

Studia Gilsoniana

A JOURNAL IN CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY

7:3 (2018)

ISSN 2300–0066 (print)

ISSN 2577–0314 (online)

DOI: 10.26385/SG

Studia Gilsoniana

A JOURNAL IN CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY

Studia Gilsoniana

A JOURNAL IN CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY

**Volume 7, Issue 3
(July–September 2018)**

**SELECTED PAPERS OF
THE SOCIETY FOR THOMISTIC PERSONALISM**

Guest Editor of the Issue: R. Mary Hayden Lemmons

INTERNATIONAL ÉTIENNE GILSON SOCIETY

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

- Anthony AKINWALE, O.P. – *Dominican University, Ibadan, Nigeria*
 Lorella CONGIUNTI – *Pontifical Urban University, Rome, Italy*
Włodzimierz DŁUBACZ – *John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland*
Adilson F. FEILER, S.J. – *University of the Sinos Valley, São Leopoldo, Brazil*
 Urbano FERRER – *University of Murcia, Spain*
 Silvana FILIPPI – *National University of Rosario, Argentina*
 Peter FOTTA, O.P. – *Catholic University in Ruzomberok, Slovakia*
Rev. José Ángel GARCÍA CUADRADO – *University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain*
 Curtis L. HANCOCK – *Rockhurst Jesuit University, Kansas City, MO, USA*
Juan José HERRERA, O.P. – *Saint Thomas Aquinas North University, Tucumán, Argentina*
 John P. HITTINGER – *University of St. Thomas, Houston, TX, USA*
 Liboire KAGABO, O.P. – *University of Burundi, Bujumbura, Burundi*
George KARUVELIL, S.J. – *JDV–Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion, Pune, India*
 Henryk KIEREŚ – *John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland*
Renée KÖHLER-RYAN – *University of Notre Dame Australia, Sydney, Australia*
 Enrique MARTÍNEZ – *Abat Oliba CEU University, Barcelona, Spain*
 Vittorio POSSENTI – *Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy*
 Peter A. REDPATH – *Adler-Aquinas Institute, Manitou Springs, CO, USA*
 Joel C. SAGUT – *University of Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines*
 James V. SCHALL, S.J. – *Georgetown University, Washington D.C., USA*
 Callum D. SCOTT – *University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa*
 Peter L. P. SIMPSON – *City University of New York, NY, USA*
Rev. Jan SOCHOŃ – *Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland*
 William SWEET – *St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS, Canada*
 Lourdes VELÁZQUEZ – *Panamerican University, Mexico City, Mexico*
 Berthold WALD – *Theological Faculty of Paderborn, Germany*

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor-in-chief

Fr. Paweł TARASIEWICZ – *Adler-Aquinas Institute, Manitou Springs, CO, USA*

Associate Editors

Fr. Tomasz DUMA – *John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland*

Jeremie SOLAK – *University of Mary, Bismarck, ND, USA*

Linguistic Editors

Stephen CHAMBERLAIN – *Rockhurst Jesuit University, Kansas City, MO, USA*

Donald COLLINS – *University of Western Ontario, London, Canada*

Thierry-Dominique HUMBRECHT, O.P. – *J. Vrin's Equip Gilson, France*

Thaddeus J. KOZINSKI – *Wyoming Catholic College, Lander, WY, USA*

Artur MAMCARZ-PLISIECKI – *John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland*

Florian MICHEL – *Institut Pierre Renouvin, Paris, France*

Ángel Damián ROMÁN ORTIZ – *University of Murcia, Spain*

ISSN 2300-0066 (print)

ISSN 2577-0314 (online)

DOI 10.26385 (prefix)

Publisher

International Étienne Gilson Society

33 Prospect Hill Road, Cromwell, CT 06416-2027, USA

Editorial Board

International Thomas Aquinas Society (Polish Branch)

Al. Raclawickie 14/GG-037, 20-950 Lublin, Poland

E-mail: ptarasiewicz@holypostles.edu

The online edition is a reference version of the issue
The issue is openly accessible at: www.gilsonssociety.com



CONTENTS

Selected Papers of the Society for Thomistic Personalism

■ R. Mary Hayden Lemmons : A Word from the Editor	409
■ Anthony T. Flood : Love of Self as the Condition for a Gift of Self in Aquinas	419
■ John F. X. Knasas : Kantianism and Thomistic Personalism on the Human Person: Self-Legislator or Self-Determiner?	437
■ Catherine Peters : Personal Participation in the Thomistic Account of Natural Law	453
■ Susan C. Selner-Wright : Thomistic Personalism and Creation Metaphysics: Personhood vs. Humanity and Ontological vs. Ethical Dignity	469
■ Daniel C. Wagner : Penitential Method as Phenomenological: The Penitential <i>Epoche</i>	487

Book Reviews

■ Fr. Kingsley Chidiebere Ekeocha : <i>On the Methodology of Metaphysics / Z metodologii metafizyki</i> by Ks. Stanisław Kamiński	521
■ Brian Welter : <i>Noble Beauty, Transcendent Holiness: Why the Modern Age Needs the Mass of Ages</i> by Peter Kwasniewski	529

Selected Papers of the Society for Thomistic Personalism

Edited by R. Mary Hayden Lemmons

R. MARY HAYDEN LEMMONS

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to this special edition of selected papers from the Society for Thomistic Personalism.¹ I formed this society, in 2008, to honor Wojtyła's insight that Aquinas's thought constituted "Thomistic personalism," a term that he coined in a 1961 paper urging the use of Thomism to understand the person.²

In that paper entitled "Thomistic Personalism," Wojtyła identifies the key personalist elements of Aquinas's thought and argues that they are grounded both in Trinitarian theology and in the perfection of the human being. The latter, explains Wojtyła, enables Aquinas to argue for a personal God on grounds other than Trinitarian.³ Wojtyła also argues that the hylomorphic view of the soul as the substantial form of the body "is of basic importance for understanding the whole uniqueness of the human person, as well as for explaining the structure of the

R. MARY HAYDEN LEMMONS — University of St. Thomas, Saint Paul, MN, USA
e-mail: rmllemmons@stthomas.edu • ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8785-0187>

¹ <http://courseweb.stthomas.edu/rmllemmons/STP-home.htm>

² Karol Wojtyła, "Personalizm tomistyczny," *Znak* 13 (1961): 664–675. Republished as "Thomistic Personalism," in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, OSM, *Catholic Thought from Lublin*, vol. IV, ed. Andrew N. Woznicki (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 165: "St. Thomas's overall philosophy and theology allows us to speak of Thomistic personalism. We find in his system not just a point of departure, but also a whole series of additional constitutive elements that allow us to examine the problem of personalism in the categories of St. Thomas's philosophy and theology."

³ *Ibid.*, 167.

human person.”⁴ Hylomorphism thus shapes “the human personality.”⁵ It also corrects the faulty understanding of the person that arises from Cartesian thought and reduces the person to consciousness and lived experience.⁶ This favorable interpretation of Thomistic anthropology is then tempered by the criticism of incompleteness: Aquinas should have gone on to consider lived experience.⁷

The rest of Wojtyła’s 1961 paper consists of various ways in which he draws out and develops the personalism of Aquinas thought. In the realm of philosophical anthropology and psychology, Wojtyła acknowledges the profundity of Aquinas’s analysis of reason before emphasizing the creativity of human thought and its importance, especially in shaping personalities.⁸ Likewise, in his analysis of the will, he relies on Aquinas to argue that freedom is for the sake of morality and a higher spiritual law, while furthering Aquinas’s personalism by emphasizing “that which is most characteristic of a person, that in which a person (at least in the natural order) is most fully and properly realized, is morality.”⁹ This keen insight is yet to be fully appreciated. Moreover, Wojtyła’s analysis of love is thoroughly Thomistic with an emphasis on spiritual love and subordinating “sensory energies and desires . . . to a basic understanding of the true worth of the object of our love.”¹⁰ With these few words, Wojtyła identifies a core theme in his extended treatment of romantic love in *Love and Responsibility*.¹¹ In his 1961 paper,

⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 169–170.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 170–171.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹¹ Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1981; originally published in 1960). For an in-depth exegesis of Aquinas’s philosophy of love coupled with an argument that the love of God and

Wojtyła adds that this emphasis on love and relationships in the realm of religion is especially profound in Aquinas's thought, albeit without also mentioning Aquinas's treatment of friendship with God through Christian charity.¹²

When the realms of social and political philosophy are considered in "Thomistic personalism," Wojtyła argues that morality is constitutive to all forms of society, albeit without also citing Aquinas's work on the organic common good or his dictum that human law is just when based on the natural moral law.¹³ Rather Wojtyła argues that since the common good contributes to the welfare of individuals and vice versa, both individualism and totalitarianism err in sacrificing either the community to the individual or the individual to the community.¹⁴ In addition, Wojtyła emphasizes that human rights are protective of the human person, especially the right to the "freedom of conscience." In *Centesimus Annus* §29.1, he argues that recognizing the rights of conscience constitute "the primary foundation of every authentically free political order." Wojtyła's emphasis on the rights of conscience corrects a significant error made by Aquinas in the application

neighbor are foundational precepts of his natural law, see my *Ultimate Normative Foundation: The Cases for Aquinas's Personalist Natural Law* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011; paperback 2017). For an overview, see my "Aquinas as Teacher of Humanity: Lessons of Truth and Love," in *Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Humanity*, ed. John P. Hittinger, Daniel C. Wagner (Cambridge Scholars Publications, 2015), 360–379.

¹² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II–II, 23–33, 44.

¹³ *S.Th.* I–II, 21, 3; I–II, 28, 1; I–I, 90, 2; I–II, 94, 3; I–II, 95, 2; II–II, 58, 9.

¹⁴ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 174. Also see *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki (New York, NY: Springer, 1979), 282; "The Person: Subject and Community," in *Person and Community*, 250: "The common good's superior character and the greater fullness of value it represents derive ultimately from the fact that the good of each of the subjects of a community that calls itself a *we* is more fully expressed and more fully actualized in the common good." For further explication see my argument from ontological poverty in *Ultimate Normative Foundations*, 146–153.

of his principles to heretics.¹⁵ It also opens, as Wojtyła notes, a new and “separate chapter in Thomistic personalism.”¹⁶ Nevertheless, in the paper’s concluding section, the future pope gives Thomistic personalism the highest praise possible for any philosophic system: namely, that the Gospel “corresponds to it extremely well” and can build upon it to explain what transcends the scope of philosophy.¹⁷ Overall, Wojtyła’s 1961 paper succeeds in establishing not only the personalism of Aquinas’s thought and the Thomistic character of Wojtyła’s personalism, but also Wojtyła’s conviction that Aquinas’s philosophy is indispensable for properly understanding human experiences. It thus anticipates the focus of his papal writings on the person and their Thomistic presuppositions—as shown, for instance, by his analysis of the moral object in *Veritatis Splendor*.¹⁸

Perhaps it was not always so. Eight years earlier, Wojtyła had explored, in his 1953 habilitation thesis at Jagiellonian University, whether the experiential values unmasked by Max Scheler’s phenomenological ethics could suffice for Christian ethics. The answer was negative reports his reader Stefan Swiezawski.¹⁹ In a paper, a few years later, Wojtyła argues that although phenomenology can “assist us in overcoming certain errors in views of the will that arise from an improper relation to the empirical facts, . . . it cannot serve as a tool for the sort of interpretation of ethical experiences upon which ethics as a

¹⁵ See Lemmons, *Ultimate Normative Foundations*, 328–329.

¹⁶ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 173.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹⁸ I explicate the Thomistic presuppositions of *Veritatis Splendor* in “Countering Today’s Moral Crisis with the Thomistic Personalism of John Paul II and Aquinas,” *Quaestiones Disputatae*, forthcoming.

¹⁹ Stefan Swiezawski, “Introduction: Karol Wojtyła at the Catholic University of Lublin,” in *Person and Community*, xv.

normative science is based.”²⁰ In his 1974 paper “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination,” Wojtyła repeats this criticism of phenomenology even while arguing that philosophy must start by analyzing human experience: “In order to grasp the personal structure of self-determination, we must start from the experience of the human being. This experience obviously cannot be understood phenomenalistically.”²¹ Human experience reveals that the efficacy of ethical action is personal, metaphysical, and constitutive of one’s very identity.²²

Given this analysis, it becomes clearer that Wojtyła did not identify Aquinas’s thought as a phenomenological Thomism, existential²² Thomism, or even personalist Thomism for several reasons. *First*, he was convinced that phenomenology was a dead end for philosophical inquiry as he argued in his habilitation thesis on Scheler. *Second*, he was convinced that the practical nature of personalism requires Thomistic analysis as shown not only by his 1961 “Thomistic Personalism,” but also by his 1974 “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination.” *Third*, Wojtyła was convinced that Thomism is properly understood as a form of personalism as shown by the collection of his papers in *Person and Community*. Hence, “personalist Thomism” would have been a redundant term. *Fourth*, Wojtyła was convinced that discovering what is true requires analyzing experience from the perspective of the acting person as shown by his books, *Love and Responsibility* and *The Acting Person*. The conviction that experience is the indispensable starting point for philosophy was also held by both Aristotle and Aquinas with each arguing that knowledge requires abstracting from experience. Each also demonstrated that one can use the facts gained through expe-

²⁰ Karol Wojtyła, “The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act” (originally published in 1957), in *Person and Community*, 21.

²¹ Karol Wojtyła, “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination,” in *Person and Community*, 188.

²² I argue this case in “Countering Today’s Moral Crisis,” forthcoming.

rience without always highlighting that source. One of the few times that Aquinas did draw explicit attention to experience was when he proved God's existence by the way of motion. *Fifth*, Wojtyła was convinced that understanding the person is the central philosophical question. This focus on the person was typical of Polish intellectuals, explains Stefan Swiezawski, who helped convince Wojtyła to join the philosophy department at the Catholic University of Lublin:

We knew with vivid clarity that all the evil that had assailed us in a dreadfully pure form, as well as all the good, which included incredible acts of heroism and sacrifice, had been the work of human beings. What then is the human being? What in the deepest sense constitutes the human person?²³

Hence, by describing Aquinas's thought as Thomistic personalism, Wojtyła was intentionally centering Thomism on the human person as he would later center Catholic thought in his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*:

Each man in all the unrepeatable reality of what he is and what he does . . . is a "person," a history of his life that is his own and, most important, a history of his soul that is his own. . . . Man in the full truth of his existence . . . and in the sphere of the whole of mankind—this man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: he is the primary and fundamental way for the Church, the way traced out by Christ himself.²⁴

And also:

This man is the way for the Church . . . because man—every man without any exception whatever—has been redeemed by Christ, and because with man—with each man without any exception

²³ Swiezawski, "Introduction," x.

²⁴ John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, in *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, ed. J. Michael Miller, CSB (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1996), §14.1.

whatever—Christ is in a way united, even when man is unaware of it.²⁵

In brief, according to Wojtyła, Thomistic personalism is the philosophy dedicated to understanding persons and their path to the fullness of existence.

In this collection of papers, we begin with *Anthony F. Flood's* endorsement of Michael Waldstein's argument that Wojtyła and Aquinas share a commitment to self-gift as being the key to life's meaning. Properly understanding this gift of self, argues Flood, requires understanding its basis in proper self-love and the reasons why non-trivial friendships elude the wicked. *John F. X. Knasas* then takes us deep into questions about the basis for respecting human dignity by contrasting how Kant, Aquinas and Wojtyła connect dignity to the will's liberty. Knasas explains that despite this similarity, significant differences exist with the Kantian formulation being not only self-defeating, but also contrary to experience for, as Wojtyła explains, the will would be "dumb and ineffectual," if it were turned "away . . . from all goods." The better analysis of the will, argues Wojtyła, identifies it as an appetite for intelligible good and being as Aquinas explains. Knasas then evaluates Wojtyła's Thomism by raising a few technical issues and suggesting that future work take up more fully the issue of "why we should pursue an ethics of perfectionism." *Catherine Peters* turns our attention to the natural law and argues that Wojtyła's understanding of consciousness, nature, and personalism develops Aquinas's thought. More specifically, she argues that the rational participation in the eternal law is a personal participation that preserves moral objectivity, while connecting with the contemporary concern for subjectivity. *Susan C. Selner-Wright* takes up the challenge given by W. Norris Clarke, S.J., to develop the personalist dimensions of *esse* (the act of existing).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, §14.3.

She does this by adopting Wojtyła's differentiation of personhood and humanity as well as his differentiation of ontological and ethical dignity. She argues that the *esse* characteristic of human persons differs from that of other animals: only humans have *esse* given by the Creator in such a way as to enable them "to own it:" only the Creator "could sunder" *esse* from the person. This personalist implication of what Aquinas calls "subsistence" enables Selner-Wright to defend the ontological uniqueness of the person as irreplaceable, irreducible, and incommunicable, while also distinguishing the ontological and personal dignity given by *esse* from the ethical dignity given by being "a responsible ethical agent." She concludes by drawing out two entailments: namely, that ethical dignity ought to be fostered to the degree possible and that those who are too disabled to fully realize their subjectivity always retain their ontological dignity. This volume ends with *Daniel C. Wagner* taking up the challenge of understanding the penitential process through the lenses of Aquinas and Husserl. Wagner argues that, contrary to the standard interpretation with which Wojtyła was familiar, Husserl's phenomenology is "not idealist and . . . [is] fully open to a realism," and helpful for entering more fully into penitential reflection.

Altogether these papers demonstrate not only the degree to which Wojtyła relied on Aquinas's anthropology, ethics and metaphysics, but also the insightfulness of Wojtyła's arguments that the truth about the human person needs Thomistic personalism. As I've argued elsewhere,²⁶ this is particularly the case given that the ubiquity of today's secularism has left many unable to conceive that the wonders of nature have a divine cause, that missionaries have a divine wisdom worth hearing, and that love is more than a feeling. The secular person seeks comfort—not in God nor in self-transcending love—but in materialistic

²⁶ See Lemmons, "Countering Today's Moral Crisis." Also see "Modes of Re-enchantment: John Paul II and the Role of Familial Love," *Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies* XXIX (2017): 91–114.

concerns or non-theistic and self-centered spiritualities. For, as John Paul II has pointed out, humans are attempting to live as if there is no God.²⁷ The misery that inevitably results opens the door to searching for the better way offered by Thomistic personalism. However, more work by Thomistic personalists is necessary, especially in the realms of psychology, anthropology, family studies, personalist feminism, metaphysics, and ethics in the individual, commercial, social, cultural, and political realms.



REFERENCES

- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*, translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York, NY: Benziger Brothers, 1948.
- John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*. In *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, edited by J. Michael Miller, CSB, 571–650. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1996.
- John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*. In *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, edited by J. Michael Miller, CSB, 729–894. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1996.
- John Paul II. *Redemptor Hominis*. In *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, edited by J. Michael Miller, CSB, 31–96. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1996.
- Lemmons, R. Mary Hayden. “Aquinas as Teacher of Humanity: Lessons of Truth and Love.” In *Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Humanity*, edited by John P. Hittinger, Daniel C. Wagner, 360–79. Cambridge Scholars Publications, 2015.
- Lemmons, R. Mary Hayden. “Countering Today’s Moral Crisis with the Thomistic Personalism of John Paul II and Aquinas.” *Quaestiones Disputatae*, forthcoming.
- Lemmons, R. Mary Hayden. “Modes of Re-enchantment: John Paul II and the Role of Familial Love.” *Journal for Interdisciplinary Studies* XXIX (2017): 91–114.
- Lemmons, R. Mary Hayden. *Ultimate Normative Foundation: The Cases for Aquinas’s Personalist Natural Law*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2011; paperback 2017.
- Wojtyla, Karol. *Love and Responsibility*, translated by H. T. Willetts. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1981.
- Wojtyla, Karol. “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination.” In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, OSM, *Catholic Thought*

²⁷ John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, in *The Encyclicals of John Paul II*, §24.2.

- from Lublin*, vol. IV, edited by Andrew N. Woznicki, 187–95. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyla, Karol. *The Acting Person*, translated by Andrzej Potocki. New York, NY: Springer, 1979.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "The Person: Subject and Community." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, OSM, *Catholic Thought from Lublin*, vol. IV, edited by Andrew N. Woznicki, 219–61. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, OSM, *Catholic Thought from Lublin*, vol. IV, edited by Andrew N. Woznicki, 3–22. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "Thomistic Personalism." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, OSM, *Catholic Thought from Lublin*, vol. IV, edited by Andrew N. Woznicki, 165–75. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "Personalizm tomistyczny." *Znak* 13 (1961): 664–75.
- Swiezawski, Stefan. "Introduction: Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, OSM, *Catholic Thought from Lublin*, vol. IV, edited by Andrew N. Woznicki, ix–xvi. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

ANTHONY T. FLOOD

LOVE OF SELF AS THE CONDITION FOR A GIFT OF SELF IN AQUINAS*

Perhaps the most well-known and provocative element of Wojtyła's ethical anthropology is that the meaning and purpose of human life is rooted in a complete gift of self. Michael Waldstein has effectively argued that Wojtyła's account is not novel; rather, Aquinas develops his account of love and friendship in a similar gift-of-self framework.¹ I believe Waldstein is correct both in his argument and in showing the value of Aquinas's account of love to debates in philosophical personalism. I wish to contribute to this debate by arguing that to understand adequately Aquinas's account of love in general and the aspect of the gift of self in particular, we must appreciate the importance of his account of appropriate self-love; moreover, self-love and love as a gift of self constitute two foundational poles on which we should base any development of a theory of love within Thomistic personalism. I will proceed by offering brief overviews of Wojtyła's concept of love as a gift of self and Waldstein's comparative study of Wojtyła and Aquinas on this issue. I will then examine Aquinas's notion of self-love, distin-

ANTHONY T. FLOOD — North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND, USA
e-mail: Anthony.Flood@ndsu.edu • ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3397-3696>

* This article is a revised version of the conference paper originally presented at the Satellite Session of the Society for Thomistic Personalism during the 2010 Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in Baltimore, MD, USA.

¹ Michael Waldstein, "John Paul II and St. Thomas on Love and the Trinity," *Anthropotes* 18 (2002): 113–138 (first part) and 269–286 (second part).

guishing between the good and bad kinds of self-love and then show how self-love actualized in self-friendship creates the possibility for friendship with others.

Wojtyla

Wojtyla bases his ethical anthropology in large measure on the “personalistic norm.” In *Love and Responsibility*, he defines the norm as such: “a person is an entity of a sort to which the only proper and adequate way to relate is love.”² The negative dimension of this principle demands that persons never be used as mere means, while the positive dimension demands love as the only proper response to a person. Throughout his writings, Wojtyla develops the implications of this principle, including the characterization of the nature of love specifically as a gift of self.

In *Man and Woman He Created Them*, Wojtyla³ characterizes the pre-sin beginnings of human existence first in terms of man’s original solitude and then in terms of man’s fulfillment by means of a complete mutual self-giving in a spousal context. He states the following of the first man:

[H]e, too, after having become completely conscious of his own solitude among all living beings on the earth, awaits a “help similar to himself” (see Gen 2:20). None of these beings (*animalia*), in fact, offers man the basic conditions that *make it possible to exist in a relation of reciprocal gift*.⁴

² Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1981), 41.

³ For convenience, in this article “Karol Wojtyla” also stands for “John Paul II.”

⁴ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, Translation, Introduction, and Index by Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), Catechesis 14:1.

The man recognizes in the woman a being like himself with whom he can truly share his life in a “communion of persons.” This recognition is fulfilled in the reciprocal self-giving of love.

One can say that, created by Love, that is, endowed in their being with masculinity and femininity, both are “naked,” because they are *free with the very freedom of the gift*. This freedom lies exactly at the basis of the spousal meaning of the body. The human body, with its sex—its masculinity and femininity—seen in the very mystery of creation, is not only a source of fruitfulness and of procreation, as in the whole natural order, but contains “from the beginning” the “spousal” attribute, that is, *the power to express love: precisely that love in which the human person becomes a gift* and—through this gift—fulfills the very meaning of his being and existence.⁵

Two aspects mark the gift of self: giving and accepting.

This allows us to reach the conclusion that the exchange of the gift, in which their whole humanity, soul and body, femininity and masculinity, participates, is realized *by preserving the inner characteristics (that is, precisely innocence) of self-donation and of the acceptance of the other as a gift*. These two functions of the mutual exchange are deeply connected in the whole process of the “gift of self”: giving and accepting the gift interpenetrate in such a way that the very act of giving becomes acceptance, and acceptance transforms itself into giving.⁶

While all of the above is cast in a spousal context, love as such possesses a self-giving nature, though the spousal instance is a sort of earthly paradigm of it.⁷

⁵ *Ibid.*, 15:1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 17:4.

⁷ Elizabeth Salas’s “Person and Gift According to Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II” offers an insightful analysis of how Wojtyła understands a gift of self and, particularly, how the self is not lost, so to speak, in such an act, but rather finds its fulfillment. *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 99–124.

Waldstein

Waldstein argues that the notion of love as a gift of self is not a Wojtylian innovation. Aquinas construes love in much the same way, even using the phrase “gift of self.”⁸ Waldstein notes that Aquinas distinguishes between two kinds of love: the love of concupiscence (*amor concupiscentiae*) and the love of friendship (*amor amicitiae*). Love of concupiscence is the love of the good itself while love of friendship pertains to whom the love is directed.

Both loves must concur in every love. They are the two sides of one and the same coin. When I love truth, I am attracted to truth as something good and I will it to be mine, or rather, since truth is a common good, I will myself to serve it. Neither aspect can be separated from the other.⁹

Waldstein proceeds to clarify the notion that a person can love himself with a love of friendship by noting that Aquinas insists each person has a friendship with himself. Stronger still, self-friendship¹⁰ is more basic than friendship between people as the former is based on substantial oneness or unity. Waldstein continues on to speak about Aquinas’s predication of ecstasy to the love of friendship for another person, to which I will momentarily turn. However, I wish to interrupt by stressing that it is this notion of self-friendship that needs to be unpacked more fully in order to understand sufficiently Aquinas’s account of love. I will return to this topic in the next section.

⁸ Waldstein does not assert that Wojtyla himself thought of this as an innovation. However, many key thinkers deny that Aquinas possessed such an account.

⁹ Waldstein, “John Paul II and St. Thomas on Love and the Trinity,” 128.

¹⁰ Neither Aquinas nor Waldstein use the term “self-friendship.” However, I think it suffices to capture the meaning of “friendship with oneself.”

Continuing on with Waldstein, he cites Aquinas's *Lectures on John* to flesh out this property of ecstasy or going outside of oneself. Aquinas states the following:

Love is twofold, namely, love of friendship and love of concupiscence, but they differ. In the love of concupiscence we draw to ourselves what is outside of us when by that very love we love things other than ourselves inasmuch as they are useful or delightful to us. In the love of friendship, on the other hand, it is the other way around, because we draw ourselves to what is outside. For, to those whom we love in that love we are related as to ourselves, *communicating ourselves to them in some way*.¹¹

The lover gives himself by communicating the being of who he is to the beloved; in other words, he makes himself a gift for his beloved. Waldstein next notes that in mutual self-giving, friends enjoy a communion (*communio*) of one another. One last quote sums up this point and Waldstein's general interpretation of Aquinas on love, friendship, and self-giving:

St. Thomas seems to state a general rule that applies not only to God, but to love in general: "To give oneself is an indication of great love." It must be granted that some kinds of friendship primarily involve cooperation in a common work and sharing in a common good rather than the enjoyment of one another as a concupiscible good. Such enjoyment of one another as a good is clearest in spousal love. Still, a certain self-communication, St. Thomas claims, is an essential aspect of the love of friendship in general. It follows that, when this love is mutually known and accepted, and when a shared life is built up, one can speak of a gift of self in some sense in all friendships. In giving the gift of

¹¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Lectures on John*, Chapter 15, Lecture 4, cit. after: Waldstein, "John Paul II and St. Thomas on Love and the Trinity," 129.

himself through the love of friendship each friend becomes for the other a good to be enjoyed.¹²

Waldstein demonstrates that Aquinas's account contains a notion quite similar to Wojtyla's gift of self. Moreover, if we wish to continue to develop a view of the person rooted in both the thought of Aquinas and Wojtyla, the overlap of the two thinkers on this point can only make our task easier. However, we need to be attentive to the basis of Aquinas's notion of self-giving, namely its foundation in proper self-love or what I term "self-friendship."

Aquinas on Self-Love and Self-Friendship¹³

Aquinas affirms that each person should love himself, and that such appropriate self-love serves as the basis for the possibility of giving oneself lovingly to another. My point of departure for discussing Aquinas's views on self-friendship is the passage cited by Waldstein referenced above:

We must hold that, *properly speaking, a man is not a friend to himself, but something more than a friend*, since friendship implies union, for Dionysius says (*Div Nom.* iv) that "love is a unitive force," whereas a man is one with himself which is more than being united to another. *Hence, just as unity is the principle of union, so the love with which a man loves himself is the form and root of friendship.* For if we have friendship with others it is because we do unto them as we do unto ourselves, hence we read

¹² Waldstein, "John Paul II and St. Thomas on Love and the Trinity," 131. The included citation is from Aquinas's *Lectures on John*, ad 3:16.

¹³ I have argued elsewhere that Aquinas's notion of self-friendship should be understood as an account of subjectivity. My present argument does not depend on such a position. See Anthony T. Flood, "Aquinas on Subjectivity: A Response to Crosby," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 69–83.

in *Ethic.* ix. 4, 8, that “the origin of friendly relations with others lies in our relations to ourselves.”¹⁴

In this passage, I believe we find Aquinas grappling with a lack of terminological resources required to express the reality of a person’s inner-life. Medieval philosophical discourse provides terms to analyze properly the relations between people but seems to lack terms to express adequately the ways in which a person relates to oneself. Aquinas’s solution is to use the term “friendship” analogically. There is greater epistemic access to the nature of friendship between two people than to self-friendship, though, somewhat strikingly, friendship between persons is based on the ontologically prior inner-life of a person. Moreover, a love-based self-relation constitutes self-friendship.

Aquinas expands on the notions of self-love and self-friendship in *Summa Theologiae* II–II, 25, 7, which asks “Whether sinners love themselves.” While this question is raised within the context of charity (*caritas*), the principles he employs in the response are drawn from natural love (*amor*). He is careful to distinguish different kinds of self-love: a self-love which all possess, a wicked self-love, and an appropriate actualization of common self-love:¹⁵

Love of self is common to all, in one way; in another way it is proper to the good; in a third way, it is proper to the wicked. For it is common to all for each one to love what he thinks himself to be. Now a man is said to be a thing, in two ways: first, in respect of his substance and nature, and, this way all think themselves to be what they are, that is, composed of soul and body. In this way

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York, NY: Benziger Brothers, 1948), II–II, 25, 4 (hereafter cited as *S.Th.*). The italics are mine, and I have placed in quotes what was italicized in this translation.

¹⁵ See also *S.Th.*, I–II, 77, 4, which asks “Whether self-love is the source of every sin.” His answer is that if one is speaking about wicked self-love, then yes, but otherwise no. His reply to the objection 1 summarizes his view: “Well ordered self-love, whereby man desires a fitting good for himself, is right and natural; but it is inordinate self-love, leading to the contempt of God, that Augustine reckons to be the cause of sin.”

too, all men, both good and wicked, love themselves, in so far as they love their own preservation.

Secondly, a man is said to be something in respect of some predominance, as the sovereign of a state is spoken of as being the state, and so, what the sovereign does, the state is said to do. In this way, all do not think themselves to be what they are. For the reasoning mind is the predominant part of man, while the sensitive and corporeal nature takes the second place, the former of which the Apostle calls the *inward man*, and the latter, the *outward man* (2 Cor. iv. 16). Now the good look upon their rational nature or the inward man as being the chief thing in them, wherefore in this way they think themselves to be what they are. On the other hand, the wicked reckon their sensitive and corporeal nature, or the outer man, to hold the first place. Wherefore, since they know not themselves aright, they do not love themselves aright, but love that they think themselves to be. But the good know themselves truly, and therefore truly love themselves.¹⁶

Common, natural self-love is the drive for self-preservation found in all substances though raised to a higher level in virtue of man's nature as a rational animal. Both wicked and appropriate self-loves are developments of common self-love, the former as a perversion and the latter as its proper fulfillment. Wicked self-love gravitates to the animal characteristics of human nature. A relation of self-love still characterizes such a person but the love is disordered. A wicked person loves the lower goods of his nature at the expense of the higher goods. Wicked self-love is not the basis of self-friendship.

Good or appropriate self-love is the full actualization of common self-love. This kind of love forms the basis of self-friendship. Through appropriate self-love, each person wills goods through love of concupiscence and wills those goods for himself through a love of friendship. Aquinas turns to his own reflection on the interior life and Aristotle to

¹⁶ *S.Th.*, II-II, 25, 7.

defend the above. In the following, he continues his response to the same question:

The Philosopher proves this from five things that are proper to friendship. For in the first place, every friend wishes his friend to be and to live; secondly, he desires good things for him; thirdly, he does good things to him; fourthly, he takes pleasure in his company; fifthly, he is of one mind with him, rejoicing and sorrowing in almost the same things. In this way the good love themselves, as to the inward man, because they wish the preservation thereof in its integrity, they desire good things for him, namely spiritual goods, indeed they do their best to obtain them, and they take pleasure in entering into their own hearts, because they find there good thoughts in the present, the memory of past good, and the hope of future good, all of which are sources of pleasure. Likewise they experience no clashing of wills, since their whole soul tends to one thing.¹⁷

The self-love of self-friendship is not narcissistic or selfish but the love of the moral and ontological goodness of one's own being.¹⁸ If love is willing the good, then it stands to reason that each person first wills his own preservation, since he apprehends himself as good. Self-friendship is the full actualization of such self-love through the willing of the various goods that pertain to human perfection. Moreover, if one is leading a good life, then he finds his own company pleasant.

Aquinas's view of self-friendship provides the foundation for a meaningful life in two ways. The first way pertains to the quality of a person's inner-life as such. If one is not a friend with himself, then he

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ For studies showing the unselfish nature of love of self in Aquinas, see R. Mary Hayden, "The Paradox of Aquinas's Altruism: From Self-Love to Love of Others," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 63 (1989): 72–83; David Gallagher, "The Desire for Beatitude and the Love of Friendship in Thomas Aquinas," *Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996): 1–47 (particularly p. 33); Thomas M. Osborne, *The Love of Self and the Love of God in Thirteenth-Century Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 109.

will be miserable; a misery that will negatively affect all subsequent experiences. The second way concerns friendship with others; self-friendship makes friendship possible. Aquinas's thought seems to be that a person is capable of relating to others only in ways by which he relates to himself. Self-love, then, is a sort of template or guide for how to extend love to others. To see how this template functions, let us first look at the destructive effects of disordered self-love on friendship, and then how self-friendship creates the conditions for relating to others in love.

Disordered Self-Love and Friendship

Aquinas concludes his response to II–II, 25, 7 with the following sketch of the wicked person's inner-life:

On the other hand, the wicked have no wish to be preserved in the integrity of the inward man, nor do they desire spiritual goods for him, nor do they work for that end, nor do they take pleasure in their own company by entering into their own hearts, because whatever they find there, present, past and future is evil and horrible; nor do they agree with themselves, on account of the gnawings of conscience, according to Ps. xlix. 21: *I will reprove thee and set before thy face.*

In the same manner it may be shown that the wicked love themselves, as regards the corruption of the outward man, whereas the good do not love themselves thus.¹⁹

The wicked person's inability to love himself properly undermines the possibility of friendship with others. I think we can reasonably derive two possibilities for the wicked person and friendship based on levels of wickedness. Aquinas, in his *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, seems to agree with Aristotle, holding that bad men can form lower-level friendships of utility and pleasure but not perfect friendship, for

¹⁹ *S.Th.*, II–II, 25, 7.

“only good men make friends in that perfect friendship by which men are loved for their own sakes.”²⁰ In the case of a minimally wicked person, he might be capable of willing goods to another person. However, insofar as the other-directedness of his love is conditioned by the direction of his own self-love, he could only will bodily goods for the other. Also, his love of concupiscence or enjoyment of the other could only extend to the beloved’s bodily goods. This is the case because the lover predominately loves his own body and associated goods and not the higher characteristics and associated goods of human nature. If he is blind to those goods in himself, he will be blind to them in others.

In the case of the fully wicked person, the possibility of any kind of friendship becomes more remote. Aquinas again seems to agree with Aristotle that wicked people seek out each other’s company as a sort of distraction from their own inner-turmoil.²¹ However, such friendships are even more fragile than in the cases above in that most of friendship’s properties, such as benevolence, beneficence, and concord, are threatened or undermined by the wicked impulses and instability on the part of both the lover and beloved, since both are wicked.

In the cases of either the minimally or fully wicked person, the self-communication of the love of complete friendship does not take place; in other words, no gift of self occurs. The wicked person lacks the necessary stability of the self to give that self to another (to reify things just a bit). Wojtyla makes a related point concerning self-mastery, which he thinks is an essential precondition to the giving of oneself:

Here we mean freedom above all as *self-mastery* (self-domination). Under this aspect, self-mastery is indispensable *in order*

²⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. I. Litzinger, O.P. (Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), Section 1591. I interpret Aquinas’s remarks in the commentary to reflect his own position.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1816.

*for man to be able to “give himself,” in order for him to become a gift . . .*²²

The negative characterization of Wojtyla’s point is that the lack of self-mastery prevents the possibility of self-gifting. The act of giving oneself in both Aquinas and Wojtyla is conditioned on prior considerations of the person. In the case of Aquinas, such considerations pertain to self-love.²³ If self-love is disordered, then there can be no gifting of oneself. He proposes that proper self-love is the remedy for the above failures in friendship with others.

We ought to shun evil with increased ardor, and make every effort to become virtuous. For in this way a person will have friendship for himself *and be capable of becoming a friend to others*.²⁴

Proper self-love is the key to loving and giving oneself to another in complete friendship.

Self-Friendship and Friendship with Others

Recall that in his response concerning appropriate self-love, Aquinas discusses how the five properties of friendship are rooted in the primordial relation each person has to himself in self-friendship. In other passages, he connects these primordial self-love relations to the possibility of relating to others as a template for the latter. Consider the passage from his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, in which he highlights some of these connections:

For since love in a certain way unites lover to beloved, the lover therefore stands to the beloved as if to himself or to that which

²² John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 15:2.

²³ I will expand on some of Wojtyla’s thoughts on such prior considerations of the person in the conclusion.

²⁴ Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nichomachean Ethics*, 1819, italics mine.

concerns his perfection. But to himself and to that which belongs to him, he stands in the following ways. First, he wishes whatever concerns his perfection to be present to him; and therefore love includes *longing* for the beloved, by which the beloved's presence is desired. Second, in his affections a man turns other things back to himself and seeks for himself whatever goods are expedient for him; and so far as this is done for the beloved, love includes the *benevolence* by which someone desires good things for the beloved. Third, the things a man desires for himself he actually acquires for himself by acting; and insofar as this activity is exercised toward another, love includes *beneficence*. Fourth, to the accomplishment of whatever seems good in his sight, he gives his full consent; and insofar as this attitude comes to be toward a friend, love includes *concord* by which someone consents to things as they seem [good] to his friend . . . over and above what belongs to the four things that have just been described, love adds a special note, namely, the appetite's resting in the beloved; lacking this, none of those four is able to exist.²⁵

Appropriate self-love actualized in self-friendship is a necessary condition for fully loving another; it is a necessary condition for a gift of self.

The wicked are, ultimately, frustrated in their attempts for non-trivial friendship. Nevertheless they seek out the company of others in order to escape dwelling with themselves.

Evil men cannot converse with themselves by turning to their soul but they seek to associate with others by speaking and co-operation with them in external words and works. They act in this way because when thinking alone about themselves they remember many distressing evils they committed in the past and they are convinced they will do the same in the future—this is

²⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, III, 27, 2, 1, cit. after: *Id.*, *On Love and Charity: Readings from the "Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard,"* trans. Peter Kwasniewski, Thomas Bolin, O.S.B., and Joseph Bolin (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

painful to them. But when they are in company they forget their wrongdoings in the distraction of external activities.²⁶

The wicked person's motivation for friendship throws the contrary dynamic of the self-friend into clear relief. The person who is a friend with himself is not trying to avoid being with himself.

Aquinas maintains that the inner-life of the self-friend is quite pleasant. A friend is not an escape from turmoil; rather, complete friendship gives the lover an opportunity to share his life with the beloved, and vice versa. It is only because the lover loves himself that he sees that he is gift worth giving, for who would give a gift one thought was an evil thing? Moreover, the lover, on account of his relations to himself, knows how to will the good and respond to the beloved. Aquinas uses vivid language to describe the depths of this self-gift and resulting communion with the other:

For by the fact that love transforms the lover into the beloved, it makes the lover enter into the interior of the beloved and *vice versa*, so that nothing of the beloved remains not united to the lover, just as the form reaches to the innermost recesses of that which it informs and *vice versa*. Thus, the lover in a way penetrates into the beloved, and so love is called "piercing"; for to come into the innermost recesses of a thing by dividing it is characteristic of something piercing.²⁷

Only in loving oneself through self-friendship does a person wish to give himself completely and to receive the beloved completely.

²⁶ Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nichomachean Ethics*, 1816. Cf. *S.Th.*, II-II, 25, 7.

²⁷ Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, III, 27, 1, 1, reply 4. See also *S.Th.*, I-II, 28, 2.

Conclusion

I hope to have shown that, for Aquinas, a gift of self is something consequent to an appropriate self-love. Moreover, I think we find a deep symmetry, and not disagreement, between the accounts of Aquinas and Wojtyla. A fairly convincing case could be made that what Wojtyla refers to as “original solitude” in *Man and Woman He Created Them* is relevantly similar to Aquinas’s self-friendship.²⁸ For instance, Wojtyla states, “The concept of original solitude includes both self-consciousness and self-determination.”²⁹ It is the condition of Adam before the creation of Eve, and this condition, in turn, becomes the precondition to the giving of himself that occurs with the creation of the woman. The self-gift is not an attempt to distract Adam from his inner-turmoil, but rather, it is the fulfillment of his inner-life.³⁰ If the above is the case, then this dimension of Wojtyla’s personalism is quite similar to Aquinas’s view of self-love and self-giving. Obviously much more work would need to be done to make this case, but I think the above suffices to neutralize any preliminary antagonism between the two thinkers on this issue. Thus, I am not criticizing Wojtyla but insisting

²⁸ I make this case in some respect in my “Aquinas on Subjectivity: A Response to Crosby” in arguing that Aquinas’s notion of self-friendship is an account of subjectivity, though my focus is John Crosby’s version and not Wojtyla’s. However, Crosby explicitly ties his account to Wojtyla’s work. See John Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press of America, 1996), Chapter 3.

²⁹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 6:1.

³⁰ Salas states, “Wojtyla argues, then, that the gift of self, arising in immanence, transcends itself, reaching the core of the other’s dignity by establishing a union of love, in common pursuit of the good, between giver and givee, a union that at the same time confirms the giver’s own dignity” (“Person and Gift According to Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II,” 124).

on the proper place of Aquinas's thought as an authentic foundation for Christian personalism.³¹



LOVE OF SELF AS THE CONDITION FOR A GIFT OF SELF IN AQUINAS

SUMMARY

The author attempts to contribute to the debate about the value of Aquinas's account of love to philosophical personalism. He argues that to understand adequately Aquinas's account of love in general and the aspect of the gift of self in particular, we must appreciate the importance of his account of appropriate self-love; moreover, self-love and love as a gift of self constitute two foundational poles on which we should base any development of a theory of love within Thomistic personalism. First, the author offers brief overviews of Wojtyła's concept of love as a gift of self and Waldstein's comparative study of Wojtyła and Aquinas on this issue. Second, he examines Aquinas's notion of self-love, distinguishing between the good and bad kinds of self-love. Finally, he shows how self-love actualized in self-friendship creates the possibility for friendship with others.

KEYWORDS

Aquinas, Wojtyła, Waldstein, Thomistic personalism, philosophical personalism, love, self-gift, self-love, self-friendship, friendship.

REFERENCES

- Aquinas, Thomas. *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by C. I. Litzinger, O.P. Chicago, Ill.: Henry Regnery Company, 1964.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *On Love and Charity: Readings from the "Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard,"* translated by Peter Kwasniewski, Thomas Bolin, O.S.B., and Joseph Bolin. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*, translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New York, N.Y.: Benziger Brothers, 1948.
- Crosby, John. *The Selfhood of the Human Person*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press of America, 1996.
- Flood, Anthony T. "Aquinas on Subjectivity: A Response to Crosby." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 69–83.

³¹ I wish to thank Carol Andreini, R. Mary Hayden Lemmons, and Vincent Wargo for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

- Gallagher, David. "The Desire for Beatitude and the Love of Friendship in Thomas Aquinas." *Mediaeval Studies* 58 (1996): 1–47.
- Hayden, R. Mary. "The Paradox of Aquinas's Altruism: From Self-Love to Love of Others." *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 63 (1989): 72–83.
- John Paul II. *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, translation, introduction, and index by Michael Waldstein. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006.
- Osborne, Thomas M. *The Love of Self and the Love of God in Thirteenth-Century Ethics*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005.
- Salas, Elizabeth. "Person and Gift According to Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 99–124.
- Waldstein, Michael. "John Paul II and St. Thomas on Love and the Trinity." *Anthropotes* 18 (2002): 113–38 (first part) and 269–86 (second part).
- Wojtyla, Karol. *Love and Responsibility*, translated by H. T. Willetts. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1981.

JOHN F. X. KNASAS

KANTIANISM AND THOMISTIC PERSONALISM ON THE HUMAN PERSON: SELF-LEGISLATOR OR SELF-DETERMINER?*

In the 2008 Thomistic Personalism Session¹ there was some discussion about whether John Paul II grounded human dignity in a Kantian way, viz., emphasizing the person as an end unto itself. I was one of the discussants that expressed the danger of that liaison. A year later, after Prof. Lemmons’s kind invitation to speak at the 2009 Thomistic Personalism Session, I thought that I would take the opportunity to discuss the relations between Kant and Aquinas on the topic of the philosophical basis of human dignity, and—since these sessions are also devoted to the thought of John Paul II—also to consider his remarks on Kant’s ethics. In this article I will follow anew the lines of my paper then presented.

JOHN F. X. KNASAS — University of St. Thomas, Houston, TX, USA
e-mail: jknasas@stthom.edu • ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7417-0211>

* This article is a revised version of the conference paper originally presented at the Satellite Session of the Society for Thomistic Personalism during the 2009 Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in New Orleans, LA, USA.

¹ Here I mean the Satellite Session of the Society for Thomistic Personalism during the 2008 Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in Omaha, NE, USA.



Kant²

In his *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*,³ Kant investigates the source for the appearance of moral necessity, or obligation. I summarize Kant's analysis as follows. Kant begins with the "good will." The good will is the will that acts for the sake of the law alone and not for any benefit derived from following the law.⁴ But what does fidelity to the law mean? It means fidelity to what characterizes law. And what is that? It is "universality." A law makes universal claims: No one, nowhere can do such and such.⁵ Next, this fidelity to universality is articulated in terms of the categorical imperative: Do only what you are able to universalize.⁶ Somewhat similarly we say in Christiani-

² The first two sections of this article are based on my previous considerations on Kant and Aquinas, published as: John F. X. Knasas, "Kant and Aquinas on the Grounds of Moral Necessity," in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale su «L'Umanesimo Cristiano nel III Millennio. La Prospettiva di Tommaso d'Aquino»*, Vol. II (Vatican City 2005), 748–753.

³ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 13–14: "Only what is connected with my will merely as ground and never as effect . . .—hence the mere law for itself—can be an object of respect and so a command. Now, an action from duty is to put aside entirely the influence of inclination and with it every object of the will: hence there is left for the will nothing that could determine it except objectively the law and subjectively *pure respect* for this practical law, and so the maxim of complying with such a law even if it infringes upon all my inclination." Earlier, Kant had subsumed the good will within the notion of duty, see *Ibid.*, 10: "In order to do so [i.e., develop the notion of a good will], we shall set before ourselves the concept of duty which contains that of a good will . . ."

⁵ *Ibid.*, 14–15: "But what kind of law can that be, the representation of which must determine the will, even without regard for the effect expected from it in order for the will to be called good absolutely and without limitation? . . . nothing is left but the conformity of actions as such with universal law, which alone is to serve the will as its principle, that is, *I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law.*"

⁶ *Ibid.*, 44: "This principle is, accordingly, also its supreme law: act always on that maxim whose universality as a law you can at the same time will; this is the sole condition under which a will can never be in conflict with itself, and such an imperative is categorical."

ty: Love your neighbor as yourself. But Kant pushes the analysis further. Why the categorical imperative?

For Kant the categorical imperative is grounded on the idea of a rational being as an end in itself.⁷ How so? Well, reflect upon what violating the imperative means. If I am willing to say that the proscription of lying is not universal, then I am saying that in some circumstances I can be lied to. Now, for Kant, there is something insulting with that thought. The insult is that I am being treated as a mere means to someone else's end. To Kant that treatment is a striking violation of our dignity. Our dignity, then, is that we are ends unto ourselves.

But Kant's analysis continues. That we are ends means that we must regard ourselves as self-legislating.⁸ Kant translates this idea of a self-legislator into the idea of the autonomous will.⁹ Such a will is absolutely free in that it takes no cues for its exercise from anything else. In other words, not even knowledge of the moral law precedes the will. Such a reference for the will would encroach on the will's autonomy.¹⁰

If I have understood Kant, I wonder if his analysis cuts off the branch on which it is sitting. The analysis is supposed to explain the appearance of moral necessity, or obligation. But, in my opinion, the analysis concludes to a will so autonomous that it is not bound by any-

⁷ *Ibid.*, 45: "For, to say that in the use of means to any end I am to limit my maxim to the condition of its universal validity as a law for every subject is tantamount to saying that the subject of ends, that is, the rational being itself, must be made the basis of all maxims of actions, never merely as a means but as the supreme limiting condition in the use of all means, that is, always at the same time as an end."

⁸ *Ibid.*: "Now, from this it follows incontestably that every rational being, as an end in itself, must be able to regard himself as also giving universal laws with respect to any law whatsoever to which he may be subject."

⁹ *Ibid.*, 47: "Autonomy of the will is the property of the will by which it is a law to itself (independently of any property of the objects of volition)."

¹⁰ *Ibid.*: "If the will seeks the law that is to determine it anywhere else than in the fitness of its maxims for its own giving of universal law—consequently if, in going beyond itself, it seeks this law in a property of any of its objects—*heteronomy* always results. The will in that case does not give itself the law."

thing, including the categorical imperative. I know that Kant acknowledges that the categorical imperative is the “supreme law” of a good will¹¹ and that the imperative is compatible with the will’s autonomy.¹² Yet, I insist on asking: How? Kant says that heteronomy exists when the will seeks the moral law in the character of its object. But is not the supreme law, the categorical imperative, a response to our character as ends unto ourselves? It seems so.¹³ It does no good to reply that heteronomy only results when the will is related to the character of something *other* than itself. For the character of the will itself is in some sense other than the will insofar as the will is *of* such a character. In sum, the categorical imperative expresses to the will the marching orders of the character of the will. How is this situation compatible with Kant’s talk about the autonomy of the will and talk of the will legislating its laws? The will seems to be not autonomous in respect to its character, and its laws seem to be dictated not by itself but the character-imposed categorical imperative. Hence, in my opinion, the only way that Kant can avoid inconsistency is to admit that the will is so autonomous that it self-legislates even the categorical imperative. And if self-legislation is the correct conclusion of Kant’s logic, then what happens to moral necessity? Can a true creator of legislation be considered as genuinely bound by that legislation? Is not the idea of a self-legislator a contradiction in terms? In sum, what is arbitrarily asserted can always be arbitrarily denied, even by the original asserter. Hence, Kant brings the project of ethics to an impasse. Insofar as he explains obligation in a way that extinguishes obligation, then to preserve obligation we have to leave obligation unexplained. Ethics has lost its future.

¹¹ See note 6 (above).

¹² See note 10 (above).

¹³ See note 8 (above).

Aquinas

Aquinas also employs human freedom to evoke obligation. At *Summa Contra Gentiles* III, 112, Aquinas explains why in God's providence God governs rational creatures for their own sake, not in subordination to some other creature. Aquinas thinking here is most relevant for human ethics, because if God has to treat us in a particular way because we are free, then *a fortiori* and for the same reason we should treat each other similarly. Aquinas says:

[T]he very way in which the intellectual creature was made, according as it is master of its acts, demands providential care whereby this creature may provide for itself, on its own behalf; while the way in which other things were created, things which have no dominion over their acts, shows this fact, that they are cared for, not for their own sake, but as subordinated to others. That which is moved only by another being has the formal character of an instrument, but that which acts of itself has the essential character of a principal agent. Now, an instrument is not valued for its own sake, but as useful to a principal agent. Hence it must be that all the careful work that is devoted to instruments is actually done for the sake of the agent, as for an end, but what is done for the principal agent, either by himself or by another, is for his own sake, because he is the principal agent. Therefore, intellectual creatures are so controlled by God, as objects of care for their own sakes; while other creatures are subordinated, as it were, to the rational creatures.¹⁴

Aquinas uses the freedom of the rational creature to argue that it should be treated for its own sake. In other words, Aquinas grounds the dignity of the human on its freedom of will. In *Groundwork* Kant argued in

¹⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 112, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1975), 115. In the opening line of the next argument, Aquinas makes plain that his first argument has been thinking of the intellectual creature as free: "One who holds dominion over his own acts is free in his activity." (*Ibid.*)

opposite fashion. He concluded to the autonomy of will from our being ends unto ourselves.¹⁵ No conflict exists here because Kant is just proceeding analytically to what Aquinas uses as a starting point.¹⁶ It remains for both that freedom is a principle of morals.

Yet each understands freedom differently. For Aquinas, the free agent is not a self-legislator but a self-determiner, an agent that acts through its consent. Unlike Kant's autonomous will, which is incompatible with direction by reason, the freedom of a self-determiner is compatible with rational direction. In fact, Aquinas indicates the object of that direction in another argument of Ch. 112:

[I]t is evident that all parts are ordered to the perfection of the whole, since a whole does not exist for the sake of its parts, but, rather, the parts are for the whole. Now intellectual natures have a closer relationship to a whole than do other natures; indeed, each intellectual substance is, in a way, all things. For it may comprehend the entirety of being through its intellect [*inquantum totius entis comprehensiva est suo intellectui*]; on the other hand, every other substance has only a particular share in being. Therefore, other substances may fittingly be providentially cared for by God for the sake of intellectual substances.¹⁷

The human as an intellector of being is what directs God's providence to govern the human for its own sake. This same understanding of ourselves and our fellows should be what merits the respect and solicitude of our free will. To understand Aquinas' argument two points are important. The notion of being, the *ratio entis*, is not just any whole or entirety. Being is a transcendental analogon. As such it is a commonali-

¹⁵ See note 8 (above).

¹⁶ Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 47: "But that the above principle of autonomy is the sole principle of morals can well be shown by mere analysis of the concepts of morality. For, by this analysis we find that its principle must be a categorical imperative, while this commands neither more nor less than just this autonomy."

¹⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, 112, trans. Bourke, 116–117.

ty, or intelligibility, that implicitly but actually, contains the different perfections of all conceivable things. This thinking about being follows from Aquinas' repeated assertions that addition to being is not from outside as is the case with the addition of species to a genus. Rather, addition to being is *via* the differences expressing what is actually but implicitly contained by the notion.¹⁸ Hence, the *ratio entis* is not just any whole; it is the whole that contains the perfections of all things. In sum, the *ratio entis* is also the good, the *ratio boni*.

Second, following Aristotle Aquinas views cognition, both sensory and intellectual, as an especially intimate becoming of the known by the knower. Knowers have an "amplitude" and "extension" of form over matter that allows them to receive the very form of the thing known without detriment to themselves.¹⁹ As so conformed to the known, the knower is suitably equipped to produce it as the term of the knower's cognitive activities.

These two points mean that in the human person understood as, what I will call, an "intellector of being," we confront an especially intense presence of the good. It is no wonder that even God relates to the rational creature in a providence that governs the rational creature for its own sake. So in Aquinas freedom is guided freedom. Reason addresses freedom with facts that include moral necessity. Our fellows are intellectors of being and being is the good. These facts are crucial for understanding Aquinas' seminal article on the basis of natural law ethics in his *Summa Theologiae* I–II, 94, 2 c.²⁰ For Aquinas, the future of ethics lies in being faithful to these facts in all of our various activities. In contrast, for Kant, if I have understood him, no facts can address

¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones de Veritate*, I, 1 c; XXI, 1 c.

¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 14, 1 c.

²⁰ For an elaboration of the connection of these facts with 94, 2 c, see Ch. 8, "The *Ratio Boni* and Natural Law Ethics," in my *Being and Some Twentieth-Century Thomists* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003).

our freedom. Any such address would compromise the autonomy of the will and Kant's understanding of the will as self-legislating.

Finally, the Thomistic notion of human freedom is not only compatible with rational direction, it is also compatible with the phenomena that Kant analyzes for his purposes. This point is important for noticing that Kant's analysis seems to commit a *non-sequitur*. That I ought to be treated as an end does not strictly entail that I ought to be regarded as self-legislating. It suffices that I be thought of as self-determining. Such an agent is also an end. Your capacity for self-determination forces me to respect you for yourself and so as an end. The idea of being self-determining also explains the insult that we feel in being lied to. By the lie we are enlisted in a project for which we did not give our consent. So, Aquinas can take the best features of Kant's position, viz., human dignity and its connection with human freedom, but parlay them so that they do not become antinomies. As self-determination human freedom still is a ground for human dignity.

Wojtyla

I now turn to Karol Wojtyla's comments on Kant as they appear in various articles collected in his *Person and Community: Selected Essays*.²¹ Wojtyla is quite aware that in Kant the will does not act on the basis of a good proposed by reason. This point is quite clear from his summary of Kant in the article "In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics."²² Even though the terminology of self-determination is employed to describe Kant, this phrase does not indicate the offering of alternatives by reason to the will, as the phrase did indicate in my

²¹ Karol Wojtyla, *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, O.S.M. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993); hereafter cited as *Person and Community*.

²² Karol Wojtyla, "In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics," in *Person and Community*, 45–56.

above use of it. So Wojtyla notes that for Kant “ethics as a science can be based only on a form supplied by practical reason. This is the form of universal legislation, which appears *a priori* in consciousness in the guise of an imperative.”²³ Furthermore, “the experience of an imperative is linked, in Kant’s view, with the experience of freedom. All determination is an actual exclusion of free will.”²⁴ Hence, “we must seek morality, or the so-called ethical content of consciousness, in the transphenomenal *homo noumenon*. To it alone belongs autonomy, or freedom.” In still other words,

When practical reason is directed solely and exclusively by this [*a priori*] form, the experience of pure duty arises in practical consciousness, and in this pure duty “supersensible” humanity (*homo noumenon*) simultaneously experiences its total freedom. Duty, thus understood, is free of all determination from without, from the side of the phenomenal world; it is subject to determination only from within, from the side of consciousness. Consequently, pure duty involves the experience of self-determination, the experience of freedom—an experience that gives consciousness a certain nonsensory satisfaction.²⁵

A few lines later, Wojtyla claims that for Kant “it is within this experience [of freedom or self-determination] that morality is contained.”²⁶

I understand these remarks to repeat the reduction mentioned in my earlier description of Kant. Namely: first duty, then to law, to universality, to person as end unto itself, and finally to autonomy. Upon reaching autonomy, however, I and Wojtyla criticize Kant for different things. I criticize Kantian autonomy for a resultant arbitrariness. Wojtyla criticizes it for being so *contra* to our evident experience. If I understand him, Wojtyla develops this criticism along two lines. First, in

²³ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 50–51.

his article on the separation of experience from the act,²⁷ Wojtyla repeats the description of Kant's ethics that he gave in the essay on the basis of perfectionism.²⁸ He then observes:

Given such assumptions, the moral activity of the will requires a complete turning away from all goods. As long as the will in its activity strives for any good whatsoever, even a good of the objectively highest order, we are not dealing with morality. Such a position, however, which results from an unconditional break with experience, does not embrace any concrete human action within its scope. A concrete action by its very nature aims at some good, and so in every real human action arising from the will we must encounter an inclination toward some good.²⁹

Later Wojtyla describes this result as a separation of the logical and psychological aspects of the one ethical act and says that "such a split, however, is at flagrant odds with experience."³⁰

Second, again in the essay on the separation of experience, Wojtyla also criticizes the degradation of the will in Kant's position. Because of the turning away of the will from all goods, the will as we experience it, i.e., as in the phenomenal order, should be rendered dumb and ineffectual. It should lose its evidential character as a principle of action. He says, "The will, in Kant's view, is devoid of any innate dynamism of its own. This is because the will has no proper object to which it would naturally turn in its activity, but is in each case subject to the motives that practical reason gives it."³¹ In the essay on the will in the analysis of the ethical act,³² Wojtyla says that "for Kant the will

²⁷ Karol Wojtyla, "The Problem of the Separation of Experience from the Act in Ethics," in *Person and Community*, 23–44.

²⁸ Wojtyla, "In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics," 45–56.

²⁹ Wojtyla, "The Problem of the Separation of Experience from the Act in Ethics," 30.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

³² Karol Wojtyla, "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act," in *Person and Community*, 3–22.

is not merely under the direction of practical reason but is completely identified with it.”³³ Wojtyla emphasizes that Kant’s understanding is not only one-sided but “does not square with experience.”³⁴ Hence, Wojtyla praises current psychological studies that corroborate a more traditional understanding of the will as a faculty and thus as having a causal-efficient character. Here he mentions Aquinas and describes Aquinas’ understanding of the will.

According to St. Thomas, this process occurs as it does because the will’s whole natural dynamism has a distinct inclination . . . that arises from the will’s own nature, the will shares in the act of command . . . for it provides the power upon which reason relies in formulating the content of a command. As far as human activity in general is concerned, the will appears there as a faculty that acts in conjunction with reason—rather than one that merely submits to the causality of motives.³⁵

And later,

The activity of the will is understood by St. Thomas as having two basic sources of actualization. One is the nature of the will itself, for the will is by nature an appetite (*appetitus*), and so it exhibits an inclination toward everything that is in any way good (*bonum in communi*). Because this appetitive inclination constitutes the very nature of the will, the will does not need any external causal-efficient impulses to operate. . . . By virtue of this nature, the will is itself already a causal-efficient source of impulse in the human being, impulses that have various goods as their object. That which St. Thomas calls *motio quoad exercitium* comes from the will itself and is the will’s natural motion.³⁶

The second source of the will’s actuation Wojtyla describes this way:

³³ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

Reason's task, in cooperating with the desire for good that naturally resides in the will, is to objectify for the will the true goodness of those goods and thereby direct the inclination of the will. . . . St. Thomas calls it *motio quoad specificationem* . . .³⁷

Fellow Thomists might want to disagree about the first source of the will's actualization, viz., the will's very nature or constitution understood as an inclination to the good in common. For textual reasons they might wonder if volition itself is ignited by the intellect's presentation of the *ratio entis* understood as the *ratio boni*? Fellow Thomists might also wonder if Wojtyla's first source of the will's actualization is making a concession to Kantian transcendental thinking. Nevertheless, for purposes of grounding human dignity, Wojtyla's thinking is close enough to Aquinas' noted reflections in *Summa Contra Gentiles* III, 112. An intimacy exists not only between knower and known but also between willer and willed. At *Summa Theologiae* I, 59, 2, Aquinas notes that not by assimilation but by inclination the will extends itself to that which is outside it. And so just as the person as an intellector of being assumes a dignity, so too does the person as a willer of the *ratio boni*, which is being once again under another guise.

Unfortunately, I do not find Wojtyla making this connection between willer of the good and dignity nor the connection between intellector of being and dignity, though he is aware of both characterizations of the human person. Yet such connections would go a long way to explain why we should pursue an ethics of perfectionism. In regard to such an ethics in both Aristotle and Aquinas, Wojtyla emphasizes the understanding of the good as what perfects and is suitable to the nature of the thing. But if the thing is ourselves, then a more basic issue is why we should treasure and cherish ourselves. In my opinion, the heightened presence of the *ratio entis* in the activities of intellection and will-

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

ing speaks to this issue. In short, goodness as a formal cause presupposes goodness as a final cause, goodness as a point of attraction. The above two understandings of the human person convey enough luster to the human such that practical reason can then formulate a command to be respectful and solicitous.

Conclusion

To sum up, both Kant and Aquinas ground human dignity upon human freedom. But both understand the human freedom differently. For Kant, human freedom is self-legislating and so exercised without rational direction. I argued that this conception of the will shuts down the ethical project because the will is so autonomous that any legislating is only a charade. Moral necessity, or obligation, disappears. Wojtyla argued that Kant's conception of the will makes the will so autonomous that it becomes completely noumenal and so ceases to be something experiential. Nevertheless, Wojtyla also notes that experiential psychology continues to find the will active and causal *contra* Kant's insistence that in the experiential order the will is motive saturated. In contrast to Kant, Aquinas understands human freedom to be self-determining. By "self-determining" I mean acting from one's consent. The Thomistic notion of freedom is compatible with rational direction. The direction consists, for example, in the human understood as an intellector of being or as a willer of the good, though neither seem to be exploited by Wojtyla.



KANTIANISM AND THOMISTIC PERSONALISM ON THE HUMAN PERSON: SELF-LEGISLATOR OR SELF-DETERMINER?

SUMMARY

Inspired by a discussion about whether John Paul II grounded human dignity in a Kantian way, viz., emphasizing the person as an end unto itself, the author considers: (1) the relations between Kant and Aquinas on the topic of the philosophical basis of human dignity, and (2) John Paul II's remarks on Kant's ethics. He concludes that: (1) both Kant and Aquinas ground human dignity upon human freedom, but both understand the human freedom differently; (2) for Kant, human freedom is self-legislating and so exercised without rational direction; (3) the Thomistic notion of freedom is compatible with rational direction which consists, e.g., in the human understood as an intellector of being or as a willer of the good, though neither seem to be exploited by Wojtyła.

KEYWORDS

person, dignity, self-legislator, self-determiner, intellector of being, willer of the good, ethics, freedom, rationality, reason, will, Immanuel Kant, Thomas Aquinas, John Paul II, Karol Wojtyła.

REFERENCES

- Aquinas, Thomas. *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate*: Question I, translated by Robert W. Mulligan, S.J. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952; Questions XXI, translated by Robert W. Schmidt, S.J. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954. Accessible at: <https://dhspriority.org/thomas/QDdeVer.htm>. Accessed on Feb. 25, 2018.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, translated by Vernon J. Bourke. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1975.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae*. Second and Revised Edition, 1920. Literally translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Online Edition Copyright © 2017 by Kevin Knight, accessible at: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>. Accessed on Feb. 25, 2018.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Mary Gregor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Knasas, John F. X. *Being and Some Twentieth-Century Thomists*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2003.
- Knasas, John F. X. "Kant and Aquinas on the Grounds of Moral Necessity." In *Atti del Congresso Internazionale su «L'Umanesimo Cristiano nel III Millennio. La Prospettiva di Tommaso d'Aquino»*, Vol. II, 748–53. Vatican City 2005.
- Wojtyła, Karol. "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M., 3–22. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyła, Karol. "The Problem of the Separation of Experience from the Act in Ethics." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M., 23–44. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

Wojtyla, Karol. "In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M., 45–56. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

CATHERINE PETERS

PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN THE THOMISTIC ACCOUNT OF NATURAL LAW*

The purpose of this paper is to draw attention to certain personalist implications in the Thomistic definition of natural law as “nothing else than the rational creature’s participation of the eternal law.”¹ While Aquinas himself does not invoke the concept of person in his account of natural law, I argue that participation can and should be understood as a personal act. Justification for this interpretation is found in the commonality of rationality: that which both makes a substance to be a person and renders the participation of man in the eternal law to be a truly natural *law*. Taking these Thomistic concepts as foundational, Karol Wojtyła would later unify these discrete accounts within his formulation of “Thomistic personalism.”²

CATHERINE PETERS — University of St. Thomas, Houston, TX, USA

e-mail: peterscj@stthom.edu • ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3479-9140>

* This article is a revised version of the conference paper originally presented at the Satellite Session of the Society for Thomistic Personalism during the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in Boston, MA, USA.

¹ *S.Th.* I–II, q. 91, a. 2c: “[L]ex naturalis nihil aliud est quam participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura.” All the *S.Th.* quotations come from: *S. Thomae Aquinatis Doctoris Angelici Opera Omnia* (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1882–).

² The essays of Karol Wojtyła that I refer to throughout this paper can be found in his *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, O.S.M. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993). Hereafter cited as *Person and Community*.

There are, however, initial difficulties for the approach of Thomistic personalism, which Wojtyła himself acknowledged and answered. He begins by noting that personalism as a movement arose after Thomas and that it is concerned with predominantly modern problems.³ There is also a seeming incongruity in formulating a *philosophical* Thomistic personalism because Thomas' own treatment of person is largely found within a theological context.⁴ Seeking to explain in some part the mystery of the Trinity, he sought a clear definition of *person* that could be applied to both creatures and God.⁵ In answering both of these objections, Wojtyła grants that Thomas was primarily concerned with the *concept* of person rather than the *problem* of the person. But he nonetheless sees Thomas' account as providing a solution to the *problem* by examining the *concept*. In this way Thomistic personalism rises from theological concerns but has philosophical relevance. Despite the lack of an explicit treatment of personalist problems, then, Wojtyła holds that Thomas' philosophy and theology "allows us to speak of Thomistic personalism."⁶ This same reasoning, I argue, justifies speaking of natural law as a personal participation.⁷

³ Karol Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," in *Person and Community*, 165.

⁴ Indeed, Wojtyła acknowledges that "we encounter *persona* mainly in his treatises on the Trinity and Incarnation, whereas it is all but absent from his treatises on the human being." *Ibid.*, 166.

⁵ As Wojtyła explains, the early theologians recognized that "what was especially needed was a conception of person and an understanding of the relation that occurs between person and nature." *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 165. Williams explains that "the term 'Thomistic personalism,' where the Thomistic element serves as a modifier of the substantive 'personalism' (as opposed to 'Personalistic Thomism,' which would take its place alongside the many schools of Thomist thought), the emphasis clearly falls on the personalistic nucleus of this current. Yet the Thomistic component is hardly extraneous. With his rigorous metaphysics and clear theological-philosophical anthropology, Aquinas provided fertile soil in which personalistic theory could take root, avoiding the subjectivist drift to which other personalisms were prone." Thomas D. Williams, "What is Thomistic Personalism?," *Alpha Omega* 7, no. 2 (2004): 166.

Personalism for Wojtyła is largely a practical and ethical concern. This means that he employs speculative concepts (e.g., “person” and “nature”) primarily with an aim to action.⁸ But he is keenly aware that lacking a correct understanding of who the human *is* leads to a deficient account of what he or she *should do*. Wojtyła recognizes the importance of understanding nature metaphysically in his account of natural law and attributes the supposed conflicts between person and law to a fundamental misunderstanding of these concepts. Both nature and person must, he holds, be understood in terms of what a human essentially is, an account of the person that includes but does not reduce to consciousness alone.⁹ Wary of the danger in over-emphasizing consciousness, Wojtyła retains and supplements Thomas’ objective accounts of person, nature (and, later, law) to guard against a modern tendency to take consciousness as synonymous with and exhaustive of person (a move he sees as eventually severing the unity of man).¹⁰

⁷ As Janet Smith explains, Wojtyła “makes it clear that his anthropology and ethics are in no way incompatible with Thomism and indeed depend upon Thomistic metaphysics.” Janet E. Smith, “Natural Law and Personalism in *Veritatis Splendor*,” in *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, ed. Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 68. See Williams, “What is Thomistic Personalism?,” 164: although “personalism” in its broadest sense can refer to “any school of thought or intellectual movement that focuses on the reality of the person (human, angelic, divine) and on his unique dignity, insisting on the radical distinction between persons and all other beings (non-persons).” In this paper, I use “personalism” to refer to the philosophical approach formulated by Wojtyła, one that certainly fits this general characterization.

⁸ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 165.

⁹ See Wojtyła, “The Human Person and Natural Law,” in *Person and Community*, 181–182: “We in the Thomistic school, the school of ‘perennial philosophy,’ are accustomed to primarily or exclusively one meaning—nature in the metaphysical sense, which is more or less equivalent to the essence of a thing taken as the basis of all the actualization of the thing.”

¹⁰ See Paul Kucharski, “Pope John Paul II and the Natural Law,” in *Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophical Legacy*, ed. Nancy Mardas Billias, Agnes B. Curry, and George F. McLean (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), 119: “Despite John Paul’s introduction of personalistic principles as a means of

“Nature” and “person” are foundational concepts in Wojtyła’s account of natural law and he views the apparent opposition between person and law as resulting from a misunderstanding of the two. As he states,

I would now like to show the extent to which this conflict, which is so widespread and spontaneous, is an illusory conflict. To do so, I shall have to examine a very basic and elementary concept, the concept of nature, and its relation to the concept of person.¹¹

Wojtyła immediately explains that he investigates nature and person not as “concepts for their own sake, but as signs of reality.”¹² This is because, again, his primary concern is practical and ethical, not speculative.¹³ A mistaken view of nature erodes the foundations of Thomas’ entire account of person and natural law and this is precisely the problem that launches Wojtyła’s own essay on “The Human Person and Natural Law.”

The Boethian definition of person accepted by Aquinas and later adopted by Wojtyła is of the person as “an individual substance of a rational nature.”¹⁴ Thomas parses this definition into “individual substance,” which signifies the singular within the genus of substance, and “rational nature.” This restricts the definition to *rational* substances,

supplementing a traditional Thomistic account of the person, we must always keep in mind that he acknowledges Aquinas’s understanding of the person as valid and necessary. In fact, John Paul’s personalism relies on a metaphysics or philosophy of being so as not to fall into the same dualistic error as Descartes and other modern philosophers.”

¹¹ Wojtyła, “The Human Person and Natural Law,” 181.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ As Smith reminds us, the metaphysical analysis of “person” is secondary for Wojtyła: “A metaphysical analysis would lead one to see that man is capable of being self-determining because he is a person, that is because he is rational and free, but for Wojtyła this metaphysical analysis is of secondary interest.” Smith, “Natural Law and Personalism in *Veritatis Splendor*,” 75.

¹⁴ *S.Th.* I, q. 29, a. 1, obj. 1: “[D]efinitio personae quam Boetius assignat in libro de duabus naturis, quae talis est, *persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia*.”

those which are properly *persons*.¹⁵ Yet, the objection can be raised that individuals are indefinable and that the inclusion of “individual” within this definition is mistaken. By “individual,” though, Thomas does not mean a particular individual human being but rather what belongs to “the general idea of singularity.”¹⁶ In other words, this definition is not of an individual person but rather the particular elements needed for an individual to be constituted. The Thomistic treatment on the human being emphasizes hylomorphism, viewing the human being as a composite of matter (the body) and form (the soul).¹⁷ This is implicitly a personal understanding of the human, though, because the soul is the substantial form of the human and, because this form is rational, he or she is personal.¹⁸

The modern tendency to divide the person into body and consciousness does not view the soul as the form of the human being and first principle of his or her activities but rather as a substance unto itself. This over-emphasis on consciousness, Wojtyła warns, leads to a view of the person as “merely a certain property of lived experiences” which is distinguished from other conscious beings only by his or her

¹⁵ *S.Th.* I, q. 29, a. 1c: “Et ideo etiam inter ceteras substantias quoddam speciale nomen habent singularia rationalis naturae. Et hoc nomen est persona. Et ideo in praedicta definitione personae ponitur substantia individua, inquantum significat singulare in genere substantiae, additur autem rationalis naturae, inquantum significat singulare in rationalibus substantiis.”

¹⁶ *S.Th.* I, q. 29, a. 1, ad 1: “Ad primum ergo dicendum quod, licet hoc singulare vel illud definiri non possit, tamen id quod pertinet ad communem rationem singularitatis, definiri potest, et sic philosophus definit substantiam primam. Et hoc modo definit Boetius personam.”

¹⁷ E.g., in *S.Th.* I, qq. 75–76.

¹⁸ Wojtyła notes that the human person differs from other persons (divine or angelic) because the rational soul informs a body. For this reason, the soul has “in addition to spiritual faculties, faculties that are intrinsically dependent on matter.” Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 168. As Wojtyła continues, the activities of the human soul are performed through its powers, both spiritual and material, which “contribute in their own way to the shaping of the psychological and moral personality.” *Ibid.*, 168–169.

own self-consciousness.¹⁹ This splits man into his consciousness and materiality and the problem then becomes how one can put him back together again. This is a radical departure from Thomas, who viewed consciousness as a consequence of man's rational nature, not constitutive of it.²⁰ While this split is rejected by Wojtyła, he is nonetheless keenly aware of the importance of accounting for the subjective aspect of the person. Indeed, he regards Thomas' objectivism of the human person as seemingly leaving little room for an analysis of consciousness.²¹ In Thomism, though, he finds the tools needed to repair the modern split. Thus he adopts and draws out personalist elements within Thomas' accounts, presenting the concepts of person and nature in Thomistic personalism and then showing their application to law in "The Human Person and Natural Law."

For both Aquinas and Wojtyła the natural law is a rational participation in eternal law. This participation is focused practically on doing good and avoiding evil. This practical aspect of natural law appeals, in particular, to Wojtyła the personalist who adopts Thomas' account while drawing greater attention to the role of the person. The participation of natural law is realized through natural inclinations that are con-

¹⁹ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 170.

²⁰ Williams nicely summarizes these issues: "Thomas's objectivistic view of the person and his faculties explains how the person is able to act as he does. A purely subjectivistic approach to personhood, so characteristic of modern philosophy, risks losing the objective base which makes human subjectivity and lived experience possible. This is where a broader personalism, and particularly Thomistic personalism, ensconced as it is in an objective metaphysics, offers surer footing for anthropology and ethics than a strict personalism that endeavors to reinvent metaphysics on the basis of man's self-consciousness. For Thomas, consciousness and self-consciousness derive from the rational nature that subsists in the person, and are not subsistent in themselves. Thus, as Wojtyła notes, consciousness and self-consciousness characterize the person, then they do so only in the accidental order, as derived from the rational nature on the basis of which the person acts." Williams, "What is Thomistic Personalism?," 176–177.

²¹ See Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 170: "that in which the person's subjectivity is most apparent is presented by St. Thomas in an exclusively—or almost exclusively—objective way."

comitant with man's rational nature. As Thomas explains, "all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, namely insofar as from their being impressed on them, they have their inclinations to their proper acts and ends."²² In the case of man, there is a natural inclination by which he is ordered to a share in divine reason.

All creatures participate in a being that is existence itself, God, and this participation entails taking part in the order of providence.²³ In this way, participation is understood by Thomas not only as a taking part in existence but also thereby a sharing in the order of divine providence.²⁴ Participation is understood generally by Thomas, then, and is particularly used within his definition of natural law as a kind of taking part in both existence and providence. Yet, though all existents participate in the perfection of God, only the rational creature's participation is properly called a law. This is because natural law can only be truly law if it pertains to reason.²⁵ The participation of non-rational beings is

²² *S.Th.* I–II, q. 91, a. 2c: "[M]anifestum est quod omnia participant aliquantulum legem aeternam, in quantum scilicet ex impressione eius habent inclinationes in proprios actus et fines."

²³ *S.Th.* I, q. 22, a. 2c: "[C]um enim omne agens agat propter finem, tantum se extendit ordinatio effectuum in finem, quantum se extendit causalitas primi agentis."

²⁴ *S.Th.* I, q. 22, a. 2c: "Cum ergo nihil aliud sit Dei providentia quam ratio ordinis rerum in finem, ut dictum est, necesse est omnia, in quantum participant esse, intantum subdi divinae providentiae."

²⁵ *S.Th.* I–II, q. 91, a. 2, ad 3: "Sed quia rationalis creatura participat eam intellectualiter et rationaliter, ideo participatio legis aeternae in creatura rationali proprie lex vocatur: nam lex est aliquid rationis, ut supra dictum est." To show the importance of natural law in John Paul II's *Veritatis Splendor* is beyond the scope of this study, but here there is a particularly strong tie between John Paul II / Wojtyła and Thomas' account: "In this way God calls man to participate in his own providence, since he desires to guide the world—not only the world of nature but also the world of human persons—through man himself, through man's reasonable and responsible care. The natural law enters here as the human expression of God's eternal law. Saint Thomas writes: 'Among all others, the rational creature is subject to divine providence in the most excellent way, insofar as it partakes of a share of providence, being provident both for itself and for others. Thus it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end. This participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is

a similitude of the natural law.²⁶ The lack of rationality omits an essential element of law and, therefore, non-rational participation is not, properly speaking, a law. Understanding man as a rational animal means that natural law is truly natural to him because it is through the inclinations of his nature that man participates in the eternal law. Central to Thomas' account of natural law, then, is the meaning of participation and nature. Man as a rational being, according to Wojtyła, fulfills his nature precisely through his rational participation in eternal law.²⁷ Understood in this way, participating in eternal law is not an external imposition but an activity fully in accord with man's nature.

To support his claim that the supposed conflict between person and law can be quelled, Wojtyła turns to the concept of nature and outlines two possible conceptions. He identifies one as the "Thomistic" or "traditional" understanding of nature wherein "the essence of a thing [is] taken as the basis of all actualization." As he explains, the word "all" is extremely important because it allows one to view nature in the metaphysical sense of being integrated into the person:

Boethius, and the whole Thomistic school after him, defined the person in the following way: *persona est rationalis naturae indi-*

called natural law.'" John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor* (Rome 1993), #43, accessible at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html.

²⁶ *S.Th.* I-II, q. 91, a. 2, ad 3: "[E]tiam animalia irrationalia participant rationem aeternam suo modo, sicut et rationalis creatura. Sed quia rationalis creatura participat eam intellectualiter et rationaliter, ideo participatio legis aeternae in creatura rationali proprie lex vocatur: nam lex est aliquid rationis. . . . In creatura autem irrationali non participatur rationaliter: unde non potest dici lex nisi per similitudinem." See also *S.Th.* I-II, q. 93, a. 5c: "Unde alio modo creaturae irrationales subduntur legi aeternae, in quantum moventur a divina providentia, non autem per intellectum divini praecepti, sicut creaturae rationales."

²⁷ *S.Th.* I-II, q. 91, a. 2, ad 2: "[O]mnis operatio, rationis et voluntatis derivatur in nobis ab eo quod est secundum naturam, ut supra habitum est: nam omnis ratiocinatio derivatur a principiis naturaliter notis, et omnis appetitus eorum quae sunt ad finem, derivatur a naturali appetitu ultimi finis. Et sic etiam oportet quod prima directio actuum nostrorum ad finem, fiat per legem naturalem."

vidua substantiae. Nature in this sense is integrated in the person.²⁸

This is the view he advocates, in preference to the alternative view that restricts nature to the subject of activity, not its source. The reduction of person that he rejects loses the person as the cause of actions and, he warns,

nature in this sense excludes the person as an acting subject, as the author of action, because nature in this sense points to a thing's being actualized, and to its being actualized in a ready-made sense, without the efficient involvement of anyone—any subject who is a person.²⁹

In advocating the metaphysical understanding of nature, Wojtyła follows Aquinas and explains that this metaphysical understanding of nature integrates it into the person. He holds that, with the distinctions drawn between a reductive and metaphysical view of nature, “we are perhaps within a step of asserting that this conflict is an illusory conflict, for it exists only between person and nature understood in a certain way.”³⁰

Yet, Wojtyła nonetheless worries that the apparent objectivity of Thomas' account of person and natural law could render it less equipped to directly address modern concerns with consciousness and subjectivity. Although the definition of person qualified the personal

²⁸ Wojtyła, “The Human Person and Natural Law,” 182.

²⁹ *Ibid.* See also: The conflict between person and nature arises when human nature is seen merely as the subject of acts, not their source. As he explains, “the conflict between person and nature appears only when we understand nature in the sense in which the phenomenologists understand it, namely, as the subject of instinctive actualization, as the subject of what merely happens.” Wojtyła, “The Human Person and Natural Law,” 182. See also Kucharski, “Pope John Paul II and the Natural Law,” 112: “According to John Paul, the phenomenological understanding of nature leads to a conception of human nature which is completely reducible to the biological, to the human body and its make-up and processes.”

³⁰ Wojtyła, “The Human Person and Natural Law,” 182.

substance as *individual*, Thomas explains that this is not to be taken as referring to this or that singular human being. This is because the singular cannot be properly defined and in this account he is directly concerned with formulating a proper *definition* of the person. Thus the definition concerns “what belongs to the general idea of singularity.” This leads Wojtyła to note that

when it comes to analyzing consciousness and self-consciousness—which is what chiefly interested modern philosophy and psychology—there seems to be no place for it in St. Thomas’ objectivistic view of reality. In any case, that in which the person’s subjectivity is most apparent is presented in an exclusively—or almost exclusively—objective way.³¹

Yet, this *problem* of the person can only be resolved by invoking the *concept* of person expounded by Thomas. As he continues, “St. Thomas gives us an excellent view of the objective existence and activity of the person.” Wojtyła nonetheless recognizes that the *concept* must be adapted to this problem.³²

While consciousness does not constitute the essence of the person, Wojtyła views it as essentially following man’s rational essence.³³ This emphasis on consciousness is characteristic of Wojtyła’s personalist development of Thomism. Indeed, as Janet Smith notes, this is where he begins to build on the Thomistic foundation, doing so as an architect keenly aware of modern concerns. As she explains, Wojtyła “shares the modern interest in consciousness and self-consciousness, though he does not share the modern view that the person *is* consciousness” and in this way “he uses an analysis of consciousness to unfold

³¹ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 170.

³² Indeed, Wojtyła goes so far as to suggest that “it would be difficult to speak in [Thomas’] view of the lived experiences of the persons.” *Ibid.*, 170–171.

³³ See *Ibid.*, esp. section 4: “The Relation of the Objective Element (Being) to the Subjective Element (Consciousness).”

his notion of man as being free and self-determining.”³⁴ The conscious and free activity of man constitutes morality, the practice of which, Wojtyła holds, is the most distinctive act of the human person, one that allows him to realize his nature.³⁵

This metaphysical understanding of person leads to an understanding of natural law as a participation consisting essentially of the person rationally—and consequently personally—acting in accord with eternal law. Natural law thus understood is not in conflict with the person but rather manifests a correspondence between them, one grounded essentially in rationality. His account of natural law addresses the practical concerns of personalism because this participation is effected through acts. For Wojtyła, merely knowing the good is obviously not sufficient because while morality “presupposes knowledge, the truth concerning the good,” it must be “realized by willing, by choice, by decision.”³⁶ The dependence of morality on knowledge and its connection to freedom evidences the unique nature and activity of the person. Through man’s free actions which as rational acts are also moral, we can come to an understanding of his nature, their source and cause.³⁷

³⁴ Smith, “Natural Law and Personalism in *Veritatis Splendor*,” 74.

³⁵ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 172: “that which is most characteristic of a person, that in which a person (at least in the natural order) is most fully and properly realized, is morality.”

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Wojtyła further sees in this understanding of “nature” the foundation for defending human dignity, though to explore this claim is beyond the scope of this study. See Karol Wojtyła, “On the Dignity of the Human Person,” in *Person and Community*, 178: “the constant confrontation of our own being with nature leads us to the threshold of understanding the person and the dignity of the person. We must, however, go beyond this threshold and seek the basis of this dignity within the human being. When we speak of the human person, we are not just thinking of superiority, which involves a relation to other creatures, but we are thinking above all of what—or rather *who*—the human being essentially is. Who the human being is derives primarily from within that being. All externalizations—activity and creativity, works and products—have here their origin and their cause.” Williams explores this connection. See esp. Williams, “What is Thomistic Personalism?,” 176 ff: “Indeed, man’s dignity is rooted in his rational nature,

The causal relationship of the natural law to the eternal law is also seen in Wojtyła's account of person. Reflection on person in the created order, he holds, allows access to some understanding of the divine persons, though Wojtyła hastens to note that "person" in this case "must be realized in an incomparably more perfect degree in God."³⁸ There is nonetheless a true analogy between human and divine person. Recognizing the human as a person draws us to an understanding of God as personal; natural participation likewise introduces, as Wojtyła explains, "an encounter with the divine source of law" because "it involves participation in the eternal law, which is in some sense identical with God, the divine reason."³⁹ Personal participation in this way introduces "an encounter with the divine source of law. . . . [I]t involves participation in the eternal law, which is in some sense identical with God, the divine reason."⁴⁰ This hearkens back at the same time, then, to the originally theological context for Thomas' account of person. Indeed, while maintaining that personalism is philosophical, Wojtyła grants that the supernatural perspective of the person "also ultimately explains everything that, when viewed in the light of reason

which separates him from the rest of visible creation and wherein chiefly lies his resemblance to God. No matter what other elements are emphasized—the person's freedom, his creativity, his action, his self-consciousness, his interiority, his sociability, and so forth—they all have their objective base in an intellectual, and thus a spiritual, nature. According to Thomistic theology and philosophy, the distinguishing characteristic of the person is precisely his rational nature from which his unique dignity derives, and this essential tenet distinguishes Thomistic personalism from other personalist schools." He will later claim that "Dignity, an attribute of the person denoting both excellence and worth, bridges the gap between metaphysics and ethics. In the case of persons, an 'is' really does produce an 'ought.' The ontological superiority of persons over things, makes persons worthy (*dignæ*) of special regard. Persons must be treated in a way consonant with their nature as free subjects of action." *Ibid.*, 191.

³⁸ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 166.

³⁹ Wojtyła, "The Human Person and Natural Law," 184.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

alone, must remain a deep and impenetrable mystery of human existence.”⁴¹

Both Thomas and Wojtyła go so far as to hold that person understood as a rational subsistence is the *most perfect* being. This is because, as Thomas explains, the rationality of person signifies what is most perfect in nature.⁴² Seeing person in the created order allows access to some understanding of the divine persons. Wojtyła thereby maintains that a natural—that is, philosophical—investigation into God understood as person is possible, while ceding Trinitarian speculation to revelation. In the general Thomistic method of advancing from what is more known to us to what is more intelligible in itself, knowledge of human persons lays a foundation for a conception of God as personal. While the latter “has its entire basis in revelation,” the former “is the product of philosophical reflection, based on an analysis of the reality accessible to human reason itself.”⁴³

Wojtyła’s personalism is grounded in metaphysical realism and emphasizes the person’s unique place in reality as a rational being.⁴⁴ These are points he adopts directly from Thomas and does not repudiate. Natural law as the rational participation in eternal law and the metaphysical understanding of the person as essentially rational, I suggest, show that there is warrant in Thomas’ account to characterize this par-

⁴¹ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 175.

⁴² *S.Th.* I, q. 29, a. 3c: “[P]ersona significat id quod est perfectissimum in tota natura, scilicet subsistens in rationali natura. Unde, cum omne illud quod est perfectionis, Deo sit attribuendum, eo quod eius essentia continet in se omnem perfectionem; conveniens est ut hoc nomen persona de Deo dicatur. Non tamen eodem modo quo dicitur de creaturis, sed excellentiori modo; sicut et alia nomina quae, creaturis a nobis imposita, Deo attribuuntur; sicut supra ostensum est, cum de divinis nominibus ageretur.”

⁴³ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 167.

⁴⁴ See Williams, “What is Thomistic Personalism?,” 184: “*Subjectivity is, then, a kind of synonym for the irreducible in the human being.* Grounded as it is in metaphysical realism, Thomistic personalism posits the essential difference between man and all other objects on man’s ability to reason.” Emphasis in original.

ticipation as personal. By recognizing participation as essentially personal, Thomism is able to speak to the modern concern with subjectivity while not losing the objectivity of natural law. The supposed conflict between natural law and person arises from a mistaken view of the person, reducing nature to the material subject of activity and identifying the person with consciousness alone. Wojtyła's personalist response recognizes the person as a rational subsistence and nature as the cause and source of human actualization. The solution to the supposed conflict between nature and law depends on a clear understanding of the nature of man. Only then can one understand the natural law as a free and personal participation.

In this study, I have shown how participation serves as a focal point of a Thomistic personalist account of natural law. While Aquinas and Wojtyła do not employ the exact formula of "personal participation," common to both is their recognition of the essential connections between the person and natural law and, on the part of Wojtyła, his dependence on the Thomistic metaphysical account of nature. Wojtyła holds that lying at the heart of modern rejections of natural law is a mistaken view of the human being. Returning to the metaphysical understanding of nature and person formulated by Aquinas, Wojtyła shows how this conflict can be resolved without forsaking either consciousness or objectivity.⁴⁵ Personal participation thus can and should be understood as a central element in Thomistic personalism. Therein is found an essential link between the perennial and personal accounts of natural law. In this way, Wojtyła shows how Thomistic concepts are capable of countering even objections not raised to Aquinas himself

⁴⁵ As Smith expresses these connections, "man's rational nature, which defines his personhood, intimately links man with the 'ordinance of reason' that defines natural law" and thus the person naturally participates "in God's reason. With a proper understanding of nature, there should be no conflict between natural law and personalism." Smith, "Natural Law and Personalism in *Veritatis Splendor*," 71.

and in this way the personalist Thomistic account of the natural law is truly perennial.⁴⁶



PERSONAL PARTICIPATION IN THE THOMISTIC ACCOUNT OF NATURAL LAW

SUMMARY

The author seeks to show how participation serves as a focal point of a Thomistic personalist account of natural law. While Aquinas himself does not invoke the concept of person in his account of natural law, the author argues that participation can and should be understood as a personal act. According to her, justification for this interpretation is found in the commonality of rationality: that which both makes a substance to be a person and renders the participation of man in the eternal law to be a truly natural law.

KEYWORDS

Thomas Aquinas, Karol Wojtyła, John Paul II, human being, person, personalism, Thomistic personalism, participation, natural law, nature, metaphysics, modern philosophy, consciousness.

REFERENCES

- John Paul II. *Veritatis Splendor*. Rome 1993. Accessible at:
http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html. Accessed on March 20, 2018.
- Kucharski, Paul. "Pope John Paul II and the Natural Law." In *Karol Wojtyła's Philosophical Legacy*, edited by Nancy Mardas Billias, Agnes B. Curry, and George F. McLean, 111–24. Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008.
- S. *Thomae Aquinatis Doctoris Angelici Opera Omnia*. Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1882–.
- Smith, Janet E. "Natural Law and Personalism in *Veritatis Splendor*." In *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, edited by Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, S.J., 67–84. New York: Paulist Press, 1998.
- Williams, Thomas D. "What is Thomistic Personalism?" *Alpha Omega* 7, no. 2 (2004): 163–97.

⁴⁶ The present work arose from a seminar class on the philosophical thought of Karol Wojtyła led by John P. Hittinger at the Center for Thomistic Studies at the University of St. Thomas (Houston, TX, USA).

- Wojtyla, Karol. "Thomistic Personalism." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M., 165–75. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "On the Dignity of the Human Person." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M., 177–80. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "The Human Person and Natural Law." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M., 181–85. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

SUSAN C. SELNER-WRIGHT

THOMISTIC PERSONALISM AND CREATION METAPHYSICS: PERSONHOOD VS. HUMANITY AND ONTOLOGICAL VS. ETHICAL DIGNITY*

There is a remarkable coincidence between Thomistic personalism and the thought of W. Norris Clarke, S.J., confirmed by the latter's trajectory pointing precisely in the former's direction.

The collection of Fr. Clarke's essays published in 2009 by Fordham University Press under the title *The Creative Retrieval of St. Thomas Aquinas* includes four that were not otherwise published in his lifetime.¹ The first of these I had the privilege to hear when he first delivered it in 2002 at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver. It is titled "The Immediate Creation of the Human Soul by God and Some Contemporary Challenges."² Fr. Clarke told his audience that he had chosen this topic because he thought the immediate creation of the human soul had lost its place in basic catechesis of the faithful, with very serious consequences for our ability to understand the Church's

SUSAN C. SELNER-WRIGHT — St. John Vianney Theological Seminary, Denver, CO, USA
e-mail: susan.selner-wright@archden.org • ORCID ID: no data

* This article is a revised version of the conference paper originally presented at the Satellite Session of the Society for Thomistic Personalism during the 2009 Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in New Orleans, LA, USA.

¹ W. Norris Clarke, S.J., *The Creative Retrieval of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009). Hereafter cited as: *Creative Retrieval*.

² *Ibid.*, 173–190.

teaching in some critically pressing areas. He believed the topic needed to be revived as a philosophical focus in the education of Catholic priests in order to address the confusion generated by this lacuna.

Earlier, in 2001, Fr. Clarke's metaphysics text book, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* came out from the University of Notre Dame Press.³ That book serves as the metaphysical counterpart to the *summa* of Clarke's anthropology, captured in his Aquinas Lecture, *Person and Being*, given in 1993 and published that year by Marquette University Press.⁴

Read together, these two books ground Clarke's claim that metaphysics ultimately culminates in what he calls a "Person-to-person" vision of the source and meaning of reality. The final essay in the new Fordham collection confirms this: it is titled "The Integration of Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics in Twenty-First-Century Thomism." In this essay, Fr. Clarke gives "marching orders" to those of us who have learned so much from him. The task:

to uncover the personalist dimension lying implicit within the fuller understanding of the very meaning and structure of the metaphysics of being itself, not hitherto explicit in either the metaphysical or personalist traditions themselves.⁵

I intend this paper to take a first few steps in my part of this march. And, since Fr. Clarke also recommends to us the work of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, I'd like to begin with an intriguing distinction drawn

³ W. Norris Clarke, S.J., *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001).

⁴ W. Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1993).

⁵ W. Norris Clarke, S.J., "The Integration of Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics in Twenty-First-Century Thomism," in *Creative Retrieval*, 231.

by him, namely, the distinction between a human being's personhood and his humanity.⁶

Personhood vs. Humanity

Some views of the human being are rooted ultimately in a form of essentialism, a focus on the human individual as a member of the human species, a one among many. But the defining note of personhood is uniqueness, irreplaceability, irreducibility, incommunicability. There are many human beings but there is only one Socrates, and to adequately understand Socrates we cannot simply see him as an instance of the human. Gabriel Marcel offers an analogy to the experience of encountering an unfamiliar flower. If we ask "What is this flower?," we might receive a scientific answer identifying the botanical family, genus and species to which this flower belongs. That is, we might receive an answer in terms of the many to which this one belongs. But, Marcel observes, this

scientific answer, which enables me to classify the flower, is not an exhaustive answer; in fact in a certain sense it is no answer at all; it is even an evasion. By that I mean that it disregards the singularity of this particular flower. What has actually happened is as though my question had been interpreted as follows—"to what thing other than itself, can this flower itself be reduced?"⁷

Wojtyla's personalism applies this existentialist twist to our view of the human being, spotlighting the human person as an individual existent first and a member of the human species second. This is not to

⁶ Cf. Karol Wojtyla, "Participation or Alienation?," in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, O.S.M. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 201 (the book hereafter cited as: *Person and Community*); and Karol Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," in *Person and Community*, 237.

⁷ Gabriel Marcel, *Faith and Reality, The Mystery of Being*, Vol. II, trans. René Hague (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1951), 13.

make any kind of chronological or developmental claim—but it is a metaphysical claim which is of central import to our ethics and anthropology.

I think this existential insight is the basis for what Thomas Williams describes as personalism's "new take on Thomas's hierarchy of being."⁸ St. Thomas' signature distinction between *esse* and essence is rooted in his perspective on the creature precisely as *from* the Creator. This leads to a view of the hierarchy of being that draws its brightest line between Creator and creature and sees all creatures in terms of their place along the "ontological continuum" of created being. Thus, Williams says, we are encouraged to "focus on man's place among created beings," and to define the human being as Aristotle does, in terms of the specific difference between the human being and all the rest of material creation.

But if our understanding of the individual human being is limited to its definition as rational animal, we have made precisely the error Marcel was talking about with the flower. We have reduced this one, this uniquely existing creature, to the many with whom it shares this characteristic. I think this is what Wojtyla is getting at in the contrast he draws between "underst[anding] the human being as an *animal* with the distinguishing feature of reason" and, on the other hand, "*a belief in the primordial uniqueness of the human being, and thus in the basic irreducibility of the human being . . . which stands at the basis of understanding the human being as a person . . .*"⁹

Personalism, while maintaining the radical distinction between Creator and creature in the hierarchy of being, invites us to draw a second bright line between persons and non-persons, thereby encouraging

⁸ Thomas D. Williams, *Who Is My Neighbor?* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 125.

⁹ Karol Wojtyla, "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being," in *Person and Community*, 211.

us to see the human being not primarily in terms of what distinguishes us from lower animals, but in terms of what we have in common with the Creator-Person(s) and with created-angelic-persons. It is our status as persons, not our membership in a species, which grounds our dignity as unique and therefore irreplaceable, non-substitutable, beings. It is our status as persons which allows what Wojtyla calls “participation,” our capacity to recognize another human being as “neighbor” and not merely as another instance of the human,¹⁰ to recognize the other as an “I” who ought to be treated as a “thou.”¹¹

Williams’ claim amounts to saying that Thomas’ view of the human niche in the hierarchy of being is too informed with Aristotelian essentialism and needs to be enriched with an existential personalism in order to adequately ground human anthropology. That existential personalism itself has roots not in Aristotelian philosophy but in Christian theological reflection culminating in the doctrine of the Trinity as a union of three Persons. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and others argue that through reflection on Christian revelation,

A profound illumination of God as well as man occurs . . . the decisive illumination of what person must mean . . . realized in its entirety only in the one who is God, but which indicates the direction of all personal being.¹²

Historically, theological reflection moves from the doctrine of God as Triune to Christological reflection on the Second Person of the Trinity and from there becomes available for anthropology. But Ratzin-

¹⁰ Wojtyla, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 237; *id.*, “Participation or Alienation?,” 201.

¹¹ Wojtyla, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 241–246, 252.

¹² Joseph Ratzinger, “Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology,” trans. Michael Waldstein, *Communio* 17 (1990): 445. Kenneth Schmitz gives a more detailed discussion of the history of the idea of “person” in his “Geography of the Human Person,” in *The Texture of Being*, ed. P. O’Herron (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 149–159.

ger faults St. Thomas for failing to make that last move. He cites Richard of St. Victor, who in the 12th century defined the person as *spiritualis naturae incommunicabilis existentia*, the uncommunicably proper existence of a spiritual nature. Ratzinger says, "This definition correctly sees that in its theological meaning 'person' does not lie on the level of essence, but of existence."¹³ Later theologians, including Thomas Aquinas, developed this existential view of the person, but, according to Ratzinger, they limited the fruit of this reflection "to Christology and to the doctrine of the Trinity and did not make them fruitful in the whole extent of spiritual reality."¹⁴ In light of Ratzinger's critique, we might formulate the project of Thomistic personalism as a retrieval of the personalistic insight for anthropology in the context of Thomas' own existential metaphysics.¹⁵

Whether or not this critique is fair, and however developed or not Thomas' own thinking on the anthropological implications of personhood, his metaphysics is more than adequate to the task of grounding the features of human personhood philosophically.

First, we must recognize the radical contingency of all finite being, the distinction between essence and existence in all beings with one possible exception. Given that distinction, we can attend to the operations of existing human beings which indicate that they have a share

¹³ Ratzinger, "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," 449.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ I think Fr. Clarke might bristle a bit at this critique and point out Thomas' "insistence that whenever existence is affirmed of individual human beings, such predications are always analogous, because of the uniqueness of the act of existence, and not univocal, as are all predications based on the common nature of members of the same species." W. Norris Clarke, S.J., "The Integration of Person and Being in Twentieth-Century Thomism," *Communio* 31 (2004): 438. Clarke credits Joseph de Finance, S.J., with bringing this to his attention in his article, "Being and Subjectivity," trans. by Clarke, *Cross Currents* 6 (1956): 163–178. In response to the Ratzinger/Williams critique, see especially pp. 165, 170, 174. Cf. *S.C.G.* I, 32, 7; *D.P.* 7, 7, ad 2; also *S.C.G.* I, 42, 12, and *S.C.G.* II, 15, 2.

in existence beyond the merely material mode. Because *operari sequitur esse*, the immateriality of the rational functioning displayed by many human beings allows us to infer that our being, our en-tity, our way of being *entia*, is not merely material, that the sort of composite we are entails a form which is not merely form of matter but which bears an actuality beyond the actualization of material potency. Only thus are we able to account for the human capacity to grasp universals, the orientation of the human will and intellect to the infinite, and our capacity for self consciousness.¹⁶ Thomas argues that these characteristic human activities reveal that the human form is in itself immaterial, spiritual, even as it is also the form of matter. The human soul is peculiar among all other forms of matter in that it owns *esse* in itself and shares it with matter, while all other forms of matter co-own *esse* with their matter and lose *esse* at the same time they lose their matter.

It is this “ownership” of *esse* that the human soul has in common with the rest of the persons in reality, both the created-immaterial-persons we call angels and the Creator-Person(s) we call God. We *are* spiritual beings. Because it is our nature also to be embodied we may be more accustomed to describing ourselves as embodied spirits, but we are fundamentally spirits with a very significant modifier.¹⁷ Because our existence is distinct from our essence, we know that we are *caused* to be what we are, that we receive existence from another. And Thomas forcefully argues that the only mode of causation adequate to account

¹⁶ *S.C.G.* II, 49. Fr. Clarke explains and elaborates these arguments for a contemporary audience in “The Immediate Creation of the Soul by God,” 175–176. For an excellent contemporary discussion of the immateriality of conceptual thought, see Patrick Lee’s “Soul, Body and Personhood,” *The American Journal of Jurisprudence* 49 (2004): 90–97.

¹⁷ Pace Patrick Lee’s insistence on “animalism,” cf. “Soul, Body and Personhood,” 88. He refers us to his “Human Beings are Animals,” in *Natural Law and Moral Inquiry: Ethics, Metaphysics, and Politics in the Work of Germaine Grisez*, ed. R. George (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998), 135–152.

for a caused spiritual being is divine creation, immediate creation by God.¹⁸

The act of creation is an act of utter endowment. There is no pre-existing recipient, already “primed” with its own actuality to receive some modification to its mode of being. Unlike the processes of accidental change and natural generation which surround us and which may come to serve as our paradigms for coming-into-being, creation is not an ingress of “further being” into an already existing thing. Creation is rather the “ingress of a creature into being.”¹⁹ As Thomas notes in the *De potentia*, in creation “God simultaneously gives *esse* and produces that which receives *esse*.”²⁰ And, he insists, “*esse* is not determined by something else as potency by act, but rather as act by potency.”²¹

To understand what it is to create a person, we must focus on the *esse* which has been gifted onto the person as well as the essence, the mode of reception, which has been simultaneously given. This *esse* is in itself unlimited.²² It is true that in creation God necessarily causes a finite being. But in the creation of a person, God causes a finite being whose *esse* is necessary. It is not merely a possible being, something that *is* but has the capacity *not-to-be*. Possible beings are merely possible in virtue of the potency to non-being that is a necessary aspect of the composition of form and matter when form has no actuality beyond actualizing the potency of matter. But, as the Third Way teaches us,

¹⁸ *D.P.* 3, 9; *S.Th.* I, 118, 2; *S.C.G.* III, 86–89. Clarke, “The Immediate Creation of the Soul by God,” 177–179.

¹⁹ Kenneth L. Schmitz, *The Gift: Creation* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1982), 74.

²⁰ *D.P.* 3, 1, ad 17: “Deus simul dans esse producit id quod esse recipit.”

²¹ *Ibid.*, 7, 2, ad 9: “[N]on sic determinatur esse per aliud sicut potentia per actum, sed magis sicut actus per potentiam.”

²² de Finance, “Being and Subjectivity,” 174: “Though limited and distinguished *in itself*—for it is in itself a relation essence—it is not so *by itself*—since it is from the side of essence that its limitation proceeds.”

“between” the utter necessity of the Creator and the possibility of merely possible beings, there is the caused necessity of caused necessary things (the “contingent necessity” of “contingently necessary” things). When Thomas speaks of the caused necessary, he has in mind the separated human soul, the angels, and the celestial heavens, the matter of which he believes has no potency to corruption. If there is no such celestial matter, then our understanding of the caused necessary is limited to the angels and to the soul of the human being, the form which owns the personal existence it shares with its body in this life and will share with its glorified body in the next. The caused necessary is the realm of the created person, the finite being to whom *esse* is granted in a way that is not vouchsafed to the rest of creation.

To summarize this in Aristotelian terms, human operation, which he calls “second act,” is rooted in human form, which Aristotle calls “first act.” But as Thomas repeatedly observes, Aristotle’s first act is, in fact, merely in potency to *esse* itself.²³ When we push what is revealed about human form through human operation we realize that human form itself has been created to own *esse*, to be composed with *esse*, in a way that is proper to no other form of matter. Immaterial operation reveals the immateriality of the human form but that immateriality, in turn, reveals that this form’s composition with *esse* allows that *esse* to retain its necessity.

Thomistic personalism teaches that I am not only a composite of mortal body and immortal soul. I am also a composite of finite essence, Susan-Selner-Wrighthood, and created eternal *esse*. I have been called into being as a being to be sustained in being forever. In creating me, my Creator has not only given me being, He has indissolubly married

²³ Cf. *S.Th.* I, 3, 4. Also, Lawrence Dewan, O.P., “St. Thomas and the Distinction between Form and *Esse* in Caused Things,” *Gregorianum* 80 (1999): 353–370. Wojtyła makes this point and shows its relevance in *The Acting Person*, trans. A. Potocki (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1979), 82–85.

me to it and only He could sunder me from it. This is what puts the “personal” in personal existence—it’s mine. And just as human marriage takes its meaning from the enduring nature of its bond, the enduring “you’re mine” entailed in the “I do,” existence takes on personal meaning precisely in its being given once and for-all-eternity. Its incorruptibility is the “flip-side” of its spirituality and thus of its “personality.”

This line of thought allows us to understand a second extremely important distinction Wojtyla makes: the distinction between the ontological dignity and the ethical dignity of the human person.

Ontological vs. Ethical Dignity

Our ontological dignity is rooted in our very existence as persons, in what unites us with the persons above us on the hierarchy of being. Our ethical dignity, on the other hand, is rooted in our rationality, in what distinguishes us from what is below. Confusion about these two modes of human dignity has led to serious error concerning the status of embryonic human beings as well as disabled born human beings, not to mention the disabled unborn. Thomas’ metaphysics allows us to ground Wojtyla’s claim that “in the ontological sense the human being is a ‘someone’ from the very beginning,” even as we recognize that through human action and self determination “the human being becomes increasingly more of a ‘someone’ in the ethical sense.”²⁴ Thus we are able to argue that the human being has intrinsic personal dignity from the very beginning, regardless of his or her degree of development or capacity to manifest typically human operation, while also explaining the necessity to preserve the political and social space that human beings require in order to act humanly and come into their own as ethi-

²⁴ Karol Wojtyla, “On the Dignity of the Human Person,” in *Person and Community*, 192.

cal agents and achieve ethical dignity. Ethical dignity is an achievement. But personal dignity is a given, given in the giving of personal existence.

This distinction is very important and I'd like to develop it here. Because human beings are created as embodied persons, our personal existence is given to us simultaneous with our "membership" in the human species. It is precisely our embodiment which makes possible our membership in a species and allows us to both image the unity-in-diversity of the Divine Person(s) and cooperate in the generation of other persons in a way that the angelic persons cannot. But another more challenging aspect of our embodiment is the fact that the capacities which are rooted in our personal existence necessarily develop in composition with our bodies, which means that they necessarily develop over time and that material defects will necessarily impact the manifestation of these capacities. Wojtyla says,

from the very beginning the human being is someone who exists and acts, although fully human activity . . . appears only at a certain stage of human development. This is a consequence of the complexity of human nature. The spiritual elements of cognition and consciousness, along with freedom and self-determination, gradually gain mastery over the somatic and rudimentary psychic dimensions of humanity. . . . In this way, . . . the human self gradually both discloses itself and constitutes itself—and it discloses itself also by constituting itself.²⁵

To understand this last sentence as not only poetically apt but also philosophically sound, we must be aware of the distinction between personal or ontological selfhood, on the one hand, and ethical selfhood, on the other. Human activity, activity which is peculiarly characteristic to members of the human species, is merely a sign of personal selfhood. Self-consciousness is merely a manifestation of our existence as spir-

²⁵ Wojtyla, "The Person: Subject and Community," 225.

itual, personal, human beings. Wojtyla insists that we understand “conscious being [as] a being that is not constituted in and through consciousness but that instead somehow constitutes consciousness.”²⁶ In other words, using Aristotle’s terminology, it is imperative that we see characteristic human activity as a matter of second act, rooted in first act and manifesting first act, sufficient to prove first act, but in no way necessary for first act, the act of existing which is simultaneously the act of existing as a human being.²⁷ This is what Wojtyla means when he says, “from the very beginning the human being is someone who exists and acts, although fully human activity . . . appears only at a certain

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 226.

²⁷ Of course anyone very familiar with St. Thomas will at this point start to wonder how this statement jives with Thomas’ understanding of delayed hominization. But it is important to recall that for Thomas it is at the moment of God’s creative act that the human being begins to exist as a human being—it is clear that *esse* and *essence* come into existence simultaneously. The question raised by delayed hominization is when that creative act occurs in relation to the start of embryonic development. The case has been very persuasively made that, given contemporary understanding of the specifically human organization of the single cell which results from karyogamy, Thomas Aquinas would conclude that God’s creative act occurs at that point and that the cooperation of the new child’s human and divine parents occurs over a matter of hours, not weeks, as Thomas supposed.

See John Haldane and Patrick Lee, “Aquinas on Human Ensoulment and the Value of Life,” *Philosophy* 78 (2003): 255–278. Haldane and Lee give a comprehensive bibliography of 33 works in English on the timing of ensoulment on pp. 259–260, n. 5. See also, John Meyer, “Embryonic Personhood, Human Nature, and Rational Ensoulment,” *Heythrop Journal* 47 (2006): 206–225; Jason Eberl, “Aquinas’s Account of Human Embryogenesis and Recent Interpretations,” *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 30 (2005): 379–394; David Hershenov and Rose Koch, “How a Hylomorphic Metaphysics Constrains the Abortion Debate,” *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5 (2005): 751–764; D. A. Jones, *The Soul of the Embryo* (London: Continuum, 2004), ch. 8; Denis Bradley, “*To Be or Not to Be*: Pasnau on Aquinas’s Immortal Human Soul,” *The Thomist* 68 (2004): 1–39; Kevin L. Flannery, S.J., “Applying Aristotle in Contemporary Embryology,” *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 249–278; Pascal Ide, “Le zygote: est-il une personne humaine?,” *Nova et Vetera* 76, no. 1 (2001): 45–88, and no. 2 (2001): 53–88; Angelo Serra and Roberto Colombo, “Identity and Status of the Human Embryo: The Contribution of Biology,” in *Identity and Statute of Human Embryo: Proceedings of the 3rd Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life*, ed. J. Correa and E. Sgreccia (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), 128–177.

stage of human development.” Existence as a human being is both ontologically and chronologically prior to an individual’s exhibition of characteristic human activity. That activity may, then, be necessary in order to make anyone, including ourselves, aware of our existence as human beings. But such awareness must always be understood as awareness of existence as already-having-been-prior-to-human-awareness of it.

The Creator’s awareness is simultaneous with beginning-to-be of a new human person. And an angelic person’s awareness of itself would be simultaneous with its beginning to be. But for us as embodied persons there is a chronological gap which can lead to ontological confusion. To be perfectly clear, then, the claim of Wojtyla’s Thomistic personalism is that the human being does not begin to be when he or she begins to manifest characteristic human activity. That is rather the point at which he or she becomes available to human awareness. In this way, Wojtyla says, “the human self gradually both discloses itself and constitutes itself,” i.e., through characteristic human activity the human self both (1) discloses its already-having-been-prior-to-human-awareness, and (2) develops, actualizes, realizes the capacities made possible through its spiritual existence. And, Wojtyla continues, “it discloses itself also by constituting itself,” i.e., through its further development it continues to disclose and confirm its already-having-been-prior-to-human-awareness and moves toward the achievement of the ethical dignity made possible by the personal dignity it has had all along.

This distinction also grounds our conviction that a person’s inability to be fully the subject of an action in no way diminishes his or her objective personhood and the imperative that as the object of human action he or she must be treated as a person.²⁸ Full development of our

²⁸ Cf. Wojtyla, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 225, 241; Williams, *Who Is My Neighbor?*, 125, 146.

capacities as persons, of course, requires the full development of our subjectivity, but this development is inhibited in this life by our bodies and for some of us the limitations of the body appear to preclude development of these capacities in this life. The good news is that there is hope, both for those who are now disabled in some way and for the rest of us who are merely handicapped. With a confidence born of faith and a well developed metaphysics, Thomas assures us that while in this life the human soul “is hindered by its union with the body, because its power over the body is not perfect,”²⁹ in the next life, “[b]y its perfect union with God, the soul will have complete sway over the body,”³⁰ and so we will all fully realize our subjectivity, whatever limitations there might have been on that realization when we were persons with earthly bodies.

It is the case though that in his reflection on human persons Wojtyla does generally focus on “the normally developed human self,” and so gives much consideration to developed human subjectivity and the human capacity for conscious relations. That focus could lead someone to conclude these are necessary for human dignity.³¹ It is essential that we understand that these are necessary only for ethical dignity, i.e., for the status of being a responsible ethical agent. Many of us do not achieve ethical dignity in this life, either because we do not live long enough to achieve it or because there is some congenital or acquired flaw in our earthly materiality which prohibits either its achievement or its use. Wojtyla’s insistence on social and political accommodation of human subjectivity, self-possession and self-determination is meant to

²⁹ *D.P.* 5, 10, ad 6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 5, 10, ad 3.

³¹ A more muted version of this error maintains that an embryo whose material condition is such that it is impossible for it to develop to the point of manifesting activity characteristic of human embryos cannot be a human embryo and therefore can be treated in ways (i.e. experimented upon, cloned, harvested, etc.) that would constitute a violation of the rights of a human embryo.

ensure that those who *can* achieve ethical dignity will have the opportunity to do so. But part of their flourishing as responsible ethical agents will be their recognition of the inherent personal dignity of human beings who are not currently capable of self-possession or self-determination and the corresponding insistence that these persons' rights as human persons be respected regardless of their capacity to insist on or even be aware of these rights.³² Wojtyla insists on the opportunity to become an "I" so that I may recognize my neighbor as a "thou" even if he is unable to constitute himself as an "I" in this life. In the act of creating this human being, my neighbor, God has created an "I," an I of whom God is fully aware and desirous. As a human being with the capacity and good fortune to constitute myself as an I in this life, I have a responsibility to act on my awareness of my neighbor as God's deliberate creation and do my part to assure this neighbor the opportunity to develop his capacity for self-possession and self-determination to whatever extent he can in this life while anticipating eternal union with him and many happy surprises upon the full realization of his and my human capacities in the next life.

Which brings us back to Fr. Clarke. May he, and all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.



³² Personalism's capacity to ground talk of human rights is the theme of Williams' *Who Is My Neighbor?*, which is subtitled: *Personalism and the Foundation of Human Rights*.

**THOMISTIC PERSONALISM AND CREATION METAPHYSICS:
PERSONHOOD VS. HUMANITY AND
ONTOLOGICAL VS. ETHICAL DIGNITY**

SUMMARY

The author seeks to respond to the philosophical appeal of W. Norris Clarke, S.J., “to uncover the personalist dimension lying implicit within the fuller understanding of the very meaning and structure of the metaphysics of being itself, not hitherto explicit in either the metaphysical or personalist traditions themselves.” She does this by discussing the distinctions drawn by Karol Wojtyła: (1) between a human being’s personhood and his humanity, and (2) between the ontological dignity and the ethical dignity of the human person.

KEYWORDS

Thomistic personalism, personalism, person, personhood, human being, humanity, dignity, ontological dignity, ethical dignity, being, metaphysics, W. Norris Clarke, Karol Wojtyła.

REFERENCES

- Bradley, Denis. “*To Be or Not to Be*: Pasnau on Aquinas’s Immortal Human Soul.” *The Thomist* 68 (2004): 1–39.
- Clarke, W. Norris, S.J. *Person and Being*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1993.
- Clarke, W. Norris, S.J. *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001.
- Clarke, W. Norris, S.J., “The Integration of Person and Being in Twentieth-Century Thomism,” *Communio* 31 (2004): 435–46.
- Clarke, W. Norris, S.J. “The Immediate Creation of the Soul by God and Some Contemporary Challenges.” In *The Creative Retrieval of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 173–90. New York: Fordham University Press, 2009.
- Clarke, W. Norris, S.J. “The Integration of Personalism and Thomistic Metaphysics in Twenty-First-Century Thomism.” In *The Creative Retrieval of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 226–31. New York: Fordham University Press, 2009.
- de Aquino, S. Thomae. “Opera Omnia.” In *Corpus Thomisticum*, recognovit ac instruxit Enrique Alarcón automato electronico. Pompaelone ad Universitatis Studiorum Navarrensis aedes a MM A.D. Accessible at: <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/iopera.html>. Accessed on Feb. 12, 2018.
- de Finance, Joseph, S.J. “Being and Subjectivity,” translated by W. Norris Clarke, S.J. *Cross Currents* 6 (1956): 163–78.
- Dewan, Lawrence, O.P. “St. Thomas and the Distinction between Form and *Esse* in Caused Things.” *Gregorianum* 80 (1999): 353–70.
- Eberl, Jason. “Aquinas’s Account of Human Embryogenesis and Recent Interpretations.” *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 30 (2005): 379–94.
- Flannery, Kevin L., S.J. “Applying Aristotle in Contemporary Embryology.” *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 249–78.

- Haldane, John, and Patrick Lee. "Aquinas on Human Ensoulment and the Value of Life." *Philosophy* 78 (2003): 255–78.
- Hershenov, David, and Rose Koch. "How a Hylomorphic Metaphysics Constrains the Abortion Debate." *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5 (2005): 751–64.
- Ide, Pascal. "Le zygote: est-il une personne humaine?" *Nova et Vetera* 76, no. 1 (2001): 45–88, and no. 2 (2001): 53–88.
- Jones, D. A. *The Soul of the Embryo*. London: Continuum, 2004.
- Lee, Patrick. "Human Beings are Animals." In *Natural Law and Moral Inquiry: Ethics, Metaphysics, and Politics in the Work of Germaine Grisez*, edited by R. George, 135–52. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1998.
- Lee, Patrick. "Soul, Body and Personhood." *The American Journal of Jurisprudence* 49, no. 1 (2004): 87–125.
- Marcel, Gabriel. *Faith and Reality, The Mystery of Being*, Vol. II, translated by René Hague. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1951.
- Meyer, John. "Embryonic Personhood, Human Nature, and Rational Ensoulment." *Heythrop Journal* 47 (2006): 206–25.
- Ratzinger, Joseph. "Concerning the Notion of Person in Theology," translated by Michael Waldstein. *Communio* 17 (1990): 439–54.
- Schmitz, Kenneth L. "Geography of the Human Person." In *The Texture of Being*, edited by P. O'Herron, 149–59. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007.
- Schmitz, Kenneth L. *The Gift: Creation*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1982.
- Serra, Angelo, and Roberto Colombo. "Identity and Status of the Human Embryo: The Contribution of Biology." In *Identity and Statute of Human Embryo: Proceedings of the 3rd Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life*, edited by J. Correa and E. Sgreccia, 128–77. Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998.
- Williams, Thomas D. *Who Is My Neighbor?* Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005.
- Wojtyla, Karol. *The Acting Person*, translated by A. Potocki. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1979.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "On the Dignity of the Human Person." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M., 177–80. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "Participation or Alienation?" In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M., 197–207. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M., 209–17. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "The Person: Subject and Community." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M., 219–61. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

DANIEL C. WAGNER

PENITENTIAL METHOD AS PHENOMENOLOGICAL: THE PENITENTIAL *EPOCHE**

Synthesizing Thomism and phenomenology, this paper compares the kind of reflective thinking and willing that goes on in penitential acts to Edmund Husserl’s method of the phenomenological ἐποχή (*epoche*).¹ As with the other sacraments, St. Thomas takes penance to be a kind of virtue, which means that it is a habitual disposition with corresponding acts.² Analysis of penance up through the act of contrition shows it to have three primary acts: (1) the examination of conscience, and (2) the reordering of the will and (3) the resolve not to sin again in regret. After presenting this Thomistic conception of contrition, the essence of Husserl’s ἐποχή as a method intended to “suspend” certain beliefs in order to discover the truth about knowledge will be presented. In conclusion, it will be shown that a particular form of the

DANIEL C. WAGNER — Aquinas College, Grand Rapids, MI, USA
e-mail: dcw002@Aquinas.edu ▪ ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5226-9832>

* This article is a revised version of the conference paper originally presented at the Satellite Session of the Society for Thomistic Personalism during the 2014 Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in Washington, D.C., USA.

¹ I am thankful to Fr. Robert Sokolowski for offering his invaluable comments on an earlier version of this paper. Also, I am thankful to Dr. Michael W. Tkacz, who not only offered his own helpful and encouraging suggestions, but who also made my correspondence with Fr. Sokolowski possible.

² See section “The Sacrament of Penance,” and especially footnote 3, below.

ἐποχή—a penitential ἐποχή—must be employed in these three penitential acts so that a disposition of grace may be made present in the penitent. The key to the comparison made in this study between phenomenology and penance is that each act involved in contrition entails a “suspension” analogous to that of the ἐποχή on the part of the penitent. While the intentional analysis pursuant to Husserl’s ἐποχή, being limited in its scope to the critique of knowledge, requires only a νόησις-νόημα (*noesis-noema*) or knower-known view of the structure of consciousness, the penitential ἐποχή, extending in its scope to acts of will themselves, requires also a βούλησις-βούλημα (*boulesis-boulema*) or willing-willed view of the structure of consciousness. Expressing these penitential activities by way of analogy to the ἐποχή can aid the penitent in making an act of contrition and returning to a virtuous disposition of grace.

The Sacrament of Penance

In book IV of *Summa Contra Gentiles*, after treating the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist, St. Thomas Aquinas turns his efforts to the sacrament of penance. While the sacraments bestow grace and communion, they do not render the Christian incapable of sinning. The reason for this pertains to the nature of the sacraments themselves as “gratuitous gifts [that] are received in the soul as habitual dispositions (*habituales dispositiones*)”—i.e., as a special kind of virtue.³ As a habitual disposition, the grace of a sacrament is something

³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV, ch. 70, sec. 2: “Gratuita enim dona recipiuntur in anima sicut habituales dispositiones . . .” Significantly, question 85 of the *supplementum* in the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, also states that penance is a virtue (*virtus*) since, in one manner of speaking it is grief or sorrow that follows on an act of choice (*electio*) and, as Aristotle says at *Nicomachean Ethics*, B, 6: “Ἔστιν ἄρα ἡ ἀρετὴ ἕξις προαιρετικὴ . . . ὥς ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὀρίσειεν . . .” (Thus, virtue is a disposition deliberately choosing . . . as the prudent man would so define . . .).” Penance as grief in the sense of a passion, of course, is not a virtue. The translations of St. Thomas Latin

that a man need not act in accord with.⁴ “Nothing prohibits him who has a habit to act according to the habit or contrary to it,” says Thomas.⁵ This is shown by the example of the grammarian, who possesses the habitual disposition of the knowledge and practice of proper grammar, but who may yet choose to speak with proper *or* improper grammar. Thomas then relates this point to the moral virtues:

And, thus, it is also the same concerning habits of moral virtues. One who has the habit of justice is able to act contrary to justice. The reason for this is that the use of the habit in us is from the will, and the will is related to either of a pair of alternatives. It is manifest, therefore, that, receiving gratuitous gifts, man is able to sin, acting contrary to grace.⁶

Having shown that man can indeed sin (post-baptism), and also that he may return again to a state of grace,⁷ Thomas then turns to the necessity of penance and its nature. In order to explain this sacrament, he begins by drawing an analogy between acts of physical healing and acts of penitential (spiritual) healing: “as it is in the case of those things which have obtained a natural life through generation, that if they should contract some disease which is contrary to the perfection of life, they are able to be cured from the disease . . . by a certain [physical] alteration,” so too, persons having committed post-baptismal acts of sin

are my own. Aristotle’s Greek is taken from Aristoteles et Corpus Aristotelicum Phil., *Ethica Nicomachea*, ed. I. Bywater (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894; repr. 1962); the translation of Aristotle, here, is also my own.

⁴ *S.C.G.* IV, ch. 70, sec. 2: “[N]on enim homo secundum ea semper agit,” the antecedent of *ea* here being *dispositiones*.

⁵ *Ibid.*: “Nihil autem prohibet eum qui habitum habet, agere secundum habitum vel contra eum . . .”

⁶ *Ibid.*: “Et ita est etiam de habitibus virtutum moralium: potest enim qui iustitiae habitum habet, et contra iustitiam agere. Quod ideo est quia usus habituum in nobis ex voluntate est: voluntas autem ad utrumque oppositorum se habet. Manifestum est igitur quod suscipiens gratuita dona peccare potest contra gratiam agendo.”

⁷ This is the topic of chapter 71 of *S.C.G.* IV.

can be healed by the sacrament of penance, “which is, as it were, a type of spiritual alteration.”⁸ By parsing out this analogy, Thomas exposes the essential characteristics of the act of penance.

Causal explanation for acts of physical healing can be divided into two kinds. (1) At times, they have their principle solely from *within* (*ab intrinseco*), following from the nature of the organism itself healing.⁹ (2) At other times, as when medicine is administered, physical healing may also require an extrinsic principle (*ab extrinseco*). However, Thomas is careful to qualify, a person is never cured entirely by external principles. The person must necessarily have within himself the principle of life, which, in this case, along with the external principle, allows him to heal.¹⁰ Because grace is necessary for the human to overcome his fault(s),¹¹ spiritual healing can never be brought about entirely from within, or by the intrinsic spiritual principles of the sinner’s nature.¹² At the same time, and like physical acts of healing, man’s spiritual cure cannot come entirely from an extrinsic principle

⁸ *Ibid.*, ch. 72, sec. 1: “Sicut enim qui vitam naturalem per generationem adepti sunt, si aliquem morbum incurrant qui sit contrarius perfectioni vitae, a morbo curari possunt, non quidem sic ut iterato nascentur, sed quadam alteratione sanantur; ita Baptismus, qui est spiritualis regeneratio, non reiteratur contra peccata post Baptismum commissa, sed poenitentia, quasi quadam spirituali alteratione, sanantur. (For, as it is in the case of those things which have obtained a natural life through generation, that if they should contract some disease which is contrary to the perfection of life, they are able to be cured from the disease, not indeed as though they are born again, but that they are healed by a certain alteration, so too, Baptism, which a spiritual regeneration, is not repeated against sin after Baptism has been received, but [post baptized sinners] are healed by penance, which is, as it were, a type of spiritual alteration.)”

⁹ *Ibid.*, ch. 72, sect. 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Here, we can understand the analysis with respect to *original*, and *post-baptismal* sin.

¹² *S.C.G.* IV, ch. 72, sect. 1: “In spirituali vero curatione accidere non potest quod totaliter ab intrinseco fiat: ostensum est enim in tertio quod a culpa homo liberari non potest nisi auxilio gratiae. (However, in the case of the spiritual cure, it is not able to happen that it be accomplished completely by an intrinsic principle: for it is apparent from book III that man cannot be freed from sin except through the assistance of grace.)”

either. Rather, penitential healing is wrought by the intrinsic principle of *will* in cooperation with the extrinsic principles of grace.¹³

In order to accomplish spiritual healing, and where sin is understood as a kind of disorder, Thomas conveys that penance requires the ordering of the mind and the resolve to avoid the re-commission of sin in regret. The essence of the act of contrition, and what penance requires, is that “the mind be turned back toward God and away from sin, grieving from its commission, and proposing not to commit it again.”¹⁴ This reordering of the mind toward God cannot occur without grace and the Charity of God which follows on it.¹⁵ Once this grace and Charity are received, the penitent is freed from condemnation: “through contrition the offence to God is removed and also the sinner is freed of the guilt of eternal punishment, which cannot be at the same time with grace and charity.”¹⁶ Thomas then emphasizes, again, that this reordering of the mind through contrition, which re-establishes a virtuous state

¹³ *Ibid.*, ch. 72, sect. 2 & 5: “Similiter etiam neque potest esse quod spiritualis curatio sit totaliter ab exteriori: non enim restitueretur sanitas mentis nisi ordinati motus voluntatis in homine causarentur. Oportet igitur in poenitentiae sacramento spirituales salutem et ab interiori et ab exteriori procedere. (At the same time, neither is it possible that spiritual healing be from a totally exterior principle: for the health of the mind would not be restored unless the ordained movements of the will were caused in the human. Thus, it is necessary that in the sacrament of penance spiritual health proceed both from an interior and an exterior principle.)” See footnote 17 below concerning the will as the intrinsic principle and God’s grace as the extrinsic principle.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, ch. 72, sec. 4: “Primum igitur quod in poenitentia requiritur, est ordinatio mentis: ut scilicet mens convertatur ad Deum, et avertatur a peccato, dolens de commissio, et proponens non committendum: quod est de ratione contritionis.”

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. 72, sect. 5: “Haec vero mentis reordinatio sine gratia esse non potest: nam mens nostra debite ad Deum converti non potest sine caritate, caritas autem sine gratia haberi non potest, ut patet ex his quae in tertio dicta sunt. (But this reordering of the mind is not possible without grace, for our mind cannot be duly turned toward God without charity, and charity is not able to be possessed without grace—as is apparent from those things which have been said in book III.)”

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: “Sic igitur per contritionem et offensa Dei tollitur et a reatu poenae aeternae liberatur, qui cum gratia et caritate esse non potest: non enim aeterna poena est nisi per separationem a Deo, cui gratia et caritate homo coniungitur.”

of grace, “proceeds from an intrinsic principle, i.e., from free choice (*a libero arbitrio*), along with the assistance of divine grace [the extrinsic principle].”¹⁷

Implied in Thomas’ claim that the *will* is the intrinsic principle of spiritual healing, is the notion that knowledge is also a necessary intrinsic principle for a person to be spiritually healed. As he conceives it, the will is not a raw un-intelligible and un-intelligent desire, e.g., in the utilitarian sense, but rather a desire informed by what is intellectually apprehended as what is good for one: *voluntas nominat rationalem appetitum*.¹⁸ Thus, the *will* as intrinsic cause of spiritual healing must be placed in the context of the human’s possession of the intellectual faculty, which allows him to understand the state he is in. The role of knowledge in penance emerges where the penitent must seek to know his own moral failings in examination of conscience before asking for forgiveness. To accomplish this task, the penitent must have knowledge of moral precepts (universals), and apply this knowledge in intellectual acts of judgment to particular actions. Only after such an activity can one regret sin and form the resolve not to commit it again. The penitent will desire a contrite heart because he knows his defect and that the virtuous state of grace it will accomplish in him is what is good and best. Thus, it is apparent that penance also entails the act of examination of conscience.¹⁹

The foregoing Thomistic analysis allows for a threefold division of contrition. First, one must become aware, one must *know* one’s sin, and this is accomplished through the reflective act of the examination

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: “Haec igitur mentis reordinatio, quae in contritione consistit, ex interiori procedit, idest a libero arbitrio, cum adiutorio divinae gratiae.”

¹⁸ *S.Th.* I–II, q. 6, a. 2, ad. 1. See also, *Ibid.*, q. 14, a. 1.

¹⁹ Thus, tradition has included the act of examination of conscience as a preparatory aspect of penance. See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1454.

of conscience with the grace of God.²⁰ Second, in a state of regret, one's will must be ordered to God as the ultimate good, removing the disordered desire for lower goods. Third, one must desire not to return to the state where the object or good at hand is related to improperly.

The Phenomenological ἐποχή

The Natural Attitude

Husserl's way to phenomenology through the ἐποχή begins with a description of what he terms the *natural attitude* (*natürliche Geisteshaltung*). The natural attitude is first characterized as the most basic knowing-conscious experience of a world and the objects that reside in it.²¹ Immediately experienced and intuited as “endlessly spread out in space, [and] endlessly becoming and having become in time,”²² the world is taken as singular from the perspective of consciousness.²³ Experience of the world comes primarily through the “field of perception,” where objects are simply present to the experiencer—“on

²⁰ God, at times, must, in a kind of way, *present* to us our sins in his mercy. Notice, even with such *divine presentation*, the rational faculty is still necessary for apprehension. If our faults are revealed to us by God, it must be precisely that He presents such faults to us as objects of intellectual apprehension. Where there is no knowledge of the fault, there can be no penitential act.

²¹ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (I, 27), trans. F. Kersten, in *Collected Works*, vol. 2 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), 51–53. Hereafter, this work will be referred to simply as *Ideas*. Emphasis is retained from both Husserl texts cited in this study from the translated source throughout.

²² *Ideas* (I, 27), 51.

²³ As Fr. Sokolowski says, the *world* is given in experience as a “singular tantum.” Robert Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 44. It is spatially and temporally limitless for the experiencer in the sense that the notion that there is some object of experience beyond it, or another world, is unintelligible: such an object/world would have to be both part of the world and not part of the world of conscious experience.

hand”—and their actual existence is taken for granted.²⁴ This experience of a world includes the animate—especially other persons with their accompanying feelings, actions, thoughts, and desires, with which they are blended and taken as immediately given.²⁵ While attention in the natural attitude is actually “turned—in acts of intuition and thought—to *things* given to us,”²⁶ it holds an interrelated temporal and perceptual potency. Acts of consciousness occur in a horizontal stream between retention and protention and they extend to objects that are partially or wholly absent or not given *now* and directly or immediately in the field of perception.²⁷

Along with being mundane, the *natural attitude* also constitutes the mode of consciousness we call *positive science*, i.e., the study of objects.²⁸ In acts of both mundane and scientific thought, consciousness is presented with the opportunity to focus in on, *categorize*, *predicate with respect to*, and *judge*²⁹ particular objects of experience and their

²⁴ *Ideas* (I, 27), 51: “By my seeing, touching, hearing and so fourth, and in the different modes of sensuous perception, corporeal physical things with some spatial distribution or other are *simply there for me*, ‘on hand’ in the literal or figurative sense, whether or not I am particularly heedful of them and busied with them in my considering, thinking, feeling, or willing.”

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. Lee Hardy (Dordrecht-Boston-London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1907), 15 (Lecture I). Hereafter, this work will be referred to as *The Idea*.

²⁷ See *Ideas* (I, 27), 51–52: “Along with the ones now perceived, other actual objects are there for me as determinate, as more or less well known, without being themselves perceived or, indeed, present in any other mode of intuition. I can let my attention wander away from the writing table which was just now seen and noticed, out through the unseen parts of the room which are behind my back, to the verandah, into the garden, to the children in the arbor, etc., to all the Objects I directly ‘know of’ as being there and here in the surroundings of which there is also consciousness . . .” On retention and protention, see *Ideas* (I, 2, sec. 75), 175. Retention is constituted through the memory of what has just been, but no longer is actually. In contrast, protention is constituted by the anticipation of what is potentially, but not yet actually given immediately in experience.

²⁸ *The Idea*, 15 (Lecture I).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

relationship(s) with one another. The natural attitude is non-reflective to the extent that, while its characteristic acts may lead to the acknowledgement that some things are “otherwise” than once supposed, and thus, not actually part of the world (e.g., hallucinations), they do not lead to a dismissal of what Husserl calls the “general positing” of the natural attitude.³⁰ This “general positing” of the natural attitude is defined through the concepts of transcendence and immanence.

In the *natural attitude*³¹ consciousness always takes for granted or understands the objects which it *intends* as distinct from *itself* in the sense of their being *outside* its knowing act.³² In the natural attitude, consciousness “takes its objects as transcendent,”³³ or as separate and or discrete from itself. Taking the object as transcendent, as Husserl

³⁰ *Ideas* (I, 30), 57: “I find the ‘actuality,’ the word already says it, as a *factually existent actuality* and also accept it as it presents itself to me as *factually existing*. No doubt about or rejection of data belonging to the natural world alters in any respect the *general positing* which characterizes the natural attitude. ‘The’ world is always there as an actuality . . .”

³¹ For pictorial diagrams of the natural, phenomenological, and penitential attitudes, see Appendix I (page 500).

³² This is the first taste of a move on Husserl’s part that appears to conflate the natural attitude with the Cartesian attitude—i.e., the *cogito*. At *Ideas* I, 28, he makes a similar claim. Having described both mundane and scientific “theorizing” modes of consciousness, Husserl goes on to say, “All of them—including the simple Ego-acts in which I, in spontaneous advertence and seizing, am conscious of the world as immediately present—are embraced by the one Cartesian expression, *cogito*. Living along naturally, I live continually in this *fundamental form of ‘active’* [aktullen] living whether, while so living, I state the *cogito*, whether I am directed ‘reflectively’ to the Ego and the *cogitare*.” See *Ideas* (I, 28), 54. In spite of such passages, it is clear that Husserl understands Descartes’ *cogito* as the result of a kind forced and artificial (non-rational) reflection on the nature of knowledge in the natural attitude. While there is ambiguity in the text of Husserl regarding the relation of the natural attitude to that of the Cartesian, an important distinction between the natural attitude and the Cartesian attitude is also manifest in the text of Husserl itself—if not explicitly, at least latently. See the subsection “The ἐποχή,” below, and especially Appendix II, where Husserl’s comparison of the Cartesian approach to a form of sophism is highlighted.

³³ *The Idea*, 27 (Lecture II). Husserl says further, “All positive knowledge, prescientific and even more so scientific, is knowledge that takes its objects as transcendent . . .”

says, means that, “the known object is not really [*reell*] contained in the act of knowing.”³⁴ Correspondingly, the *immanence* of the object *as known* means that it is—in a reductive sense—“really [*reell*] immanent to the experience of knowing.”³⁵ There is a tendency in the natural attitude to reduce to an immanence which takes for granted that object as known is really and only “contained” in the act of knowing and does not extend to that to which it is taken to refer outside of the knowing act. In other words, the same object, which is supposed to be *transcendent*, is most precisely not contained *immanently* in the act of knowing—lest, this sense of *transcendence* would evaporate in contradiction. Thus, what is known is not the transcendent object itself, but a likeness or impression, which is *immanently* contained in the supposed act of knowing.³⁶ An equivocation, thus, comes to light from reflection on the natural attitude itself between two senses of “object.” First, there is “object” taken in the sense of that which transcends subjective aware-

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Husserl, identifies another related form of transcendence assumed in the natural attitude, which is even more problematic, but beyond our scope. In a second sense, *transcendence* refers to any kind of knowledge the object of which is not immediately evident, i.e., where there is no immediate and pure act of seeing—where the knowledge claim goes “beyond what can be directly seen and apprehended.” *The Idea*, 28 (Lecture II). In other words, there is apprehension of some object, but not full apprehension, not full disclosure in perception. Here, we might think, for example, of our ability to intend a house only in partial and temporally individuated moments—we perceive the front, the sides, the back, the inside, perhaps even the roof in the course of time, but there is no single temporal moment (what Sokolowski calls a *profile*) in which the whole house phenomenon is given to us in perception. Thus, we come to understand that parts/moments of objects which are intended but not directly perceived, are transcendent in this manner. In spite of our intention of a singular object with a singular identity, perception gives us only temporally individuated moments of the whole, so that we are always “reaching,” as it were, for the whole through parts of presentation given in perception. This form of transcendence is taken further, thus, in as much as we will want to say that we intend the house as a singular identity, even when we are not currently perceiving it at all, but rather have a blend of full and empty intentions of it. For another example, see Sokolowski’s treatment of the “Perception of a cube as a paradigm of conscious experience,” which is chapter 2 of his *Introduction to Phenomenology*.

ness, and then there is “object” taken as what is merely immanently present to awareness.³⁷

Through a critical philosophical reflection on the natural attitude, which emanates from these very senses of *transcendence* and *immanence*, epistemology (historically speaking) is essentially confronted with the Humean skeptical critique of the Cartesian view of knowledge. In his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes utilized a method of hyperbolic or universal doubt, negating the whole of objective reality along with the sense faculties, in order to establish *res cogitans* as the indubitable foundation of all knowledge.³⁸ Consequentially, he separated consciousness from its known object. As the *cogito* is grasped clearly and distinctly at a point in the methodological enquiry where nothing else is so given, it must exist in its own immanence and any object it might have must be taken as really transcendent.³⁹ Indeed, Descartes

³⁷ In a chapter on critical realism (“Le Réalisme Critique”), in his *Degrees of Knowledge*, Jacques Maritain very helpfully draws this distinction between “thing and object (chose et objet)” following the scholastics. Maritain uses “thing” to designate object in the transcendent sense, and “object” to designate object in the immanent sense. See Jacques Maritain, *Distinguer Pour Unir ou Les Degrés du Savoir* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1946), 176–195.

³⁸ See René Descartes, “Meditations on First Philosophy,” in *Modern Philosophy*, ed. Forrest E. Baird and Walter Kaufmann (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2003). At the end of the first Meditation, having enlisted the imagined all powerful evil deceiver to help him accomplish a doubt that reason cannot, Descartes sums up the act of hyperbolic doubt in its scope. Denying the existence of the “sky, the air, the earth, colors, shapes, sounds, and all other objective things,” he then severs the faculties corresponding to these objects from consciousness also: “I will consider myself as having no hands, no eyes, no flesh, no blood, nor any senses, yet falsely believing that I have all these things.” *Ibid.*, 22. In the *Second Meditation*, he can then concluded that, even in his radical universal doubt of everything, he cannot help but reaffirm the existence of something, namely, the very “I,” the thinking thing, or *res cogitans*, which was so convinced that nothing else existed. See *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁹ This separation becomes most salient and explicit in Descartes’ conception of the soul—in his mindbody dualism—which he presents in *Meditation VI*: “[S]ince on the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself insofar as I am only a thinking and not an extended being, and since on the other hand I have a distinct idea of body insofar as it is only an extended being which does not think, it is certain that this ‘I’—that is to

took this very fact as the foundation of his substance dualism.⁴⁰ In perception, the senses of the body, then, produce for the mind a representation of the sensed thing. The immanently perceived representation is what is grasped by the mind and known. The thing, which the immanent perception is supposed to be a representation of, must be taken as really transcendent and other than the perception. It is this understanding of objects of experience as really transcendent in relation to the *cogito* that provides the basis for Hume's skeptical critique of knowledge.

If we assume *transcendence* and *immanence* to have a kind of relationship characteristic of the natural attitude, i.e., one where what is claimed to be known is also claimed to be discrete and separate from the knower, where the known is not really contained immanently in the act of knowing, then the question becomes, how do we bridge the gap between the knower and the known in such a way as to have certain knowledge about the things that we study? This is precisely the question behind Hume's formulation of skepticism in section 12 of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. His answer is clear: no such bridge can be established, so that no necessary knowledge is obtainable about things in themselves.⁴¹ As Husserl will ask, if the essential struc-

say, my soul, by virtue of which I am what I am—is entirely and truly distinct from my body and that it can be or exist with out it.” *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴⁰ This is, of course, a fallacious argument for substance dualism. Even given Descartes' method, the ontological claim of substance dualism does not necessarily follow from the fact that the idea of the *cogito* can be conceived clearly and distinctly prior to that of the body. This is an *error abstractionis*.

⁴¹ Consider the following passages from David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), section 12: “[N]othing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception, and . . . the senses are only the inlets, through which these images are conveyed, without being able to produce any immediate intercourse between the mind and the object.” Hume continues, “No man, who reflects, ever doubted, that the existences, which we consider, when we say, this house and that tree, are nothing but perceptions in the mind, and fleeting copies or representations of other existences, which remain uniform and

ture of knowing is characterized by *transcendence*, how can experience “go beyond itself?”⁴² Thus, we are faced with the possibilities of both skepticism and solipsism; with the fact that what we call knowledge is merely a matter of prejudice, since we can no longer get at the essence (εἶδος) of the thing in itself.⁴³ It is in the face of this skepticism that Husserl will propose phenomenology as a rigorous scientific critique of knowledge.

The Phenomenological Attitude

In *Logical Investigations*, Husserl indicates that the methodology of any science is formulated with respect to its end.⁴⁴ The method for obtaining scientific knowledge of a subject must be functionally and teleologically fitted to the subject itself. The end of the phenomenological method is an understanding of the possibility of conscious knowing. Unlike Descartes, Husserl does not take the existence of this subject matter itself as provable by thought experiment and hyperbolic doubt.

independent.” His presentation of the *problema pontis* then hits its crescendo: “The mind has never anything present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects. The supposition of such a connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning.”

⁴² *The Idea*, 27 (Lecture I).

⁴³ In the second sense of *transcendence* mentioned above in note 35, an even more difficult question arises: “[H]ow can knowledge posit something as existing that is not directly and genuinely given to it?” How, without direct apprehension of it, can I claim there is a back to the house I am currently seeing the front of, let alone that the back of the house must be in certain way? If I presuppose that the house itself is not part of the intentional act I am engaged in, I simply cannot perform these basic epistemic functions. *The Idea*, 27 (Lecture I).

⁴⁴ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. I, ch. 1, §11, trans. J. N. Findlay (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 25: “Sciences are creations of the spirit which are directed to a certain end, and which are for that reason to be judged in accordance with that end. The same holds of theories, validations and in short every thing that we call a ‘method’. Whether a science is truly a science, or a method a method, depends on whether it accords with the aims that it strives for.” This is somewhat reminiscent Aristotle’s statement at *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 3, that the clarity achieved in a science concerning its subject matter is determined by the nature of the subject matter itself.

Rather, it is discovered through candid reflection on the natural attitude. The senses of *transcendence* and *immanence* that characterize the natural attitude coupled with the inability of the special sciences to provide firm epistemological basis for their findings, provide *rational cause* for questioning the possibility of knowledge. This enquiry can be seen as the basis for establishing a distinct subject matter (conscious-knowing) for a distinct science (phenomenology).⁴⁵ Because this enquiry points to the *existing* subject matter of phenomenology, it can be called an ontological reduction.⁴⁶ It is motivated by the desire for true and complete scientific knowledge and recognition of the fact that the particular sciences cannot provide such completeness, since their focus is limited to the objects of experience that constitute their own subjects. Each treats its own “marking off of being,”⁴⁷ as it were, but does not address the subjective mode of consciousness itself which makes knowledge of these objects possible. The subject matter of phenomenology is already indicated, though in a vague and indeterminate form.⁴⁸ Thus, a *need*

⁴⁵ Husserl, here, appears to follow the Aristotelian method for establishing science through a formal designation of its subject matter. On Aristotle, see Michael W. Tkacz, “Albert the Great and the Revival of Aristotle’s Zoological Research Program,” *Vivarium* 45, no. 1 (2007): 30–68.

⁴⁶ This phrase is well used by Fr. Sokolowski. See his *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 52. It appears to be a most appropriate phrase of Sokolowski’s, which is not used by Husserl.

⁴⁷ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, E, 1 (1025b9).

⁴⁸ Here again, a comparison of Husserl’s approach to that of Aristotle strongly suggested. Aristotle’s comments on methodology at *Physics*, I, 1, are most relevant. Here, Aristotle explains that, in our process of coming to know, or forming an *episteme*, we begin with a whole or universal of perception grasped only vaguely confusedly. By analysis or division, we then come to define the phenomenon as what it is. Reflection on the natural attitude brings to light consciousness as a possible subject for a distinct science. This is vaguely grasped. Most importantly, intentionality has not yet been analytically identified as the basic form of consciousness, and thus, there is not a complete definition of the general form of its subject matter. I would further point out that, given our natural, and I think Husserl would say, *reasonable* tendency to take objects of experience as *transcendent*, a question naturally arises as to how we know objects themselves. This kind of questioning cannot, without the kind of forced manipulation

arises for a scientific investigation of the very conscious-knowing that is the fundamental possibility for the objective sciences whatsoever.⁴⁹ Accordingly, and along Aristotelian lines of formulating a science (ἐπιστήμη/*episteme*), Husserl begins by positing the existence of a subject matter (γένος) known only in a vague and confused manner.⁵⁰ It is with the aim of fully formulating a definition of this subject matter and

that is illustrated by Descartes above, result in radical skepticism about our ability to know things of experience. At the same time, it can point toward the possibility of *knowing-consciousness* itself taken as a distinct subject matter for a distinct science. Here, I would suggest a reading of, for example, Aristotle's *De Memoria et Reminiscencia*, in which, in order to explain the process of recollection, he draws an explicit distinction between the thing itself as recollected and the concept or impression of it imminently existing in the mind. He emphasizes that the remembering is of the former and not the latter. One may further reflect and draw similar conclusions from his conception of first and second substance (οὐσία) at *Categories* 5. In these texts, we find an ancient premonition of the problem of epistemology born in Descartes' *Meditations*, and discovered by reflection on the natural attitude by Husserl.

⁴⁹ See Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 53. As Fr. Sokolowski points out, this need is not unlike that indicated by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, Γ, 1—the need to go beyond particular sciences to that of the whole or the science of being *qua* being. This analogy holds insofar as both phenomenology and metaphysics (as conceived by Aristotle) seek a science that is prior to the particular/special sciences and unifies and grounds them. While Aristotle's concern is to found this science on a unifying subject matter which is substance objectively speaking (see, e.g., *Metaphysics*, Λ, 1) phenomenology seeks a similar unity through the subjective reality of knowledge and the relation it must have to its objects in order to know them. Most interestingly, Husserl will refer to the subject-object phenomenon, or intentionality, which phenomenology studies, as a “this-here,” at times using Aristotle's phrase for indicating a primary substance (τὸ δε τι). Not only does this express a unity of subject and object in intention—that these are moments in one concretum—but it suggests a harkening back to a philosophy grounded in our perceptual experience of things in the world, like that championed by Aristotle. In Husserl, and keeping in mind that phenomenology is epistemology, or the critique of knowledge, see, for example, *The Idea*, 19 (Lecture I): “What is required is a science of what exists in the absolute sense. This science, which we call metaphysics, grows out of a ‘critique’ of positive knowledge in the particular sciences.”

⁵⁰ For the positing of the existence of the subject matter, see *Posterior Analytics*, A, 10 (76b12–16). Compare, again, to Aristotle's account of scientific methodology at *Physics* A, 1, and his initial formulation of the subject matter of physics at A, 2 (185a12–14).

in enquiring into the appropriate methodology for treating it, that Husserl produces the *ἐποχή*.

The ἐποχή

The *ἐποχή* is a method for transcending the natural attitude, which is sharply contrasted to Descartes' method.⁵¹ In fact, Descartes' exercise of hyperbolic doubt and reduction to the *cogito* make it impossible for him to transcend the natural attitude, and the whole of his thought is caged in it (in a way that is quite un-natural). While Descartes intends the exercise of "universal doubt" to strip away all untested assumptions in order that an un-doubtable epistemic foundation may be un-covered, such doubt, in its *negation* of material objectivity, amounts to an un-founded assumption itself: namely, that any object, as it is related to *res cogitans*, is actually discrete from the same, and vice versa. This is to fall into an idealism and a solipsism, and it is a trap, as Hume has shown, which cannot be escaped once it has been entered. To avoid these pitfalls, Husserl proposes the *ἐποχή*.

In performing the phenomenological *ἐποχή*, Husserl exhorts the practitioner, not to "universally doubt," but to "suspend" or "neutralize," most exactly, that natural belief (*δόξα*) in the object as *transcendent*, as actually existing discretely from consciousness.⁵² We do not, then, negate our belief in the world, we simply suspend it, or, view it here as an un-necessary, superfluous, supposition. In a word, "We put out of action the general positing which belongs to the essence of the natural attitude"⁵³—precisely what Descartes, through his method, could not accomplish. By supplying all forms of transcendence with the

⁵¹ Husserl will substitute for "*ἐποχή*" as the phenomenological method, and also as "transcendental-phenomenological-reduction." On Husserl as distinguishing his method from that of Descartes, see Appendix II (501–506).

⁵² *Ideas* (I), 64.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 61.

“index of indifference” through the ἐποχή, the practitioner reduces to a state of pure phenomenological immanence and “sees,” in this case, intentional acts of knowing which are immediately given and available for phenomenological analysis.⁵⁴ Accordingly, an “individual region of being” is acquired as the distinct subject of the science: conscious-knowing.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Thus, Husserl notes, with respect to epistemology, which he takes as phenomenology, “immanence is the necessary mark of all knowledge that comprises the critique of knowledge.” *The Idea*, 26 (Lecture II). Again, however, this “pure immanence” is not to be taken, as it is often interpreted to be, as an idealistic divorce of the mind from things-in-themselves. How could this be the case when the express end of the ἐποχή is to suspend belief in transcendence, which such a distinction presupposes? Far from committing the phenomenologist to such a divorce, the ἐποχή actually requires that the phenomenologist remain silent on this issue—at least initially. “Phenomenological immanence” means only that the phenomenologist’s stance is such as to take all objects of experience as integral to consciousness. It does not mean, and cannot mean, that objects of experience exist only in the mind.

⁵⁵ In *The Idea of Phenomenology*, Husserl compares this subject to Aristotle’s concept of the primary sense of substance as individual or some “this here” (τόδε τι): “Every intellectual experience, indeed every experience whatsoever, can be made into an object of pure seeing and apprehension while it is occurring. And this act of seeing it is an absolute givenness. It is given as an *existing* entity, as a ‘this-here.’” *The Idea*, 24 (Lecture II). Compare to *Categories* 5, 2a10–15, and 3b10. First, defining substance (οὐσία) in its primary sense as “that which is neither predicated of, nor present in, a subject,” Aristotle gives as examples “this man,” or “this horse” (ὁ τις ἄνθρωπος ἢ ὁ τις ἵππος), indicating by the combination of the indefinite pronoun “τις” and the definite article “ὁ” the designation of an individual and not a species. In contrast to Plato, Aristotle, thus, even in his logic makes individual subjects of sensation the first principles of knowledge—these, as opposed to separated forms, are the primary sense of the real, the “what is,” and the οὐσίαι for Aristotle. At 3b10, he emphasizes that substance in the primary sense signifies the “this here” or the individual: “Πᾶσα δὲ οὐσία δοκεῖ τόδε τι σημαίνεσθαι.” For Aristotle, the point of departure for all knowledge is sensation of particulars of experience, which is made clear at *Posterior Analytics* II, 19, where induction (ἐπαγωγή) is treated to explain how intellectual insight (νοῦς) is achieved concerning the fundamental principles of a science, and also in Aristotle’s initial comments concerning scientific methodology at *Physics* I, 1. Husserl’s appeal to the Stagirite’s terminology seems indicative of his own desire to locate the source of human knowledge directly in experience. As opposed to taking the *cogito* or any a priori concepts of the understanding as his point of departure, Husserl takes the experience of consciousness as intentional as his point of departure, and this means that his founda-

Analysis of consciousness shows its essence to be that of *intentionality*, consisting in correlated moments of νοησίς (*noesis*) and νοηµα (*noema*), or knower and known. The first fruit of the phenomenological reduction is the concept of *intentionality* itself. Having reduced to the *transcendental-phenomenological attitude* through the ἐποχή, I am first made aware of myself, not as the Cartesian *thinking I*, the isolated *cogito*, but necessarily as a “consciousness of” something—a *cogitationis* that always takes with itself a thought-object or *cogitatum*. In the phenomenological attitude, the subject, my reflection on myself as the “consciousness of” something, becomes the νοησίς (*knowing-consciousness*), and the object, which in this purely immanent transcendental and phenomenological sphere is not posited as something discrete from myself, is now termed the νοηµα (the object of my thought), viz., the “something” to which the “consciousness of” is directed and must be correlated. Νοησίς and νοηµα, then, exist, in this properly reduced sphere, as *moments* to each other, as parts in a single whole or *concretum*.⁵⁶ Human consciousness, thus, is not foundationally severed from its objects, and a properly philosophical account can be given of knowledge.⁵⁷

The ἐποχή and Contrition

Husserl’s ἐποχή is a method aimed at disclosing the essential structure of consciousness. In suspending belief about real transcendence, the ἐποχή shows forth the intentional structure of consciousness and results in the practitioner’s capacity to perform *noetic-noematic*

tion incorporates all of the world as sensually perceived as the objective correlate of consciousness.

⁵⁶ See Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 60–61.

⁵⁷ *Ideas* (I, 32), 61. For an extended defense of Husserl’s phenomenology as compatible with the type of realism presupposed by St. Thomas Aquinas account of the sacrament of penance, please see Appendix II.

analysis in the phenomenological attitude. This version of the *ἐποχή* might well be named the “originary *ἐποχή*.” It is the first version of the *ἐποχή* that Husserl employs and, from an epistemological perspective, all other inquiries terminating in knowledge will presuppose it. Indeed, Husserl himself has recourse to other versions of the *ἐποχή*.⁵⁸ As in the case of the originary use of the *ἐποχή*, the nature of the subject matter being studied determines what is to be “suspended” through the *ἐποχή*. Accordingly, while all possible versions of the *ἐποχή* will be identical insofar as they involve an act of suspension of judgment, they will differ in their functional fitting to their subjects in the manner of which beliefs they suspend. It can thus be said from the outset that an analogy between Husserl’s phenomenological method and penitential acts is possible because penitential acts also involve a *suspension of judgment*—an *ἐποχή*. At the same time, a fundamental difference is immediately clear: while Husserl’s originary *ἐποχή* is aimed at the critique of knowledge, or epistemology, this is not the aim of the penitential method. What, then, will the penitential *ἐποχή* seek?

Recall that, as was seen above, the acts of penance up through contrition have three primary aspects: (1) the examination of conscience, and (2) the reordering of the will and (3) the resolve not to sin again in regret. With respect to the examination of conscience, the aim of the penitential *ἐποχή* is knowledge for the sake of spiritual healing. Without first knowing that one has sinned, one can have neither regret nor purified intention. Thus, the penitential *ἐποχή* is initially a method-

⁵⁸ For example, at *Cartesian Meditations* V, Husserl employs a “peculiar *ἐποχή*,” essentially bracketing his natural belief in the real transcendence of other persons in conscious experience and reducing to a “sphere of ownness,” with the aim, precisely, to see if others really constitute transcendent objects of experience as subjects. See Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, section 44, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 92–99. As noted above, Husserl’s work here terminates in disclosing others as really transcendent objects—because they are phenomenologically given through the lived body as other subjects with their own corresponding transcendental egos.

ological employment of a kind of *suspension* in order to put the practitioner in a position to gain *knowledge* regarding his actions/dispositions so that spiritual healing can be accomplished. In order to apprehend myself as being in a state of (post-baptismal) sin or not, I must be able to view myself objectively. I cannot assume (1) that I have not sinned or (2) that I have sinned. The first assumption—probably the normal error as a consequence of sin itself—will prevent me from seeing my sin and seeking spiritual healing. The second results in or simply is scrupulousness and has a range of negative consequences beyond the scope of this study. Accordingly, the penitential ἐποχή is employed by the penitent so that he may suspend judgment as to whether he has committed an act of sin (or not). This method of examination, then, entails neither the presumption of innocence nor of guilt. In this manner alone one can candidly evaluate his intentional actions and dispositions.

Since acts of sin require that the agent have knowledge of the impropriety of the act, it is clear that *noetic-noematic* analysis is part of this penitential act. What the penitent seeks by way of this kind of suspension is to observe himself (νόησις) in relation with a certain object (νόημα) in such a way that he can actually determine, without any bias, whether or not his *intention* came to fruition with knowledge of the fact that it was *disordered*, or that he actually comported himself toward some object in a way he *knows* is disordered.⁵⁹ However, since sins follow properly on acts of the will, the examination of conscience requires, further, a βούλησις-βούλημα view of the structure of conscious-

⁵⁹ Here, the etymological roots of “conscience,” as we mean it in the phrase “examination of conscience,” is begging explicit presentation. The word “conscience” comes from the Latin *con*, which means “with,” and *scientia*, from the verb *scire*, which means “to know.” The kind of examination the penitent is performing pertains specifically to himself as a knower in at least two ways: first, as one *with knowledge* about himself and how he ought to be oriented toward particular objects: second, as one *with knowledge* of the fact that on such and such an occasion, he actually was not oriented toward some object(s) properly, or in the way he knows he ought to be.

ness. It is not simply that the penitent reflects on himself as relating to objects of consciousness as known, but as desired and willed, where intention just means a “tending-toward-something.”⁶⁰ Since all proper acts of will are informed both by knowledge that an end is good, and judgment as to its moral appropriateness, the βούλησις-βούλημα structure of consciousness analyzed by the penitent implies the νόησις-νόημα structure. Such *bouletic-boulematic* analysis could involve, for example, reflection on the fact that I once intended a glass of Scotch over and above other objects/goods, in a way which, because of my *understanding* of myself and the same objects (some of which are other persons), and in light of the moral law, was improper and disordered.

Even in this initial stage of contrition, i.e., examination of conscience, grace plays a role. Knowing that we have in fact reduced to this state of examination, and just what it is that we are looking for, allows us as penitents to ask and to pray to God for the disclosure of precisely what we seek. Thus, I can pray: “Christ, let me *see*, without prejudice,⁶¹ the points in my life at which I related (as βούλησις) improperly, that is, in a mentally and naturally disordering fashion, to any gift (βούλημα) which you have given me.” In the very act of asking for this, I have moved closer to healing in contrition. While the act of suspense here appears primarily *noetic*, pertaining to my belief about my state of sin or grace, the second and third parts of contrition require a *bouletic ἐποχή*, i.e., a suspense pertaining to the desiring will itself.

With respect to the second aspect of contrition, that is, the penitent’s attempt to achieve regret and re-orient his mind toward God, the comparison to the ἐποχή is especially conducive to bringing about contrition because the penitent is actually asking God for the grace to perform the suspending act in this respect. In other words, the penitent *sees*

⁶⁰ See *S.Th.* I-II, q. 12, a. 1, resp.: “Dicednum qoud intentio, sicut ipsum nomen sonat, significat ad aliquid tendere.”

⁶¹ Here, I mean to emphasize the *epoche*-like exhortation for a kind of suspension.

both himself (βούλησις) as improperly oriented toward some object (βούλημα), and the possibility of a yet to be actualized version of himself (βούλησις) in the proper relation with the same object (βούλημα). The penitent then asks God for this which he himself cannot accomplish, precisely because he is actually mentally and spiritually disordered. The penitent, in positive terms, is asking God to help him make the proper *bouletic-bouleumatic* relationship, which is merely potential at this point, as an act of intellectual apprehension, *actual*. In negative terms, and this brings the ἐποχή features to the fore, the penitent is asking God to allow him to *see* himself as actually *not being* in the improper relationship with the object at hand, that is, as having the proper desire or a *good will*; he is praying for the *suspension* of a particular intention which he obviously cannot accomplish on his own—lest, why would he be in this state of sin?

Finally, with respect to the third aspect in the act of contrition, that is, that one must desire not to return to the state where the object at hand is related to improperly, it is clear that the penitent must pray for, even simultaneously with the second step, the same kind of suspension. This is to say, that the penitent must pray for what he himself cannot be the internal cause of, namely a possession of himself (βούλησις) as *actually* not desiring to be in an improper relationship with the particular object (βούλημα) at hand, now and in the future for all time. Knowing, then, that what I need to be spiritually healed is to transcend these improper forms of intentionality, I can pray for the accomplishment of just this end. And so, *seeing* myself (βούλησις) as desiring to drink this glass of Scotch (βούλημα) in an improper and disordered way, say, over and above serving my friends, family, or profession, and yet also *seeing* that I am utterly incapable of changing this desire by my own power, in spite of the fact that I know it is wrong now, I can pray: “Christ, please give me the grace to suspend this judgment of myself as actually disordered and to understand myself as the kind of person who

actually serves, and thus loves, God and his friends and family over and above this glass of Scotch.”

Conclusion

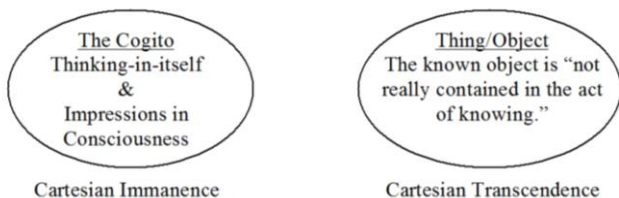
This study has presented St. Thomas’ explication of the Sacrament of penance and Edmund Husserl’s conception of the phenomenological ἐποχή, and argued that a fruitful analogy exists between them. While the intentional analysis pursuant to Husserl’s ἐποχή, being limited in its scope to the critique of knowledge, requires only a νόησις-νόημα view of the structure of consciousness, the penitential ἐποχή, extending in its scope to acts of will themselves, requires also a βούλησις-βούλημα view of the structure of consciousness. Looking to the act of contrition, it has been shown that a penitential ἐποχή is first employed in the examination of conscience, where there is a need to suspend belief as to whether one is in a state of sin or not. In the second and third stages of contrition, in order to accomplish a reordering of the will and a resolve not to sin again in regret, the penitent must suspend his will to the disordered end itself. With the aid of divine grace, these acts will lead the penitent back to a virtuous state of grace.



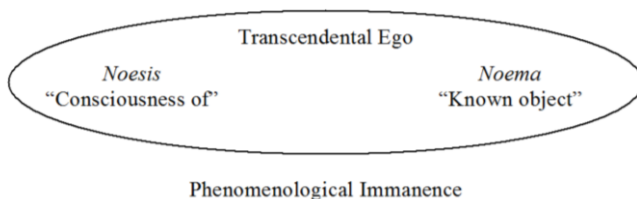
APPENDIX I

Pictorial Diagrams of the Natural, Phenomenological, and Penitential Attitudes

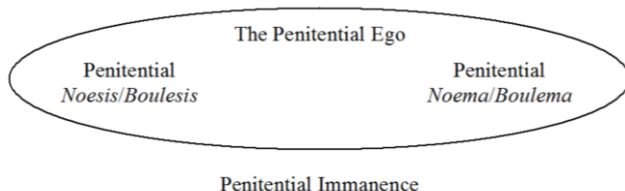
*The Natural/Cartesian Attitude*⁶²



The Phenomenological Attitude



Penitential Attitude



⁶² The quotation in the encircled object portion of the diagram is from *The Idea*, 27 (Lecture II). The diagrams are primarily intended to depict the relation of consciousness to its object(s). Thus, the key difference depicted between the Cartesian attitude and those of the phenomenological and penitential is that the former excludes objects of knowledge from the field of consciousness, whereas the latter do not.

APPENDIX II

Throughout the treatment of Husserl's phenomenological method, I emphasized its distinction from the Cartesian method. This distinction is especially relevant to the end of this study to the extent that it shows Husserl to be open to the kind of realism presupposed by penitential acts, which seems un-achievable once one has entered into the Cartesian attitude. On what has even been called the common reading, Husserl's method is essentially Cartesian and either necessitates or just is in its nature idealism and solipsism.⁶³ In Husserl's own lifetime, a group of his students and followers centered at Munich, including—most importantly—Roman Ingarden and Max Scheler, took his method as committing him to idealism.⁶⁴ Ingarden identified idealism as the “fatal defect of the philosophic method introduced in [Husserl's] *Ideas* and *Cartesian Meditations*.”⁶⁵ Preferring Husserl's critiques of psychologism and historicism in his earlier work, *Logical Investigations*, Scheler shared the sentiments of Ingarden.⁶⁶ This idealist reading of phenomenology is also strong in Thomistic circles and, consequently, in the Thomistic commentary literature on the phenomenological thought of Karol Wojtyla.⁶⁷ Here, Jacques Maritain provides a likely

⁶³ See Karl Ameriks, “Husserl's Realism,” *The Philosophical Review* 86, no. 4 (October 1977): 498, as cited and concurred with by Harrison Hall in his “Was Husserl a Realist or an Idealist?,” in *Husserl, Intentionality and Cognitive Science*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus in collaboration with Harrison Hall (Cambridge, Massachusetts/London, England: MIT Press, 1982), 169, footnote 2.

⁶⁴ See Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 212–213.

⁶⁵ See Hall, “Was Husserl a Realist or an Idealist?” For the text of Ingarden as cited by Hall, see *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt*, vol. 2 (Tubingen: Niemeyer, 1965); and “Die vier Begriffe der Transcendenz und das Problem des Idealismus in Husserl,” in *Analecta Husserliana*, vol. 1, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1971), 37–74.

⁶⁶ See Sokolowski, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 213.

⁶⁷ In contemporary literature on the work of Karol Wojtyla, see the following: Jaroslaw Kupczak, O.P., *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol*

origin of this reading in Thomistic circles. In *Distinguer Pour Unir ou Les Degrés du Savoir*, referring to the phenomenology as a form of idealism, he says, “This is the *πρῶτον ψεῦδος* [first falsehood] of phenomenology.”⁶⁸ He continues:

This fundamental misunderstanding is connected to the phenomenological *ἐποχή* insofar as it “puts into parenthesis” the whole register of extramental existence and in this way separates the object (the essence-phenomenon) from the thing . . .⁶⁹

Those who adopt this anti-realist reading of Husserl’s method will, no doubt, have serious objections to the comparison this paper draws between penitential acts and the *ἐποχή*. Whereas, such interpreters will hold that the *ἐποχή* places the phenomenologist in a state of idealism and absolute presuppositionlessness, the penitent brings a

Wojtyla/John Paul II (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 75; Kenneth L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 68; Thomas D. Williams, L.C., “What is Thomistic Personalism?,” *Alpha Omega* VII, no. 2 (2004): 170. While it is clear that Karol Wojtyla sees (1) a fundamental compatibility between realism and the phenomenological method, he does think that it is not sufficient to establish realism in itself and (2) he appears to follow the idealist reading—at some level—which he obtained from Ingarden and Scheler. On (1), see Karol Wojtyla, “The Problem of the Separation of Experience from the Act in Ethics,” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, O.S.M. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 32–33; and Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki, in *Analecta Husserliana*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979), 10. On (2), see Karol Wojtyla, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being,” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok, O.S.M. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 210. While Wojtyla actually credits the Husserlian phenomenological tradition with breaking down the “line of demarcation,” between subjectivity and objectivity precipitated by the Cartesian reduction, he nonetheless characterizes Husserl’s *ἐποχή* as “bracketing the existence, or reality, of the conscious subject.” See also Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 46 and the corresponding endnote 21 (page 305).

⁶⁸ Maritain, *Distinguer Pour Unir ou Les Degrés du Savoir*, 197: “C’est là le *πρῶτον ψεῦδος* de la phénoménologie.” My translation.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: “Cette méprise fondamentale est liée à l’*ἐποχή* phénoménologique, en tant qu’elle «met entre parenthèses» tout le registre de l’existence extramentale et sépare ainsi l’objet (l’essence-phénomène) de la chose . . .” My translation.

great number of realist type assumptions into his reflections. First, there is the penitent's basic assumption that he is related to really existing objects in the world (persons and goods), and then one would obviously have to point out that he assumes the existence of God and His moral law. The fundamental error of this idealist or "presuppositionlessness" reading is to take Husserl to be universally bracketing all of reality/existence through the *ἐποχή*—a reading so well captured by Maritain above. The following remarks on Husserl's method are intended to show that his phenomenology is not idealist, and that it is fully open to a realism. This will serve as a response, accordingly, to what is likely to be the most significant criticism of this study's thesis.

Clearly looking to distinguish the *ἐποχή* from the Cartesian method, Husserl has the following to say at *Ideas* I, 32: "We could now let the universal *ἐποχή*, in our sharply determinate and novel sense of the term, take the place of the Cartesian attempt to doubt universally."⁷⁰ A few lines later, Husserl goes on to note that in employing the *ἐποχή*,

I am *not negating* this "world" as though I were a sophist; I am *not doubting its factual being* as though I were a skeptic; rather I am exercising the "phenomenological" *ἐποχή* which also *completely shuts me off from any judgment about spatiotemporal factual being*.⁷¹

Characteristic of this suspension is not a negation of transcendent objective reality, but a complete setting aside of the question of real transcendence. This notion of suspension and setting aside is not all together foreign to natural modes of thinking. The mathematician, for example, does not need to negate the world of perceived objects in order to study mathematical objects, which he takes in abstraction from the sensuously perceived world. The natural world is there for him in experi-

⁷⁰ *Ideas* (I, 32), 65.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

ence—it is, in fact, always with him—though it is not considered in his mathematical mode of consciousness.⁷² So too, in the phenomenological attitude, belief in transcendence of objects of experience is suspended, bracketed, or set aside. It is simply not considered in this mode of thought—a demand of the subject matter of this science—though it is thereby in no way negated. Such a negation, in fact, is incompatible with the very meaning of the *ἐποχή* as an attitude of “suspension,” “neutrality,” or “cessation of belief.”

Now, it must be said that the phenomenological method and its discovery of intentionality, certainly do not in themselves establish the transcendent existence of objects of experience, which is necessary for realism. No, it is just such transcendence that the method is initially intended to put out of consideration. At the very same time, and as Harrison Hall has well pointed out, in his “Was Husserl a Realist or an Idealist?,” this suspension also requires a non-commitment to idealism. All Husserl’s method commits him to is not considering the possibility of real transcendence, at least initially in his phenomenology. By no means is he committed by it to the claim that objects of consciousness are not transcendent. Far from it, he must be open to the possibility of real transcendence if he is going to successfully employ the *ἐποχή*. In short, and at the outset, if one is still asking questions about the real extra-mental existence, the transcendence or immanence of objects of experience—if one is still asking questions the answers to which would commit him to an idealist or a realist position—then one is still operating in the natural or Cartesian attitude and he has not yet entered into the phenomenological attitude. Therefore, interpreters of Husserl’s method who claim that this method is an idealism have neither understood nor employed this method.

⁷² Husserl uses this example at *Ideas* (I, 28), 62.

As has already been stated in the subsection “The Phenomenological Attitude,” that Husserl does not intend the ἐποχή as the universal negation of the existence of objects of experience is also clear from his formulation of phenomenology as a rigorous science. Through the ontological reduction, Husserl formulates the subject matter of phenomenology (conscious-knowing), which already exists as a given datum capable of rigorous analysis. Through phenomenological analysis disclosing the essence of conscious-knowing, the basic structure of consciousness is then disclosed as intentional—as a noetic-noematic concretum. It must be understood thus, that phenomenology presupposes the existence of its subject matter (conscious-knowing) and that, by way of analysis, it quickly defines this subject matter in such a manner as to include in its essence both the knowing (noesis) and the known-object (noema). The existence of objects of experience is, thus, not negated, even though judgment about the real transcendence of these objects is initially suspended by the ἐποχή.

As it turns out, Husserl demonstrates his openness to the possibility of real transcendence, and that he sees phenomenology as terminating in a full blown realism, in the fifth meditation of his *Cartesian Meditations*, where his explicit goal is to answer the charge of thinkers like Ingarden and Scheler that phenomenology is a solipsism and an idealism mired in skepticism.⁷³ Here, Husserl works from analysis of the phenomenon of empathy, which shows the necessity of an intuition of the other through a “pairing” of the lived body (*Leib*) with that of the other. Essentially, there is an analytic connection between the lived body of the other and the transcendental ego of the other, which necessitates that the other be a really transcendent other existing in its own sphere of oneness, just as I do. Full explanation of this novel and enormously important philosophical work by Husserl is far beyond the

⁷³ See Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 89–157.

scope of this study. However, it is enough here to say that, by way of this phenomenological analysis, Husserl certainly takes himself to have established the real transcendence of the other, and consequently of any intersubjective objects of experience—he takes himself to have moved from a phenomenological attitude that is initially neutral about real transcendence to one that must necessarily assert it and fully embrace realism.

One may still want to defend the notion, however, that Husserl is an idealist. After all, he himself used the term to describe his phenomenology. Thus, and finally, I will provide two sources in which Husserl makes it clear that his “transcendental idealism” is no Kantian idealism, but that it is actually a realism, or at least open to it.⁷⁴ In a 1934 letter he wrote to Abbé Baudin, Husserl says the following: “No ordinary ‘realist’ has ever been as realistic and concrete as I, the phenomenological ‘idealist’ (a word which by the way I no longer use).” Husserl also had the following to say in the preface to the first English edition of the *Ideas* (1931):

Phenomenological idealism does not deny the factual [*wirklich*] existence of the real [*real*] world (and in the first instance nature) as if it deemed it an illusion. . . . Its only task and accomplishment is to clarify the sense [*Sinn*] of this world, just that sense in which we all regard it as really existing and as really valid. That the world exists . . . is quite indubitable. Another matter is to understand this indubitability which is the basis for life and science and clarify the basis for its claim.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Here, I am greatly indebted to Dr. Dan Bradley for having brought these texts to my attention, and for offering his helpful thoughts on Husserl in our discourses.

⁷⁵ Edmund Husserl, preface to W. R. Boyce Gibson’s translation of *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1931). Cited after Dagfin Føllesdal’s “Husserl and the Categories,” in *Categories: Historical and Systematic Essays*, ed. Michael Gorman, Jonathan J. Sanford, *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, vol. 41 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 122.

PENITENTIAL METHOD AS PHENOMENOLOGICAL: THE PENITENTIAL *EPOCHE*

SUMMARY

Synthesizing Thomism and phenomenology, this paper compares the kind of reflective thinking and willing that goes on in penitential acts to Edmund Husserl's method of the phenomenological *ἐποχή* (*epoche*). Analyzing penance up through the act of contrition, it first shows it to have three primary acts: (1) the examination of conscience, (2) the reordering of the will and (3) the resolve not to sin again in regret. After presenting this Thomistic conception of contrition in detail, it then focuses on the essence of Husserl's *ἐποχή* as a method intended to "suspend" certain beliefs in order to discover the truth about knowledge. In conclusion, it shows that a particular form of the *ἐποχή*—a penitential *ἐποχή*—must be employed in these three penitential acts so that a disposition of grace may be made present in the penitent.

KEYWORDS

Thomism, phenomenology, Thomistic personalism, Edmund Husserl, realism, idealism, *epoche*, consciousness, conscience, penitence, penance, contrition, will, sin, belief, truth, knowledge, grace, *noesis-noema*, *boulesis-boulema*, virtue.

REFERENCES

- Aristotle. *Ethica Nicomachea*, edited by I. Bywater. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894; repr. 1962.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993. Accessible at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM. Accessed on Feb. 22, 2018.
- Descartes, René. "Meditations on First Philosophy." In *Modern Philosophy*, edited by Forrest E. Baird and Walter Kaufmann. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2003.
- de Aquino, S. Thomae. "Opera Omnia." In *Corpus Thomisticum*, recognovit ac instruxit Enrique Alarcón automato electronico. Pompaelone ad Universitatis Studiorum Navarrensis aedes a MM A.D. Accessible at: <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/iopera.html>. Accessed on Feb. 22, 2018.
- Føllesdal, Dagfin. "Husserl and the Categories." In *Categories: Historical and Systematic Essays*, edited by Michael Gorman, Jonathan J. Sanford, 118–135. In *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, vol. 41. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004.
- Hall, Harrison. "Was Husserl a Realist or an Idealist?" In *Husserl, Intentionality and Cognitive Science*, edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus in collaboration with Harrison Hall, 169–190. Cambridge, Massachusetts/London, England: MIT Press, 1982.
- Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by Tom L. Beauchamp. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Husserl, Edmund. *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, translated by Dorion Cairns. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999.

- Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, translated by F. Kersten. In *Collected Works*, vol. 2. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983.
- Husserl, Edmund. *Logical Investigations*, vol. I, translated by J. N. Findlay. London and New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Husserl, Edmund. *The Idea of Phenomenology*, translated by Lee Hardy. Dordrecht-Boston-London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1907.
- Kupczak, Jaroslaw, O.P. *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000.
- Maritain, Jacques. *Distinguer Pour Unir ou Les Degrés du Savoir*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1946.
- Schmitz, Kenneth L. *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993.
- Sokolowski, Robert. *Introduction to Phenomenology*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Tkacz, Michael W. "Albert the Great and the Revival of Aristotle's Zoological Research Program." *Vivarium* 45, no. 1 (2007): 30–68.
- Williams, Thomas, D. L.C. "What is Thomistic Personalism?" *Alpha Omega* VII, no. 2 (2004): 163–97.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M.. 209–17. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyla, Karol. *The Acting Person*, translated by Andrzej Potocki. In *Analecta Husserliana*, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979.
- Wojtyla, Karol. "The Problem of the Separation of Experience from the Act in Ethics." In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, O.S.M., 23–44. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

Book Reviews

FR. KINGSLEY CHIDIEBERE EKEOCHA

*On the Methodology of Metaphysics /
Z metodologii metafizyki*
by Ks. Stanisław Kamiński*

This book is a collection of five articles, written in English and Polish. The author's aim in these articles is to formulate or construct a new system of philosophy—classical philosophy—capable of standing the test of time. A careful reading of this book shows a reaction against positivist movements and anti-metaphysical trends which denigrate the scientific status of metaphysics, impose methods which are incompatible with classical metaphysics or absolutely obviate classical metaphysics by reducing it to some other philosophical discipline. The author makes it obvious that metaphysics is under an attack. The title of the work seems very *ad rem* because it shows the way the author undertakes his task of rediscovering and reconstructing classical philosophy. The author is convinced that the reconstruction of classical philosophy demands an autonomous methodology, untainted by positivist tools. The autonomy of methodology guarantees the autonomy and scientificity of philosophy. This philosophy, which can be called a metaphysical philosophy, is what the author refers to as “the theory of being.”

FR. KINGSLEY CHIDIEBERE EKEOCHA — John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland
e-mail: frkingsleyekeocha@gmail.com • ORCID ID: no data

* Ks. Stanisław Kamiński, *On the Methodology of Metaphysics / Z metodologii metafizyki* (Lublin-Roma: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu & Società Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino, 2018), 275 pages, ISBN 978-83-65792-02-0.



The author's understanding of metaphysics is deeply connected with that of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, yet it retains some unique features. Metaphysics for him is a conception of philosophy which is realistic, that is, a philosophy which has real being as its object. And it is in this narrow sense that it is called classical philosophy.

In the first chapter, "The Theory of Being and Other Philosophical Disciplines," Kamiński seeks answers to questions like: is it possible to formulate an identical methodology for explanation in all philosophical disciplines? Is it possible to reduce all philosophical disciplines to the theory of being? Can the "theory of being alone be the basis of the disciplines of classical philosophy or even exhaust them all?"¹ The author's answer to these questions is affirmative. He argues that

if we assume that classical philosophy explains any object given in experience in its ultimate and necessary ontic aspect, each particular type of reality is ultimately explained also in the same way as being in general, that is, by the structure of being.²

The author shows the cradle of classical thought through Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas and the importance of the theory of being as a base for the explanation of all beings from the angle of their causes, even those specialized in other disciplines. Thus the unity of the disciplines in Aristotle was solidified in Thomas Aquinas. Thanks to "first philosophy" which is the bearer of the principle of justification for all existing things. The decline of this importance was inevitable in subsequent philosophers, from the Hellenistic to the Modern period, who adopted different methods and systems, championing the cause for the autonomy and disintegration of some philosophical disciplines from metaphysics like the theory of cognition, theory of values, philosophy of

¹ Kamiński, *On the Methodology of Metaphysics*, 28.

² *Ibid.*, 39–40.

nature and practical philosophy, natural theology or theory of the Absolute. Meanwhile, metaphysics metamorphosed through these times into logic and a philosophy of possible beings.

In the reconstruction of classical philosophy, Kamiński insists that “one has to restore the greatest possible faithfulness to the conceptions that were historically first (Aristotelian-Thomistic), and were not deformed by later modifications.”³ Secondly, there is a need to unify the disciplines within classical philosophy by restricting the range of issues it covers. Hence, Kamiński brings together the philosophy of culture and philosophy of action on the grounds that “both are determined by the ontic nature of the acting subject.”⁴ Similarly, Kamiński maintains that in the reconstructed version of classical philosophy the theory of cognition (epistemology) cannot be separated from the theory of being (metaphysics). He accepts the fact that the study of epistemology and metaphysics is widely practiced, however, he claims that such division has no place in classical philosophy.

The second chapter, “The Theory of Being and Its Domains,” seeks to identify all the separate disciplines which form part of classical philosophy, in order to establish methodological links between them and specify the nature of the relationship between these disciplines. Kamiński achieves this task by first stating the views of different philosophers within classical thought under the following headings: (i) “The Basis of the Scope of the Theory of Being,” (ii) “The Character of the Domains of the Theory of Being,” and (iii) “The Methodological Relationships between the Domains of the Theory of Being.” Under these different questions Kamiński submits that (i) “the theory of being constitutes the supreme and principal manifestation of philosophy,”

³ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

hence there is an identity of philosophy and the theory of being,⁵ (ii) “the theory of being constitutes a science that is one and indivisible with regard to its formal object and its method of explanation; it is possible however to distinguish its disciplines that are partially autonomous, and this is due to their particular starting points,”⁶ (iii) theory of being proceeds from general metaphysics to particular metaphysics. These points secure the uniformity of philosophical cognition and keep philosophy in check.

Furthermore, Kamiński painstakingly demonstrates why classical philosophy can be identified with metaphysics. He emphasizes that in every science there are two possible objects for investigation: “the object of experience” and “the object of theoretical clauses.”⁷ Metaphysics, and indeed all philosophical disciplines have existing beings as the object of experience. Theories simply serve as a generalized formula for explaining what is given in experience and are often times cut off from reality. In this sense, Kamiński defines the “theory” in the “theory of being” as a realistic model wherein the “theoretician of being endeavors to explain reality in the most general (transcendental and analogous) scale.”⁸ Therefore, the determination of the object of metaphysics as being precedes any theory which aims at an explanation of reality. The particular metaphysics, hence, are bound up and linked with general metaphysics on the basis of their formal object and explanation. One important point in this chapter is that only a partial autonomy exists between the theory of being and its domains because of the unity in their formal object and the structure of justification.

The third and fourth chapters are entitled, respectively, “On the Language of the Theory of Being” and “Explanation in Metaphysics.”

⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 74.

It is clear that all cognitive actions are communicable only through language. Hence, this forms a vital part of the theory of being. Kamiński states that language is indispensable for doing metaphysics, and argues that appropriate kind of language should accompany metaphysical investigations since all products and fruits of philosophical investigations must be communicated adequately. He holds that the essence of language is not simply to define terms and concepts in metaphysics. Rather, language should help the cognizer to see the object of demonstration. It helps one to see the content of being.

The neo-positivists, then, and others who lay emphasis on the “analysis of the pragmatic functions of language”⁹ are defective in its usage. Language in metaphysics cannot be deductive as in logic. The language of the theory of being should be structured in such a way that in the determination of the formal object of the theory of being, the language arrives at the concept of being. The making explicit of this concept in a general sense leads to the discovery of transcendental concepts of thing, unity, something, truth and good. These properties correspond to the fundamental principles of being and thought: the principle of identity, non-contradiction, sufficient reason and finality. There should be “a mutual conditioning of the ontic, cognitive and linguistic aspects”¹⁰ in the theory of being wherein the ontic aspect enjoys primacy. This means that language is objectival. The metaphysical language is also transcendental and analogous in character.

The fifth chapter, “The Methodological Peculiarity of the Theory of Being,” highlights the distinctive nature of the theory of being. First, identifying the theory of being with classical philosophy does not imply that its authority is based on that of Thomas Aquinas or Aristotle. Rather, it is based on what is given in experience. Secondly, in the classi-

⁹ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 126.

fication of the sciences, the theory of being stands on its own away from theology or the natural-mathematical sciences. Thirdly, between minimalism and maximalism, the theory of being is committed to fulfilling maximalist goals which other disciplines cannot engage in. Maximalism means that philosophy is able to ask and proffer solutions to fundamental questions concerning the meaning, purpose, and end of existence. Fourthly, the theory of being sees our world as rational and, hence, begins its investigation from common sense experience. In this way, it rejects all idealist and subjectivist trends and focuses constantly on the sensitive-intellectual operations at the moment of contact with objective reality. Hence, intellectualism and reductiveness of thinking are basic features of the theory of being.

In evaluation, the arguments which the author employs are sound and well-founded. The author shows deep experience of philosophy, metaphysics, methodology, history of philosophy, etc. He successfully demonstrates the specificity and peculiarity of metaphysical cognition. His work is a metaphysical masterpiece with a methodological foundation. It demonstrates that being is the point of unity for all philosophical disciplines. Therefore, philosophy is not simply a set of unconnected disciplines which investigate “everything.” Instead, to be philosophical is to be inclusively metaphysical, realistic and methodic. The methods of the contemporary sciences are not proper to realistic metaphysics.

The main difficulty I encountered in the book is the author’s use of “theory of being” which seems ambiguous. Sometimes he employs it as metaphysics (general metaphysics precisely) distinguishable from other disciplines (particular metaphysics) within classical philosophy, and at other times he treats “theory of being” as a model of classical philosophy distinguishable from other models. Also, a reader may be tempted to think that the author simply reduces all philosophical disciplines into metaphysics (general and particular). Such criticism of reductionism may be too harsh since the author emphasizes the unity of phil-

osophical disciplines, on the one hand, and a partial autonomy of the particular disciplines, on the other. I agree with the author on a need for unity of the philosophical disciplines because when philosophy concerns itself with everything and uses different methods from the sciences, it falls into an identity crisis.

Most interesting for me, however, is the place of the “philosophy of God” in the divisions of the philosophical disciplines. It seems the author would reject any idea of “Christian philosophy.”¹¹ Philosophy has to be autonomous in relation to faith since God is not given in immediate experience. Therefore we can only employ the Absolute as reason for the existence of contingent things. Such philosophical position may not be totally in agreement with the claims of philosophers like Joseph Owens, whose book title, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics*,¹² already suggest the contrary.

There is no doubt that this book covers a wide range of issues for philosophers, metaphysicians, methodologists and even students in the natural sciences who seek to understand the relation between philosophy and other disciplines. I am certain that these persons, as well as all lovers of wisdom, will find the book compelling.



REFERENCES

- Kamiński, Stanisław. *On the Methodology of Metaphysics / Z metodologii metafizyki*. Lublin-Roma: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu & Società Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino, 2018.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

¹² Joseph Owens, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1963).

Owens, Joseph. *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics*. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1963.

BRIAN WELTER

*Noble Beauty, Transcendent Holiness:
Why the Modern Age Needs the Mass of Ages*
by Peter Kwasniewski*

Professor at Wyoming Catholic College, Peter Kwasniewski offers a thoughtful, well-rounded argument for the superiority of the Latin Mass. His view of Vatican II, though harsh, is mostly nuanced, though his failure to grant the Novus Ordo its place will disappoint some. He situates the Council within wider, modernist currents and the Liturgical Movement, frequently backing his argument with Conciliar documents. He is harshest on the post-Vatican II era and its main players—Annibale Bugnini, Pope Paul VI, the “smug” writers of the following decades celebrating a victory over supposedly obscurantist, outdated spirituality.

Kwasniewski never hides his low opinion of the outcome of Vatican II. He clearly defines the issue as being Novus Ordo (also called Ordinary Form) versus the Latin Mass (the so-called Extraordinary Form or Vetus Ordo). His quotation of Henry Sire sums up much of his own oftentimes strongly-worded argument on both Masses:

BRIAN WELTER — Taipei, Taiwan

e-mail: brianteachertaiwan@gmail.com • ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6796-6561>

* Peter Kwasniewski, *Noble Beauty, Transcendent Holiness: Why the Modern Age Needs the Mass of Ages* (Kettering, OH: Angelico Press, 2017), 318 pages, ISBN 978-1-62138-284-3.



[T]he traditional Catholic liturgy, with all its attendant devotions, made up a whole of potent beauty and imaginative persuasion, which bound souls to the Faith as no rationalist invention does. In its place, the new Mass has set an experience of soul-destroying secularity at the heart of every Catholic's ordinary experience of his faith. . . . The old liturgy was a nourisher of souls, the new is a starver of them.¹

In other words, pick your sides, readers.

Kwasniewski spends much time examining the Extraordinary Form in light of tradition. The third chapter, highlighting the spirituality of Our Lady, is particularly illuminative. Like many Catholic writers, he sees in the Blessed Virgin the summation of Christian living and the basis of ecclesiology. Individuals and the Church as a whole need to emulate Mary's receptivity, a receptivity that is not passive, but rather contemplative: "We do not make or create or fashion this word, but, like Mary, we receive it from another, we suffer it and are thus transformed by it, as potency is fulfilled by actuality."² This is the spirituality that the Latin Mass forms in us.

In Chapter 8 the author returns to contemplation, discussing the meaning of *participatio actuosa*: "a deeper sense of engagement that begins and ends with interior activity—faith leading to contemplation."³ The author never shies away from how strange or different this is for contemporary westerners accustomed to individualistic, utilitarian values. It is, in fact, a holy strangeness. Kwasniewski expresses his nuanced view of Vatican II here, showing that the Council can be appropriated by supporters of the Extraordinary Form: "[T]he Council Fathers did not intend to use *actuosa* to mean 'hyperactive.'"⁴ His learned

¹ *Ibid.*, 126–127.

² *Ibid.*, 58.

³ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁴ *Ibid.*

reinterpretation of the Council, by addressing commonly-heard counterclaims, significantly strengthens his argument.

The Extraordinary Form is a powerful spiritual director, an aid to the modern soul thirsty for contemplation and a break from materialism and busyness. Kwasniewski cites Joseph Ratzinger's wise insight into the modern condition:

In the present age, we are all possessed by a strange restlessness that suspects any silence of being a waste of time and any kind of repose as being negligence. . . . And yet in the religious sphere receptivity is at least as important as activity.⁵

The chief sin of the post-Vatican II era was the pride of believing that humans could refashion the liturgy. Kwasniewski starkly describes the process, contrasting it with the humble devotional receptivity of past centuries:

[T]here was never a time in the Church's history . . . when the Roman liturgy was sliced into discrete portions that were farmed out to subcommittees . . . for redactions and spliced back together, with the ragged joints still showing.⁶

There is in the *Novus Ordo* a modernist logic, in other words (rationalist, utilitarian, individualist, horizontal, narcissistic), that has much in common with the Protestant spirit.

Fortunately for readers, the author doesn't leave us hanging, but develops a theology of tradition greatly inspired by Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's insight that modern man can no longer handle an "invisible, remote, and mysterious God."⁷ Ratzinger's words reflect the author's argument: "Worship is no longer going up to God, but drawing God down into one's own world."⁸ Yet for Kwasniewski the liturgy

⁵ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 42, footnote 29.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*

allows God, with all His mystery and majesty, to break into our world and re-form us to His image.

The author thus contrasts modernity with tradition, the Ordinary Form with the Extraordinary Form. The former Mass is horizontal and understandable, and therefore boring. The latter, being beautiful and mysterious, by its very strangeness presents a challenge to the intellect. Kwasniewski borrows Pope John Paul II's characterization of the Latin Mass as being counter-cultural. Kwasniewski notes the tension between the modern and pre-modern person attending the Extraordinary Form: "When you attend the traditional Mass, you find yourself either attracted by something special in it, or put off by the demands it makes. Lukewarmness is not an option."⁹ It is this interplay of modern and pre-modern that helps readers grasp the significance of the Latin Mass for the contemporary western world. The Extraordinary Form, Kwasniewski argues, can save us and the world. This is a convincing claim though it does leave followers of the *Novus Ordo* spiritually homeless and hopeless even where this Mass is said with reverence.

Much of Kwasniewski's argument is, not surprisingly, politically incorrect. He supports a hierarchical view, where the priest and the laity have a different relationship to the Eucharist. Eucharistic ministers and the reception of the Eucharist in the hand are inconsistent with Catholic sacramental theology. It is the priest's hands alone that have received the anointing necessary to handle the sacred Host.

This is connected to another politically incorrect assertion. Effort, not accessibility (a byword of the people Kwasniewski opposes), is key. The Extraordinary Form, "a veritable bootcamp of spiritual discipline" with plenty of painful kneeling,¹⁰ demands much of the worshiper. Its mystery cannot be rationally fathomed. The priest's many

⁹ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 259.

gestures, developed over the centuries and conducted with rubrics-guided precision, cannot be totally understood, perhaps even by the priest himself. This presupposes humility: The humility of not knowing everything. That is why the Latin Mass is not boring, but captivating. This leads to another keen comparison: “With the elements that once appealed to the whole man and his emotions having been stripped away, novel elements are invented and inserted.”¹¹

Such contrasts will, perhaps unfortunately, offend many. Perhaps this is the book’s greatest weakness: Kwasniewski is polemical, not irenic. He does not seek peaceful co-existence between the two Masses. He even predicts that one will eventually prevail. Perhaps this reflects the author’s realism: We are all involved in the liturgical wars, whether we want to be or not. He notes Martin Mosebach’s observation that we have all become “an armchair expert in the nature, structure, rubrics, and history of the sacred liturgy,” where the individual “become[s] a spectator and a critic” rather than a worshiper.¹² Here Kwasniewski criticizes Latin Mass devotees for being especially critical of the smallest deviations, asking, “Can we break through to a childlike apprenticeship to the sacred liturgy?”¹³ Ultimately, the author notes, “we do not need to invent new things; we need to rediscover old things that have always worked and will always work.”¹⁴

The Chapter “A Perpetual Feast of All Saints,” explicitly outlining the old things that need rediscovery, is the book’s highlight and in practical terms is the part of the book that succeeds best at contrasting the Ordinary Form with the Extraordinary Form. The latter Mass is where we meet and get to know the persons—the saints, mystics, angels—of the eternal faith. These persons are our spiritual helpers. We

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹² *Ibid.*, 170.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

can ask for the prayers of SS. Peter and Paul, Kwasniewski enthuses: “These saints become one’s friends, and one’s communion with them grows as each year their feasts are dutifully celebrated.”¹⁵ Ridding the Mass of the names of the great angels Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael is a sure sign of the decline of faith among Church leaders according to the author.

Kwasniewski’s clarity and sincerity, a great strength of the book, also produce the greatest weakness. While he repeatedly cites Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, and while he does examine Vatican II with nuance, Kwasniewski never manages to express sympathy for the Novus Ordo in the way that Ratzinger has. While the Pope Emeritus seems to have accepted that the Novus Ordo is here to stay, and that we need to make the best of it, Kwasniewski the liturgical warrior asks readers to take sides and prepare for battle, a most un-Catholic thing to do. Readers would benefit from his changing his either-or to Ratzinger’s both-and and trust that the Holy Spirit will work things out in the end.



REFERENCES

Kwasniewski, Peter. *Noble Beauty, Transcendent Holiness: Why the Modern Age Needs the Mass of Ages*. Kettering, OH: Angelico Press, 2017.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 224.

