Darwinian evolution is necessarily committed to accepting human genetic enhancement.² McKenny's main argument is that if a conception of created order is compatible with changes in nature, including human nature, through evolution, then such a conception must also be compatible with the alteration of nature, including human nature, produced by biotechnology. To test his case, McKenny turns to two theologians, Jean Porter and Oliver O'Donovan, whom he believes have the strongest contemporary accounts of "created order" that accommodate

Darwinian evolution. McKenny's view is that if there is a case to be made that a divinely created order can rule out human genetic enhancement, we will find it in O'Donovan and/or Porter. According to McKenny, though, both O'Donovan and Porter's theologies fail to rule out biotechnological alterations of human nature, and so he believes we can dismiss the notion of a divinely created order as a principled objection to such alterations.³

In our response we will argue that McKenny has yet to make his case with regard to O'Donovan.⁴ In the first section we discuss what McKenny means by "biotechnological alteration of human nature," and focus on his main example of genetically enhancing our children. We then raise preliminary concerns with how McKenny frames the ethical question, independent of his treatment of O'Donovan. In the second and largest section we introduce O'Donovan's account of created order, but as a preliminary point summarize his understanding of the task of Christian ethics, which is the activity of ordered love. Then we develop our reading of O'Donovan's account of created order in relation to his theology of resurrection, which vindicates the created order and points to its fulfillment. After we present the larger theological context in which O'Donovan's account of created order finds its full intelligibility, we focus on how this illuminates his understanding of generic and teleological order, human nature, and human action, especially the activity of ordered love of God and neighbour. We contend (contra McKenny) that according to O'Donovan, the "created order" inheres not only in human "nature," but also in human persons, and that respecting this order is a key part of O'Donovan's account of the ordered love of God and neighbour. In the third section, we will contrast our reading with McKenny's interpretation of O'Donovan, and show why McKenny believes that O'Donovan's concept of created order presents no inherent objection to genetic enhancement. We then conclude by highlighting differences between our and McKenny's understanding of O'Donovan, and raise the question we believe McKenny needs to answer in order to make his case. In short, our argument is that without putting O'Donovan's understanding of 'created order' in its Trinitarian context and showing how that shapes his account of rightly ordered love of God and neighbour, McKenny cannot make his case that O'Donovan's account of created order raises no inherent moral objections to our genomically 'enhancing' our children.

Clarifications on Genetic Enhancement and Natural Selection

Our first task is to clarify what McKenny means by the "biotechnological alteration of human nature." (15) McKenny's use of 'biotechnological' and 'human nature' is relatively clear: by 'biotechnological' McKenny means *genetic*; by 'human nature' he means *inheritable*. Comparing as he

does “biotechnological alteration of human nature” to biological evolution (which works through *inheritable* changes at the *genetic* level), McKenny is focused on *inheritable genetic* changes in human nature through biotechnology.

On the other hand, McKenny’s use of ‘alteration’ borders on obfuscation with regard to sorting out the issues from a moral perspective. For example, I can choose to permanently ‘alter’ my daughter’s genome for a variety of purposes: to cure her disease (a *therapeutic* purpose), to give her a ‘superhuman’ ability (an *enhancement* purpose), or to experiment on her to expand human knowledge (an *experimental* purpose). Since the purpose of the ‘alteration’ shapes the moral evaluation, we believe that the language of ‘alteration’ obscures rather than illumines the issues. While ‘gene therapy’ (with its connotation of ‘cure’) has dominated the debates in theological ethics, McKenny’s examples of genetic alterations are “higher levels of cognitive ability, expanded perceptual capacities, a richer or more subtle range of emotions, or greatly increased physical strength or agility” (22). So unless the current range of human emotion or strength is considered a disease state, the moral question raised by McKenny concerns genetic *enhancement*.

McKenny’s use of “alteration” also raises the possibility that I may, morally speaking, alter my daughter’s genome for experimental purposes, intentionally introducing a mutation into her genome to understand the effect of the mutation on her ability to function, be it for better or for worse.⁵ Although McKenny never suggests experimental “altering” of my daughter’s genome, his avoidance of teleological language (i.e. stating the alteration’s purpose) would seem to preclude McKenny’s ruling out that possibility, at least with regard to the argument he presents in his article.⁶ However, since McKenny’s interest in genetic alteration for the purpose of enhancement is clear, we will restrict our discussion to the ethics of human genetic and genomic enhancement.

Now, even before McKenny engages with O’Donovan and Porter, his thesis raises three preliminary questions: Is there a difference between genomic enhancement and natural selection? Does introducing human intentionality into natural processes change the scope of human responsibility? And what and whose ‘good’ is served by genetic enhancement?

First, McKenny’s analogy between genomic enhancement and natural selection highlights the importance of carefully considering the role of *human agency*. By definition, ‘natural selection’ does not involve human agency, and is thus not subject to human moral evaluation.⁷ Thus, we believe it to be a non sequitur to ask if evolution is compatible with a “normative conception of created order.”⁸ On the other hand, my choice to genetically enhance my child most surely involves my agency, and thus is subject to moral judgment, which in Christian ethics is inseparable from theological evaluations of human nature, freedom, and sin. Thus my choice to genetically enhance my child is more ethically fraught and theologically complex than McKenny’s analogy suggests.

Second, genetically enhancing my child, as my choice, has social consequences alien to natural selection. For example, if I choose specific genetic enhancements for my daughter, will I have inordinate expectations about her use of the ‘gifts’ I am giving her? On the other hand, if we grant McKenny’s argument that genetic enhancement is similar to other ways parents intervene “into their growing child’s environment” (20), then if I refuse to ‘enhance’ my daughter genetically, will I be considered just as irresponsible as if I keep her out of school, or refuse to vaccinate her?⁹ While these potential consequences do not constitute an intrinsic argument against allowing genetic enhancement, they illustrate the significance of introducing human intentionality into what was primarily a natural process. In the past, only God, natural selection, and the genes of one’s parents were responsible for your genetic makeup.

Third, McKenny is not entirely clear when he argues that genetic enhancement can better promote our good than natural selection. He is careful to phrase his point in the negative: “Because biological evolution has operated without concern for our overall good, we have no reason to assume that it is a more reliable means to [our overall good] than biotechnology will be” (24). Still, the implication is that biotechnology has the potential to improve ‘our overall good’ more than has evolution. However, *whose* good will be improved? Darwin himself, for example, thought that artificial selection was reliably self-interested in a way natural selection was not: “man selects for his own good, whereas under nature, characters of all kinds are selected exclusively for each creature’s own good.”¹⁰ Like Darwin, we may ask whether parents will enhance their children to serve their own purposes, rather than the true good of their children. Similarly, the term ‘overall’ is ambiguous: it may refer to the common good of all human beings, or the holistic good of a few individuals. Furthermore, ‘good’ itself is by no means uncontested, especially in light of the commitment of Christian ethics to a *supernatural* end, which at the very least questions the ultimate significance of ‘natural’ goods.

O’Donovan’s Theology of Created Order

To understand O’Donovan’s theology of created order, of the ‘beginning’, we start with the end, both the end of creation in general, and with our individual ends as human persons specifically. O’Donovan refers to our end as the restored order of creation (or ‘new creation’), which we as Christians participate in through a life of ordered love of God and neighbour. Indeed, this proper ordering of love is the chief task of Christian ethics.¹¹ Thus, for O’Donovan, any attempt to answer the question of whether I should seek to genomically ‘enhance’ my child will depend on understanding it as an expression (or a rejection) of a properly ordered love of my child who is-ordered-to-the-love-of-God.

We learn the task of “ordering love” not only from revelation, but also from what is revealed to us in the “created order” itself. For how can we understand the restored order of creation if we have no understanding of the original order of creation? Indeed, God’s revelation in Jesus Christ, and in particular Christ’s resurrection, is God’s vindicating of the goodness of creation. (RMO 13, 22)¹² Jesus’ resurrection vindicates creation in a “double aspect:” on the one hand it redeems and restores the original created order from its ‘sub-natural’ enslavement to sin and death (13, 55-57); on the other hand it points to creation’s renewal and transformation (both actual and eschatological) towards its supernatural destiny. On O’Donovan’s Trinitarian account of the created order, to act with an ordered love precludes an exclusive focus either on preserving the original creation or on bringing about the new creation; the ordered love to which we are called “respects the natural structures of life in the world, while looking forward to their transformation”(58). On this account, an ordered love of my child which respects the created order will avoid two errors: on the one hand, an ordered love cannot claim that there is *no* justification for transforming my child’s genome; on the other hand, an ordered love will decisively reject any justification for transforming my child’s genome that is predicated on any implicit or explicit appeals to the inherent inadequacy of my child’s genome. To better understand this latter point, we turn to O’Donovan’s claim that the created order is “complete.”

When O’Donovan claims the created order is ‘complete,’ he means that creation is not something that takes place in or over time. Rather, to call the created order complete is first and foremost to make a claim about the nature of God, and second a confession regarding the intelligibility and goodness of creation, which reflects the wisdom and goodness of God. As O’Donovan puts it, the created order is not “the first phase in the process of history,” nor a product *of* history, but exists prior to and outside of history, being the “condition of history’s movement.” (RMO, 63) Thus, when O’Donovan speaks of two kinds of created order - generic and teleological - these should be understood ontologically, as order necessary for history to be told, and not order arising in or through the narration of history.¹³ Since the very notion of a Creator entails a creation whose end is its Creator, the creature-Creator relationship is the primordial *teleological* order (32, 35, 38). And since creation is not one giant undifferentiated monad, but consists in diverse creatures, this generic (i.e. universal) category of ‘creatures’ is the primordial *generic* order. The fact of a plurality of creatures means that creation is not undifferentiated energy or materiality, but a multitude of kinds, which are in turn in a complex set of generic and teleological relations with each other. (33)¹⁴ In summary, teleological order originates in the ‘vertical’ relationship between creator and creature, and generic order originates in the differentiation between creator and creature, in the orderly differentiation of creatures, and in the ‘horizontal’ relationship among creatures, “that each to each is as fellow-creature to fellow-creature” (32).

Now, a key question about O'Donovan's understanding of generic and teleological order is how they relate to the material and historical reality of creation. O'Donovan is careful to guard against a gnostic understanding of the resurrection freeing humanity *from* creation. Therefore, he insists "we must understand 'creation' not merely as the raw material out of which the world as we know it is composed, but as the order and coherence *in* which it is composed" (RMO 31).¹⁵ In short, O'Donovan insists that creation cannot be seen as unformed matter awaiting order, but rather that the generic and teleological orders are as inherently part of creation as its materiality (31-32).¹⁶ Although some 'scientific' accounts of the order in nature may claim such order requires only material and efficient causality, that is, the physical constituents of things and how they act on each other, teleological order is O'Donovan's way of speaking of final causality, whereas generic order is his version of formal causality. Epistemologically, the four causes of any object can be considered separately. But ontologically, the four causes are unified. We understand O'Donovan to be emphasizing the ontological unity of matter and created order in creation, while allowing that the epistemological ground of our knowledge of matter is different than our knowledge of created order.

O'Donovan is also concerned with the ethical consequences of seeing generic and teleological order as merely the imposition of human intellect and will, lacking ontological grounding or epistemological confirmation. He signals this fear early on, asking "how can we assert confidently that Bantu and Caucasian races belong equally to one human kind that renders cultural and biological differentiation between them morally irrelevant?" (RMO 19). In other words, O'Donovan is concerned to preserve the moral significance of universal human kinship. O'Donovan later develops this point in a discussion of Kant and the limits of his profound ethical demand to treat all of humanity as an end, where he asks what prevents a self-interested individual or group from deciding that their rational nature is different enough that they need not identify with "humanity" or other beings who might want to call themselves human. O'Donovan's answer is that "if we are to defend the claim that humanity is an 'objective end' ... we shall have to appeal to some teleological determinant outside the rational will" (47-8).¹⁷ Put another way, the laudable ethical goal of treating all of humanity with respect requires our definition of humanity to be more than category imposed by our minds on an otherwise unintelligible natural variation.

Finally, O'Donovan's emphasis on created order has implications for his account of our activity of ordered love. He freely acknowledges that human agents are not forced to conform to the created order established by God, but may impose our own order on the world. However, he insists "our ordering depends upon God's to provide the condition for its freedom. It is free because it has a given order to respond to... in conformity or disconformity, with obedience or with rebellion" (RMO 37). O'Donovan's point here is connected to the moral significance of generic and teleological orders,

as he argues created order is necessary for human agents to reliably name, describe, and judge human actions.¹⁸ Only with created order, understood in relation to our eschatological fulfillment in Christ, can we articulate whether our actions are properly ordered to the love of God and neighbour.

McKenny's Reading of O'Donovan on Created Order

McKenny's basic argument (following James Peterson) is that God's "creative act occurs over time," (16) that "God intends that [I actively participate] in the divine work of creation and to carry out that work over time" (16) and that my acting to 'enhance' my child's genome is one way I "participate in God's creative act." (16)¹⁹ What is particularly notable about McKenny's argument is that it (1) focuses on creation *as an ongoing process*; (2) concludes that since God acts to permanently change the genomes of human persons through the evolutionary process, so in principle I can and should act to permanently change my child's genome through a technological process; and (3) does not discuss the ends or purposes of such "enhancement" beyond a general mention of costs and benefits, and yet expresses confidence that we can speak of altering my child's genome as "good" or the genetic change in my child as an "enhancement."

In his discussion of O'Donovan, McKenny acknowledges that O'Donovan - at least at a surface level - disagrees with these three claims. First, O'Donovan denies that God's work of creation and establishing the created order *occurs over time*.²⁰ Second, O'Donovan is clear that my calling as a human person is neither to mimic God's actions in creation (which is impossible) nor in God's providential care of the world in history (RMO 36-45). Third, O'Donovan's point about my appropriate response to a "complete" created order is not about prohibiting my "changing" my child, but about a properly ordered love of God and neighbour, and whether my acting to change my child's genome is compatible with an ordered love of my child.²¹

Faced with O'Donovan's apparently opposed view, McKenny digs deeper, focusing on O'Donovan's notions of generic and teleological order, which McKenny sees as the key to understanding O'Donovan's account of created order. McKenny's decisive interpretative move is his understanding of O'Donovan's claim that he quotes as follows: "We must understand creation not merely as the raw material out of which the world as we know it is composed, but as the order and coherence *in which* it is composed" (18).²² McKenny takes O'Donovan to be making a "sharp distinction" between two aspects of creation: on the one hand there is "an order that demands respect"; on the other hand there is "raw material available to the human will-to-form" (18). In stressing the distinction between "the unchanging and finished character" of generic and teleological order, and the temporal character of

actual material entities, which “all came into existence through temporal process and all may pass out of existence,” McKenny sees O’Donovan as more Platonic than Aristotelian (18).

McKenny thus concludes that in O’Donovan’s scheme “the generic and teleological relations in which things exist are extrinsic to those things,” meaning O’Donovan can not only accommodate evolutionary process with the finished character of creation, but must also allow some alteration of the functions and traits of individual humans. For if “such alterations could be understood as presupposing the generic order in which humans exist ... they would not appear to violate created order” (19). In other words, O’Donovan’s argument should allow genetic enhancement that does not distort the orders which relate humans to each other or to God.

While McKenny acknowledges that O’Donovan argues against this implication in *Begotten or Made* (1984), he believes *Resurrection and Moral Order* (1986) overturns O’Donovan’s earlier argument, for in McKenny’s words, O’Donovan asserts that “it is not always clear which generic and teleological orders should determine an act” (19). Therefore, McKenny argues, genetic enhancement can be considered as an example of good parenting, analogous to how parents intervene in their child’s environment for their benefit. If so, genetic enhancement need not violate a generic order, but could instead fulfill a teleological relation between parents and children.

Enhancement and Rightly Ordered Love

Some differences between our and McKenny’s reading of O’Donovan are clear. First, we fear that McKenny has neglected the architectonic significance of the resurrection and eschatology for O’Donovan’s account of created order, where the resurrection vindicates the created order and eschatology fulfills the created order. While McKenny understands O’Donovan to derive his account of created order from the Genesis creation narratives (16-17, 19), we believe I Corinthians 15 and Colossians 3 are the decisive texts for O’Donovan’s understanding of created order (RMO, 13-15). Perhaps for this reason, McKenny does not discuss O’Donovan’s concern to reject gnostic understandings of creation.²³ Second, while McKenny sees O’Donovan’s generic and teleological orders as extrinsic from the particular creatures they order, we understand O’Donovan to see created order as inhering in creatures and their relationships. Put another way, we read O’Donovan as an Aristotelian, not a Platonist (compare 16, 19). Third, McKenny argues it is unclear which generic and teleological orders should describe the act of genetic enhancement. However, we see O’Donovan as insisting that the basic purpose of all created order, generic and teleological, is to rightly order creation to God. This is how he interprets the sabbath-command, that we are to remember the

goodness of creation and that we are to rest and glory in it, overcoming any technological compulsion to deny creation's completeness through efforts to "better" the created order (RMO, 61-62). Of course, it is important to emphasize that the 'completion' of God's work in creation should not be confused with God's work in history, which is clearly not complete. Rather, the 'completeness' of creation means that the 'goodness' of creation is lacking in nothing (that humans might improve) when it is rightly ordered to God. The key is to rightly order our actions to God.

We believe that these different readings of O'Donovan's account of created order lead to rather different evaluations of inherited genetic enhancement. If one reads O'Donovan's theology of creation with the natural *telos* of creation from within history, it seems correct to look to evolutionary theory as a model, seeing genomic change as the apogee of providence. Thus, it would be self-evident that genetically "enhancing" our children is a service to them, a way for us to maximize the possibilities for them. On the other hand, when one reads O'Donovan's theology of creation as arguing the *telos* of humans is modelled on our common destiny of eternal life with God, the goal will similarly be to enhance my child, but such "enhancement" will consist in furthering my child's "high calling and destiny to fellowship with God and a concern to further that destiny in the context of concern for his welfare." (RMO, 229) In that light, the fundamental question for McKenny is: *Is genetically enhancing my child compatible with spiritually enhancing my child's calling and destiny to fellowship with God?* From our perspective, McKenny has not yet answered this key question.

Notes

¹ Gerald McKenny, "Evolution, Biotechnology, and the Normative Significance of Created Order," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 31, no. 1 (2015), 15 - 25. Subsequent references in text.

² We will argue below that McKenny is focused on the non-therapeutic alteration of the human genome in his paper.

³ Thanks to Brian Green and Johann Roduit for their insights on an earlier draft of this article.

⁴ For the sake of brevity and simplicity, we will not discuss his analysis of Porter.

⁵ Scientists routinely mutate genes in model organisms like fruit flies and mice; the same could be done to human embryos, in order to yield more accurate insights into the human genome or attempt to create interesting new sequences. Most changes would be detrimental, but it would increase human genetic variation. However, a more efficient method would be to modify the human genome in accord with a template, a model sequence derived from healthy human beings or extensive trials on genetically similar species. In that case, the recipients of any particular change will have more variation compared to the unmodified population, but less variation relative to each other. Therefore, the effects of genetic enhancement on genetic variation are hard to predict.

⁶ One might also question whether the current limits of knowledge in techniques of genomic modification makes efforts to 'enhance' a person genomically effectively equivalent to 'experimenting' on the person.

⁷ Of course, one may link natural selection in evolution to divine agency. McKenny implies but does not explicitly make that connection, and O'Donovan warns against efforts to confuse human and divine agency in this area.

⁸ To be sure, Christian theology must accommodate biological evolution, but in itself, our natural history has no bearing on whether we engage in genetic enhancement. After all, we seek to preserve a variety of species in their current form while acknowledging that past evolution and extinction has produced the species we see today.

⁹ As O'Donovan puts it, "There is a world of difference between accepting the risk of a disabled child (where that risk is imposed upon us by nature) and ourselves imposing that risk in pursuit of our own purposes." O'Donovan, *Begotten or Made?* (Oxford: OUP, 1984), 83.

¹⁰ Charles Darwin, *More Letters of Charles Darwin: A Record of His Work in a Series of Hitherto Unpublished Letters*, ed. Francis Darwin and A.C. Seward (New York: D. Appleton, 1903), 128; as cited in Richard A. Richards, "Darwin, Domestic Breeding and Artificial Selection," *Endeavour* 22, no. 3 (1998): 107.

¹¹ Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 25-26, 228. Henceforth referred to as RMO.

¹² Without the resurrection, O'Donovan argues, it would be possible to have a gnostic view of creation that denies the goodness of bodily existence and hopes "for redemption *from* creation rather than for the redemption *of* creation." (14) However, in the resurrection God affirms for eternity that creation, including human beings, has not been abandoned. Indeed, O'Donovan goes on to claim that the resurrection provides insight into creation, because it is "the resurrection that assures us of the stability and permanence of the world which God has made." (19) O'Donovan's point here is subtle: he is not arguing that non-Christians cannot have some knowledge about creation, but rather insisting that our epistemological *certainty* about the goodness and order of creation derives from the doctrine of the resurrection. O'Donovan's goal is to avoid what he describes as a common polarization in modern theology "between an ethic that is revealed and has no ontological grounding and an ethic that is based on creation and so is naturally known." (19) As we will see, this distinction between the epistemological and ontological aspects of creation is important for understanding O'Donovan's work.

¹³ RMO, 31. These two kinds of order are presupposed for us to imagine the very possibility of a "world" or a "universe." As O'Donovan puts it, "Without these twin concepts we could not think of a 'universe'. ... Absolute disorder ... would be a plurality of entities so completely unrelated that there would be a no 'world' in which they existed together, no relation that would enable them to be thought together. One thing would exist, and another thing would exist; but they would be unconnected universes." (RMO, 32)

¹⁴ For O'Donovan, the twin theological errors that deny the existence of the created order are nominalism (which denies kinds) and voluntarism (which denies ends). See RMO, 38-52, especially 49.

¹⁵ O'Donovan is insistent on this point, noting that "for only if the order which we think we see, or something like it, is really present in the world ... can there be a Christian, rather than a gnostic, gospel at all" (RMO, 36).

¹⁶ With regard to his view that there cannot be unformed matter temporally prior to formed matter, O'Donovan follows Augustine and Aquinas. See Aquinas, *ST I* q. 66 a. 1. Furthermore, O'Donovan's account of teleological and generic order echoes the Aristotelian and scholastic categories of final and formal causality.

¹⁷ Teleology appears here because O'Donovan understands Kant's second form of the categorical imperative to be concerned with justice, not merely scientific classification.

¹⁸ O'Donovan resolutely rejects voluntarism, the view that God is free to change the moral order in any and every way. For as O'Donovan notes, if we do not have some sense of the goodness of the created order *and our ability to know it*, then there would be no ground for moral concern when we read of various actions of the Patriarchs in the Old Testament.

¹⁹ Since McKenny's primary example (19-20) is that of enhancing my child through altering her genome, we will focus on that example.

²⁰ McKenny recognizes O'Donovan's *atemporal* understanding of creation, quoting O'Donovan's claim that what "most distinguishes the concept of creation is that it is complete," (17, quoting RMO, 60) that "creation as a completed design is presupposed by any movement in time," and thus that evolution "can tell us nothing about 'creation' in the theological sense, because creation is not a process" (17, quoting RMO, 63).

²¹ To argue that our moral calling is to be understood fundamentally as 'mimicking' God as co-creators is to forget that "only God expresses love by conferring order upon the absolutely orderless, and he has contented himself with doing it but once" (RMO, 25). In contrast, as humans who are ordered not

generically but purely teleologically to God (RMO 40), love is “the form of the human participation in created order ... and this ordering of love is the task of substantive Christian ethics to trace” (RMO 25-26).

²² In quoting here from RMO, 31, McKenny omits italics marks around “creation.” We also quote this passage above (32).

²³ O’Donovan’s references to a gnostic view of creation can be found in notes 12 and 15.