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Title: Theology and Hallowed Secularism

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12/4/2007--I have been reading John Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory* and although I am not going to rewrite my book to add his voice to the few instances in which he is in there already, it is exciting to see how theology has already begun to anticipate *Hallowed Secularism*. Sometimes Milbank criticizes this theological tendency as insufficiently Christian. For example, Milbank criticizes the thought of Karl Rahner because Rahner understands "Christian revelation and Christian teachings as just expounding, or making 'explicit' the universal availability of grace." (224) But Rahner, if this is fair to him, is showing secularists precisely how to reinterpret the Christian message in universal terms. And a category, such as grace, if reinterpreted, can be understood in secular terms. That is precisely why Milbank disagrees with Rahner. [Rahner might reject that reading too.] But Milbank praises what seems to me to be the same tendency to universalization in Luigi Sturzo, the opponent of Mussolini, who in *The True Life: Sociology of the Supernatural*, argued that human community, specifically the Church, is supernatural. Sturzo meant by supernatural, according to Milbank, an "objective human finality [that] is encountered and partially realized" (226) as groping towards the true life as proper relation to God and to fellow human beings. Supernatural means "super-added finality." You could say the objectively proper way to live. Secularists have no reason to doubt all this. They just doubt that the Church is moving toward this proper way to be. We don't doubt that there is one. Otherwise secularism is just nihilism. But the evidence of human existence does not support nihilism. There is more to this world than its surface. I can hardly wait for the explosion that awaits the secular rediscovery of theology.