By: Richard H. Bulzacchelli

MARY AND THE ACTING PERSON: 
AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF PARTICIPATORY 
REDEMPTION IN THE PERSONALISM OF 
KAROL WOJTYLA/POPE JOHN PAUL II 

A Dissertation submitted 
in partial fulfillment of the requirements 
for the degree 

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ex aedibus Pontificiae Facultatis Theologicae Marianum, die 2 Februarius 2012.
I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Kay, who has sacrificed as much as I for this project.

I dedicate this dissertation, also, to Pope Bl. John Paul II, and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom he was so profoundly devoted throughout his life.
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Introduction

In the present dissertation, we will show that John Paul II’s Marian thought in his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* is thoroughly informed by his personalist anthropology as developed in his prepapal work, *The Acting Person*, and in a series of articles in which he developed his thesis further. Central to this consideration will be Wojtyla’s understanding of the ideas of self-determination and participation, where he offers new insights intended to transcend the limitations of the naturalistic-cosmological conception of the human person through a turn to personal subjectivity characteristic of contemporary thought, but without losing the so-called “objective” or “transcendental” dimension. Wojtyla thus seeks to avoid Kantian formalism, characterized as it is by the option to structure the moral universe entirely upon the categories of rational thought, wherein the most fundamental truth about morality—namely, the love of a person for other persons—is to be bracketed for moral analysis, and pure, passionless “duty” left as the sole measure of moral virtue. He also seeks, however, to avoid the turn to sentimentalism as found first in Hume, and later, according to Wojtyla’s reading, in the thought of Max Scheler. Thus, Wojtyla attempts to ground ethical choice and action in a neo-realism that takes adequate account of the subjectivity of the person, such that the person is understood and analyzed, not as a mere *thing* or *object*, but as a *thou*, who cannot be reduced to any mere function of biology, psychology, sociology, or cosmology. This perspective, according to which the person emerges as truly self-determining, and also as thoroughly oriented toward the whole through a nature designed by God for the dynamic of self-donation, forms the foundation of his work in *Redemptoris Mater*. There, the figure of Mary comes to stand as the perfect image of the *acting person*, who comes to her fulfillment through a radically free act of self-donation, thus implicating herself in the common good of all humanity. In the end, this understanding of Mary will serve as the philosophico-anthropological underpinning of the Catholic and Orthodox view of Mary in her cosmic, soteriological, and eschatological significance.
0.1: Status Quaestionis:

This thesis has never been thoroughly developed to date. It would be an overstatement, of course, to suggest that the scholarly record is entirely void on this point; but it would be accurate to say that where discussions of Wojtyla's concept of the Acting Person have touched upon his Mariology, they have not done so in such a way as to provide the philosophico-anthropological basis for a full reading of *Redemptoris Mater* on the question of human agency and participation. In the present dissertation, we have taken our investigation to that length, and have gone on to analyze *Redemptoris Mater* in that light. While a few scholars have drawn some connection between *The Acting Person* and *Redemptoris Mater*, most scholarship on Wojtyla's personalist anthropology does not touch on his Mariology, and most scholarship on his Mariology does not rest consciously upon his personalist anthropology. Our thesis, thus illustrates the inner consistency in Wojtyla's thought, showing a synthesis between dimensions of his thinking that have been treated, for the most part, as unrelated trajectories.

That said, the thought of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II has become the focus of a great deal of scholarly attention in recent decades—not simply because of the *de facto* influence of John Paul II as pope, but just as much because of the objective merit of his thinking as a scholar. No doubt, his papacy was the cause of a much more rapid and thoroughgoing impact than might otherwise have been realized, but it would be naïve to suggest that this impact was not meritorious in its own right. While, however, a great deal of attention has been paid to his *personalism* in general, beyond the work dedicated to the technical content of Wojtyla's personalist philosophical perspective as such,¹ the bulk of the

studies can be divided into two categories. These are: 1) those dealing with sexuality, marriage and family issues, and the surrounding moral questions;² and 2) those dealing with questions of economics, political theory, and social justice.³ Of course, there

² This issue does not constitute the focus of the present work, so we cite, only by way of illustration, the following examples in the academic arena: Damian P. Fedoryka, John Paul II as a Prophet of Life in a Culture of Death, *Faith & Reason*, Vols. XXIV–XXV (1999–2000): 67–84; William E. May, “The ‘New’ Evangelization, Catholic Moral Life in Light of *Veritatis splendor*, and the Family, *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Fall 2004): 393–402; also, see, Richard H. Bulzacchelli, “Opening the Self to the Other: A Personalist Response to Contemporary Challenges to Catholic Sexual Ethics,” Ethical issues in Sex and Marriage, Spring 2008 Institute of Bioethics Conference, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Steubenville, OH (March 2008), although the thought of Wojtyla/John Paul II is not the exclusive focus of the essay. The preponderance of contributions on John Paul II’s theology of the body, in spite of the heavily academic flavor of the work, has been offered to populist audiences. For a notable exception to this rule, of course, see Michael Waldstein’s extensive commentary in, John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, Michael Waldstein, trans. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 1–128.

has been overlap.⁴ We need not engage, here in a bibliographical survey of this material, since what is relevant to us, at this point, would be studies with still a different emphasis not yet widely represented in the literature.

As we have said, little attention has been given to his personalist thinking as it comes to bear upon the more mystical dimension of the Catholic world-view—in particular, the participation of the creature in the process of redemption. We contend, however, that this as yet underexplored area of inquiry promises to bear a great deal of fruit. Noting that Wojtyla played a significant role in the Second Vatican Council, especially in the composition of Lumen gentium and Gaudium et spes,⁵ it is reasonable to suppose that, as suggested by his pre-papal work, Sources of Renewal,⁶ he would go on to apply his personalist perspective to the work of the council as the proper hermeneutical lens through which the conciliar documents ought to be interpreted. As pope, he would do this principally (though by no means exclusively) through his formal magisterial contributions, especially his apostolic letters and his encyclicals. Without suggesting that we ought to undertake, here, a thorough exploration of this question—indeed, such a question could easily occupy the better measure of a scholarly career—we would like to focus particularly upon the personalistic dimension of the thought of Wojtyla as it comes to bear upon the question of participation in grace as an efficacious act of self-determination, and that, as concerns the question of creaturely interpersonal intercession, most fully realized in the person of Mary.


Of course it would be necessary to take account of a number of difficulties emergent in the literature. First among these is the fact that there is comparatively little active dialogue in the scholarly literature between those who see Wojtyla in light of his Thomistic pedigree and those who see him as a phenomenologist and a personalist. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that people on either side of this "divide" are frequently unfamiliar with the intricacies of the issues of concern for those on the other side. Their specializations typically do not overlap, and they find themselves unable to appreciate the importance of the insights made from the other point of view. Thus, we see, in the literature, that there appear to be two different Wojtylas. Many see him as a committed Thomist who restates traditional arguments in the language of contemporary philosophy. These scholars tend to minimize or explain away the Schelerian influence in his thought, and do not appreciate what is at stake for Wojtyla in his turn to the dimension of subjectivity. The result can sometimes be the emergence of an entirely distinct John Paul II, who seems never to have heard the name of Max Scheler, and never to have known Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. His magisterial writings thus find themselves removed from their broader context in Wojtyla's pre-papal writings, and the most novel dimension of their meaning is lost, while the reader is left to read them as a mere restatement of arguments already made.

0.2: **Methodology:**

In undertaking the present project, we will have to treat, first, of the difficulty we have just mentioned. In Chapter 1, we will consider the intellectual background of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II. Our purpose, here, is not to re-present what others have already accomplished in much greater detail in terms of biography, but to provide a kind of intellectual profile against which we can begin to set the issues central to our broader discussion. We will consider, in other words, not simply what influences came to bear upon Karol Wojtyla in what times of his life, but instead, what were the central questions Wojtyla faced that drove his philosophical and theological pursuits through Thomas and Scheler to the formulation of his own philosophical approach. This chapter will
include discussions of Wojtyla’s background, generally, but also more particular discussions of the problem of Kantian formalism, and the points of confluence and of departure between Wojtyla and his two major influences, St. Thomas Aquinas and Max Scheler.

In Chapter 2, we will consider Wojtyla’s original synthesis between Aquinas and Scheler. There, we will suggest that Scheler’s subjective turn provides Wojtyla with an opportunity to nuance and even correct a tendency toward a naturalistic, cosmological reductionism characteristic of the thought of St. Thomas with respect to the human person. At the same time, however, we will argue that Wojtyla sees in Aquinas a way of avoiding a sentimentalism he finds in Scheler—a sentimentalism that ultimately undermines the insight of subjectivity for which he values Scheler most. Wojtyla will find a way of saving, in each figure, what he sees as the most important element in his attempt to provide an account of the acting person. We will consider, then, in specific detail, the Thomistic and Schelerian influences, as well as the points of departure between Wojtyla and these major influences, exhibited in The Acting Person, and present a picture of Wojtyla’s own major insights in this text.

In Chapter 3, we will consider the implications of personalism for a broader Catholic anthropology. Here, we will situate Wojtyla’s distinctive contribution within the development of doctrine during the late nineteenth century through the twentieth century, as concerns a growing Personalist tendency in Catholic magisterial thought. Of special importance will be the Church’s rethinking of cosmological approaches to the human person in light of the problem of totalitarianism in the twentieth century. The problems of fascism and communism both rested upon a cosmological, reductionistic foundation, and set, for the Second Vatican Council and the papacies of the second half of the twentieth century, the task of announcing in unambiguous terms, the uniqueness and the inviolability of each and every human person. In the end, this approach will be most fully developed in the magisterial documents by Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, both before his accession to the papacy and after. In this approach, the human person is viewed not merely as an object, but as a subject, and thus as fundamentally irreducible to any mere function. This approach comes to be employed in magisterial texts with the deepening awareness that it can serve felicitously in the articulation, to the contemporary world, of the most essential insights of the Catholic tradition. This chapter will include a broad discussion of the trend toward Personalist thinking in magisterial
writings over the course of the twentieth century, a discussion of John Paul II’s interventions at the Second Vatican Council, a discussion of the Personalist influences in *Gaudium et spes* and *Lumen gentium*, and a brief orientation to the task of applying the Personalist perspective to a broader Catholic cosmology.

In Chapter 4, we will apply the personalism of Karol Wojtyla to an analysis of his treatment of Mary in *Redemptoris Mater*. This Chapter will include a discussion of the theology and Mariology of Joseph Ratzinger, whose influence on the papacy of John Paul II is understood by every attentive observer. There are distinct points of complementarity in the central concerns of these two figures, though their overall approaches remain rather profoundly distinct from one another. Our central focus of this chapter, however, will consist in illustrating how and where the concepts of self-determination and participation developed by Wojtyla in his pre-papal work lie at the foundation of his understanding of Marian Intercession and the continuing importance of that intercession in the ongoing history of salvation. We will consider select excerpts from John Paul II’s so-called *Marian Catechesis* in a separate section, before turning to a more direct study of *Redemptoris Mater*. Through these studies, but especially in our study of *Redemptoris Mater*, we will see that Mary, in the performance of a genuine human act, has implicated herself in the very fabric of the cosmos, and become bound with the common good of the whole human race. She will be seen as the *perfectly redeemed acting person*. In this chapter, we will discuss the role of receptivity as a third metaphysical category, beyond mere passivity and activity, which must be presupposed if a genuine interpenetration of persons is to be recognized with authenticity. Such recognition is necessary for a full appreciation of Wojtyla’s concept of participation. In the course of our discussion we will introduce a new term to describe Mary’s role in the salvific order. In and through her action, she becomes the personal and historic locus of the intersection between the order of nature and the order of grace. In Mary, *procreation* merges with God’s redemptive initiative, such that we can come to speak of Mary as the *Pro-Redemptress*. Because Mary is not *other than* humanity, however, her preeminent role is, in some way, identifiable with our own. In this way, Mary stands out as the indicator of that very sort of free participation in the process of redemption to which we are called in the face of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ, and which accounts for the communion of saints and the Church.
We are able to introduce the term *proredemption* as a name for Wojtyla's position on the figure of Mary as an active participant in the order of salvation. We trace out the central anthropological thought of Karol Wojtyla, which comes to be seen in terms of the irreducibility of the human person as an efficacious, self-determining agent of responsibility, oriented to communion with others. This orientation of the irreducible person to the community leads directly to the concept of *participation*, which, itself, involves the transcendent or "spiritual" dimension of the human person, whereby the person reaches beyond the confines of the self in his very act of self-determination. This opening of the Self into the realm of the community makes for participation in the sense in which Wojtyla employs that term, and it is precisely that concept of participation that lies at the foundation of the concept of *procreation* in the natural order of things. Applying the same insight concerning the idea of participation to the place of Mary as an agent engaged with the divine in the context of his soteriologico-eschatological action in the order of grace, we are able to say that Mary appears in the most singular and exemplary way as the *Pro-Redemptress*—the one participates, actively, with God in pursuit of the common good of salvation, in the most singular and exemplary way that any human being can, bringing together in one and the same human act, the orders of nature and of grace.

0.3: *Limitations of the Present Study:*

This study is not intended to represent a complete exposition of the whole thought of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, nor even of the totality of his anthropological perspective. Our treatment of the philosophical perspective of Karol Wojtyla, though it represents the greater portion of text in the present study, is given here as a foundation upon which the central theological insight can be developed. We do not descend, furthermore, into critical questions concerning Wojtyla's interpretation of his major interlocutors, asking whether he read them correctly or not. That question, however interesting it may be, lies beyond the scope of this study. Our only concern in our presentation of Wojtyla's interlocutors is Wojtyla's own interpretation of their thought, because that and that
alone forms the real impetus for the development of his own position as a response. Finally, as we present our central theological analysis, we restrict ourselves primarily to Wojtyla’s thought about the relationship between the concept of the *acting person* and the process of salvation, in particular, as it concerns the place and role of Mary in the order of salvation. Even on this final point, it is not our intention to present a complete exposition of Wojtyla’s Marian texts, much less a complete analysis of them. Rather, we focus on those text in which Wojtyla relates the figure of Mary to the anthropological pattern of the *acting person*. 
Chapter 1

The Intellectual Background of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II

The intellectual background of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II is, up to a certain point, well known. He studied philology at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, before attending the Angelicum in Rome, where he studied Aquinas under Fr. Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., yet writing his dissertation on St. John of the Cross. Finally, in his habilitation dissertation, written for the Jagiellonian University, he undertook a formative study of the early phenomenologist, Max Scheler, asking whether and to what extent a Christian morality can find grounding in Scheler's system of thought.

In this chapter, we will examine Wojtyla's intellectual background, not simply from the perspective of his academic transcripts, but from the perspective of his historico-cultural situation as the backdrop against which he first enters into dialogue with his major interlocutors. Of these, Aquinas and Scheler must be the central focus, since it is around these two figures, most of all, that Wojtyla's own philosophical synthesis will eventually be constructed. But Scheler himself begins with the problem of Kantian formalism, which means that some treatment of that issue must be undertaken here. Going further, however, Kant would not have been an issue had earlier philosophical problems not arisen. Scheler's relevance presupposes a recognition, therefore, of the limitations of the pre-Kantian tradition—inclusive of Aristotle and


8 Wojtyla's habilitation thesis was, Ocena Moliwości Zbudowania Etyki Chrześcijańskiej Przy Założeniach Systemu Maksa Schelera (Lublin, 1959). This may be translated roughly as, An Attempt to Develop a Christian Ethics Based on Max Scheler's System. The thesis was actually written for the Jagiellonian University Theology Department (1953), but this university was forced to close under Communist control in 1954, with the faculty reconstituting at the Seminary of Kraków.
Aquinas—but also of an acknowledgment that the Kantian solution is not finally acceptable. Yet, Wojtyla does not settle on Scheler as the final solution, either, insisting upon a reclamation of certain essential elements of the tradition, even as he recognizes their limitations and seeks to transcend them.

All of this said, transcript analysis alone will never suffice for an understanding of Wojtyla’s intellectual pilgrimage. It is important for us to situate this pilgrimage within the cultural context of the philosophico-theological dialogue alive in Twentieth-century Europe, and especially, in Poland. In this way, we can better understand the thinker himself as an active participant in, and contributor to, this culture, as it faced threats emergent as violent outbursts from within its own philosophical tradition. This, in turn, will help to define the precise areas of concern Wojtyla/John Paul II sought to address in his writings, and thus provide a clearer framework within which to understand his intended meaning. Our purpose here is not, in other words, merely to reiterate biographical details already adequately treated by others, but to situate the problem under discussion in our larger study within this context, and, thus, to interpret the relationship between these details and our central problem.

Details of Wojtyla’s life, of course, are well-documented in Weigel’s authoritative biography, Witness to Hope, and elsewhere. A study of the mind of Wojtyla can be found in Rocco Buttiglione’s intellectual profile, Karol Wojtyla: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II, and G. H. Williams, The Mind of John Paul II. We need not rehearse this body of work here. The reader is encouraged to consult the literature for the detailed portrait, while, for our purposes, we seek guidance within this body of work for pertinent data upon which to restate, with some degree of nuance, the foundational questions that guided Wojtyla’s intellectual development. Our discussion of Wojtyla’s formative experiences is not presented here to provide a biography that could only hope to be redundant at this point, but to provide a context for the interpretation of Wojtyla’s intellectual concerns. Wojtyla will attempt to answer these concerns with insights gained from St. Thomas Aquinas, but also from Max Scheler, neither of

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whom he will take in totality. Rather, Wojtyla will find both insight and deficiency in both figures, and will, in the course of his own attempt to articulate what he sees as the real truth of which the Church herself has always been conscious, come to offer a synthesis in a way that must be counted, today, as a genuinely distinct contribution.

1.1: Wojtyla/John Paul II's cultural situation in the philosophico-theological dialogue with an emphasis on the religious dimension of his personal formation in this context:

There can be no doubt that, upon his enrollment in seminary in the Fall of 1942, some dimension of personal choice was removed from Karol Wojtyla's academic agenda. The encyclical *Aeterni Patris* had mandated a foundational encounter with Aquinas, and the Angelicum, where he would be sent for doctoral studies after his ordination, was an island of rather strict Thomism, whose institutional identity had come to rest in preserving that tradition as an alternative to more contemporary systems of thought. But wherever he went, Wojtyla sought answers to his own questions, and to the living questions of real human beings. These, it is important to acknowledge, do not always correspond to the questions dictated by the methodical structure of the mediaeval disputatio—and so, however valuable a study of this method is to a sound philosophical formation, it begs to be transcended in the modern world. For, as Aquinas and his contemporary interlocutors new quite well, it is the world itself—that is to say, the human world—that frames the questions philosophy must ask, rather than the other way around. Their own disputations, far from being

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13 Aquinas is among the most exemplary representatives of this realist approach to the world. One notes, for example, that his first way (*Summa Theologiae* 1.2.iii) begins with an appeal to the readily observable—to what is *manifest*. Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus, too, exemplify this
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static entrenchments in any sort of "manualist" tradition, represented active engagements with the most pressing questions of their own day, in which the Church struggled, not unlike the Church of our time, to make sense of new philosophical insights in light of revelation, and vice-versa. For Wojtyla, indeed, both in his study of the mystic, St. John of the Cross, and in his study of the phenomenologist, Max Scheler, it was the real questions arising from within the contemporary human experience that set the agenda for his engagement with his studies. Reflective of this fact, Weigel describes Wojtyla's position in the early days of the Nazi Occupation of Poland. He writes:

Every able-bodied male between fourteen and sixty in the General Gouvernement had to have a job. The alternatives were to be shipped off to a concentration camp or to be summarily executed. For the first year of the war Lolek worked as a store manager for a restaurant. It was relatively light work, and it suited Wojtyla's interest in continuing his education, his theatrical career, and the cultural resistance activities in which he was becoming involved. While others were "dying of boredom," he wrote [Mieczysław] Kotlarczyk at the end of 1939, "I have surrounded myself with books, dug in with Arts and Sciences." He also intensified his study of French. At the same time, he read and reread Conrad, Słowacki, Mickiewicz, and Wyspiański on his own, complemented by the Bible, especially the Hebrew Scriptures. 14

The Jagiellonian University had been suppressed by the Nazis after 184 academicians were taken from the university and shipped

14 Weigel, Witness to Hope, 55.
to concentration camps, only to reconstitute itself underground in early 1942. \(^\text{15}\) Wojtyla was a part of that experience, even as he moved from one form of employment to another, including his experience as a quarry worker at Zakrzówek. \(^\text{16}\) "From this inside perspective," writes Weigel:

\[\text{... the young rock breaker began to think more deeply about the meaning of work itself. The Catholic piety with which he had grown up held that backbreaking work was one of the curses of original sin, one of the enduring punishments for Adam and Eve’s [sic] defiance of God. His experience of the quarry eventually led Karol Wojtyla to a different view. Work, with all its rigors and hardships, was a participation in God’s creativity, because work touched the very essence of the human being as the creature to whom God had given dominion over the earth.}

\[\text{... The built-in tensions of work, Wojtyla suggests, find their resolution in the transcendent dignity of the worker, who can never be reduced to a mere unit of production.}\(^\text{17}\)

This background of human experience is the background against which Wojtyla undertook his studies, and against which his thoughts would continue to develop throughout the whole of his life. In further illustration of this point, Weigel describes Wojtyla’s coming into his own under the influence of Jan Tyranowski, a layperson who had taken a vow of celibacy. Tyranowski had a deep interest in a kind of “ordinary mysticism”—a mysticism whereby, as Weigel puts it, “the goal of contemplative prayer was a release from thoughts and images, a certain freedom to simply be in God’s presence.” \(^\text{18}\) Tyranowski had founded a pious association called the “Living Rosary,” into which Wojtyla had been recruited to a position of leadership. Weigel writes, of Wojtyla’s formation under Tyranowski, that:

\[\text{... Jan Tyranowski’s personal sanctity exemplified the apostolic possibilities of a lay vocation, and helped confirm Wojtyla in the view that holiness did not reside solely inside the sanctuary rail or in the parish priest’s house. You did not spend hours with Jan Tyranowski, who, as John Paul II later said, “lived a very personal}

\[^{15}\text{Weigel, }\textit{Witness to Hope, }54–55.\]
\[^{16}\text{Weigel, }\textit{Witness to Hope, }55–58.\]
\[^{17}\text{Weigel, }\textit{Witness to Hope, }57–58.\]
\[^{18}\text{Weigel, }\textit{Witness to Hope, }59.\]
experience of God,” and not conclude that sanctity was everyone’s vocation in the Church.\textsuperscript{19}

It was Tyranowski who first introduced Wojtyla to St. John of the Cross and his mysticism of total self-abandonment before a God so radically transcendent that all our faculties fail us in his presence.\textsuperscript{20} It is a presence into which we can only enter through an act of unqualified love in the form of total self-surrender. Only then can God reveal himself to us; for, only then are we ready to receive him as he really is.

The mystical approach of St. John of the Cross and Jan Tyranowski was essential for Wojtyla in the midst of Nazi Occupation, which began from the opposite pole of a kind of Nietzschean will-to-power. Weigel writes:

It was an approach to the human condition as radically opposed to the Nazi will-to-power as could be imagined. Under the tutelage of the unexpected apostle, Jan Tyranowski, and amid the madness of the Occupation, the imitation of Christ through the complete handing over of every worldly security to the merciful will of God seized Karol Wojtyla’s imagination. Over time, it would become the defining characteristic of his own discipleship.\textsuperscript{21}

Wojtyla was always conscious of his ongoing dialogue with the world, even where the world, for whatever insights it may otherwise have had to offer had taken a turn into the darkness, a turn contrary to the human good. Years later, at the Second Vatican Council, when Wojtyla was Archbishop of Kraków and Poland was under Marxist rule, he left an impression on the French Dominican ressourcement theologian, Yves Congar. In his diary entry for February 2, 1965, Congar recounts Wojtyla’s contribution in the day’s discussion of Schema XIII, which would eventually be ratified as \textit{Gaudium et spes}. Congar writes:

At the afternoon meeting, which was devoted to discussion of the second chapter, Bishop Wojtyla made a few remarkable comments. “One exclusively considers here,” he said, “the problems and questions that have arisen from the new situation of the world. . . . However, the contemporary world also gives some answers to these questions, and it is necessary for us to consider

\textsuperscript{19} Weigel, \textit{Witness to Hope}, 61.
\textsuperscript{20} Weigel, \textit{Witness to Hope}, 61.
\textsuperscript{21} Weigel, \textit{Witness to Hope}, 61–62.
these answers as well, because they conflict with the Church's answers. In the text that has been presented to us, there is no reference to the answers that the contemporary world is offering, and no discussion about the problems that are created because of these conflicting answers.22

If, however, Wojtyła found ways to ask his own questions, even where, in his early career, he was compelled in obedience to submit his course of study to the needs of his ministerial obligations as a Roman Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Krakow, what were those questions, and who is the Karol Wojtyła who asked them?

Before ever undertaking formal studies, Karol Wojtyła was a devout Catholic who, through the whole of his life, regarded his brother as a martyr for succumbing to an epidemic he had been trying to battle as a doctor.23 His natural father was the model of the "man of Christ" in his own life—a man who lived a real and vibrant relationship of faith with God.24 His life-long passions were literature and literary forms, poetry, music, and drama: the stuff of culture, especially Polish culture. Coming of age at a time of tremendous turmoil in his own society, Wojtyła found himself a patriot who refused to allow a place in Polish society for a growing climate of anti-Semitism, and who would never, even under threat of death, agree to hand over Poland’s heritage to those who would destroy it.

Buttiglione sees Wojtyla’s involvement in the Rhapsodic Theater in this context. He writes:

The General Government of Poland [under Nazi Occupation] had little time for intellectuals or professors or men of the theater. Hitler intended that Poland should disappear. Part of the population was to be assimilated; the rest were to be exploited to sustain the German forces and then eliminated. First among those to be persecuted, along with the Jews, were the intellectual custodians of Polish language and tradition, which had to be eradicated. For this reason, one of the main tasks of the Resistance, following in the tradition of "organic work," was the transmission


23 Cf. Weigel, Witness to Hope, 32.

of Polish language and culture. In this spirit, Mieczław Kotlarczyk organized clandestine meetings of the Rhapsodic Theater in Cracow. They met in private houses and staged the classics of the national tradition. If they were detected by police, they could expect to be deported to concentration camps.  

Buttiglione clarifies what is meant by the term "organic work." He has in mind the awareness of a people that their cultural identity and the political structure under which they live are not strictly conflatable, and that there can be times at which the political structure can even become the enemy of the culture. The idea behind this concept of "organic work" is the realization of the living culture even in the face of political oppression. Buttiglione writes:

The Key word of the moment was "organic work," signifying the defense of the language and of national culture and religion against the invader. In the second phase the nation was organized outside the structure of the state, which remained under foreign domination; this created the conditions for the survival and the growth of spiritual self-consciousness despite the lack of a genuine national state. Through this experience the Polish [language] came to accentuate more than other European languages the semantic difference between the word “nation” (Naród) and the word “state” (Państwo). The idea of revolution was also charged with special meaning. Toward the end of the nineteenth century [when this movement was first underway in Poland], the West came to understand the notion of revolution as implying a complete break with the past, whereas in Poland the idea of revolution continued to be understood as the resurrection of a forgotten value underlying the principles of the country’s history. The central value is the vital community to which the nation had originally belonged. It was the fracture of the experience of mutual relationship that had allowed foreigners to dismember Poland; the resurrection of the spirit of national culture was at the same time the germ and the fruit of the awaited restoration of the national state.  

Here, Weigel provides an important key. He points out that Polish nationalism rests upon certain formative cultural experiences. First, he notes the pivotal option, early in Polish

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history, for *Latin* Rite, in distinction from *Eastern* Rite Christianity, for this nation situated at the very nexus between Eastern and Western Christendom. 27 Second, Weigel points to the geographical situation of Poland as a natural invasion rout between East and West, and the fact that, throughout her history, Poland has, consequently, lived under threat of domination, especially on the German front. 28 Third, the rising tide of anti-Semitism in the early decades of the twentieth century was not solely a German problem, but became a divisive element in Polish society even prior to the Nazi Occupation. 29 Fourth, Poland’s occupation under the Third Reich included an explicit intention to eradicate Polish culture, with the keen observation that Poland had previously survived as a nation, even after its political suppression, precisely through its culture. 30 Fifth, the end of Nazi Occupation marked the beginning of Communist Occupation. 31 The sixth and final point, here, is that Polish philosophy tended to embrace a notion of freedom that enabled the people of Poland to resist, throughout history, each attempt at its erasure. 32 The whole of this historical circumstance collided with an academic debate beginning in the early Renaissance and continuing throughout the twentieth century. 33

Wojtyla was, and always remained, a part of that dialogue, not only in the classroom and at academic conferences, but on stage, in books of poetry, in the pulpit, in the chair of Peter, and in prayer. He saw, at the heart of this cultural cataclysm, a fundamental assault upon the human person—an assault which takes cover under philosophical positions antithetical, in one way or another, to our innate personal dignity. This problem, which he would eventually name, the *Culture of Death*, lay at the center of his life’s

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33 Here is not the place for a lengthy digression into the whole history of philosophy from Descartes to the Polish philosophers of the early twentieth century. Later in this chapter we will treat Wojtyla's actual participation in the philosophical dialogue and the point at which he takes it up.
work. Indeed, in a letter to Henri de Lubac, written in February of 1968, then Cardinal Wojtyla discussed the work he had been undertaking on his now famous project, *The Acting Person*. To provide context for that work, he offered the following analysis of this great moral drama of the twentieth century. He wrote:

I devote my very rare free moments to a work that is very close to my heart and devoted to the metaphysical sense and mystery of the PERSON. It seems to me that the debate today is being played on that level. The evil of our times consists in the first place in a kind of degradation, indeed in a pulverization, of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person. This evil is even much more of the metaphysical order than of the moral order. To this disintegration, planned at times by atheistic ideologies, we must oppose, rather than sterile polemics, a kind of "recapitulation" of the inviolable mystery of the person. I firmly believe that the truths

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34 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Evangelium Vitae*, 25 March 1995. While Pope John Paul II coins the phrase in § 12, the encyclical must be read in its entirety to understand adequately the issues at stake in the juxtaposition of the "Culture of Death" and the "Gospel of Life". Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II had already begun to move toward an articulation of this concept in his pre-papal essay, "The Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis," in Karol Wojtyla, *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, Andrew N. Woznicki, General Editor, Catholic Thought from Lublin, vol. 4, Theresa Sandok, OSM, trans. (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 263–275. There, speaking of the tendency to an inordinate focus upon the material goods of the world—the world understood under the aspect of its transience (cf. 1 Cor. 7:31)—he writes, "A civilization that gives such products priority, a civilization that is somehow completely focused only on consumption, is a civilization of the 'death of humanity'" (272). While he is, here, concerned with the problem of consumerism, there can be no question that he associates this problem with the loss of a sense of the transcendent and eternal poles of our value spectra (or modalities) in our moral consciousness, as those spectra contract to occupy a purely material range. The consequences reach far beyond the consumption of material goods, to the reduction of all reality, even the human person and the moral sphere, to something transient and consumable. This is why, morally, he is so deeply convinced that philosophy must be called, once again, to achieve a "genuinely metaphysical range, capable, that is, of transcending empirical data in order to attain something absolute, ultimate and foundational in its search for truth." Indeed, he goes on, without a pause, to say, "This requirement is implicit in sapiential and analytical knowledge alike; and in particular it is a requirement for knowing the moral good, which has its ultimate foundation in the Supreme Good, God himself" (John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Fides et ratio*, 14 September 1998, § 83).
attacked compel with more urgency the recognition of those who are often the involuntary victims of it. . . .

This insight was, by no means, a new one for Wojtyła in 1968, who had come to it even in his formative years, as he discerned and answered a vocation to the priesthood in the context of the atrocities perpetrated against the innocent under the Nazi Regime. The soil of Poland—the most thoroughly and devoutly Catholic Country on earth at the time—had “opened its mouth to receive his brothers’ blood from Nazi hands.” With the eventual defeat of the Nazis, of course, came still another occupation under the Soviets.

That said, in his letter to Henri de Lubac, Wojtyła was simply re-articulating, and reaffirming his commitment to the governing thread along which so much of the Work of the Second Vatican Council had been woven—and indeed, it was a thread Wojtyła himself had helped to tease out of the blood-soaked tapestry of the mid-twentieth century global experience. The issue, again, was that of the human person and his dignity and place in creation. This would prove the battleground on which the Church would fight for the faith over the decades leading to the present day. It remains the central issue in questions like abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and euthanasia, even if, then, the problem was understood in light of the relationship between the individual and the State, especially as manifested in the phenomena of Fascism and totalitarian Communism. The fact that, as a Pole, Wojtyła had experienced the precise form dehumanization is able to assume under both sorts of régimes would make him a pivotal figure in the Council chambers, and would set the stage for his finally emerging in the decades to follow, as the most authoritative interpreter of the Council’s mind and meaning.

Wojtyła’s early and formative experiences with human cruelty, suffering, and compassion were underlain with a vision of God as a faithful and loving Father of Mercy—a God whose Paternity covers not merely a limited number of individuals, but embraces the whole of humanity. Whatever else we may say, it was within the context of this commitment that he came to discern his


36 Cf. Genesis 4:11.
personal vocation to the priesthood in contrast to his great love for the Christian family he would be called to forego. In his encyclical *Dives in misericordia*, John Paul II would commend this understanding of God—and thus, the very bedrock upon which he can proclaim a gospel of hope—to the whole Church, and the whole world. Facing the loss of his mother at the age of nine, Wojtyla’s earthly father became the principal witness in his formative years of God’s self-emptying love—a love which, though expressed in maternal terms, can be manifest by a father in his ultimate self-outpouring for his beloved son. Deeply interested in the interior life, Wojtyla gravitated to explorations of the human condition through the media of poetry, literature, and drama, where he made substantial contributions of his own.

It is important to understand this dimension of Wojtyla’s intellectual life, since it represents a kind of refusal to accept an understanding of rationality that would reduce to syllogistic reasoning, or any one philosophical method, whether that of phenomenology or that of neo-scholastic Thomism. In his encounter with divine revelation, for example, Wojtyla will accept, within the fold of reason, linguistic nuances, narrative threads, poetic images, and cultural sensibilities. Rather than approaching Scripture through a predominantly propositional reading that forces Scripture into scholastic categories, John Paul II will go on to encourage the scholastic tradition to engage in fruitful, if challenging, dialogue with Scripture on its own terms. In his encyclical *Fides et ratio,*

37 Weigel, *Witness to Hope,* 68–70.

38 John Paul II, encyclical letter, *Dives in misericordia* (30 November 1980). It is, we think, relevant, that his opening address in *Dives in misericordia* reads, only, “Venerable Brothers and dear sons and daughters, greetings and the apostolic blessing.” Read in the context the whole encyclical, it is clear that he is employing this encyclical as a tool for evangelization, reaching out, with the gospel of hope in the Mercy of God, even to those who do not believe. We use, here, the Vatican translation.


41 *Dives in misericordia,* §§ 5–6.

42 While the scholastic, and particularly Thomistic, tradition, sees anthropomorphism in Scripture as fundamentally a reference to human modes of understanding God, John Paul II places great emphasis, especially, for example, in his encyclical, *Dives in misericordia,* upon the
Mary and the Acting Person

John Paul II not only calls for a restoration of the proper place of Christian philosophy, but also for the humility of philosophy in the face of revelation. He writes, rather provocatively, at one point, saying:

The mystery of the Incarnation will always remain the central point of reference for an understanding of the enigma of human existence, the created world, and God himself. The challenge of this mystery pushes philosophy to its limits, as reason is summoned to make its own a logic which brings down the walls within which it risks being confined.43

affection that the father (representing God the Father) has for the prodigal son in Luke's iconic parable (Luke 15:11–32). In light of his reflections on certain theological elements of the Hebrew language in n. 52, where he explores, for example, the use of the term rahamim (a maternal affection) in association with God's love for the human person, it would be disingenuous to read him as continuing in the Thomistic tradition with respect to his approach to the anthropomorphisms in Scripture. Rather, we would seem forced to consider the real problem with anthropomorphism to be something other than the attribution of emotion to God. Rather, the real problem is the attribution of sinful dispositions to God, such as the thirst for vengeance. In Hosea, for example, God rails against the sins of his people, but finally declares, in a torrent of mourning, "My heart recoils from it, my whole being trembles at the thought. I will not give reign to my fierce anger, I will not destroy Emphraim again, for I am God, not man: I am the Holy One in your midst and have no wish to destroy" (Hosea 11:8–9). In Psalm 50, a similar presentation is made, where the issue is authenticity in worship. God reprimands the wicked, saying, "You sit there, slandering your own brother, you malign your own mother's son. You do this, and expect me to say nothing? Do you really think that I am like you" (Psalm 50:20–21)? Dives in misericordia should be read in this light. There, John Paul II emphasizes the human face of God in affective terms, saying, "The Father's fidelity to himself—a trait already known by the Old Testament term hesed—is at the same time expressed in a manner particularly charged with affection. We read, in fact, that when the father saw the prodigal son returning home "he had compassion, ran to meet him, threw his arms around his neck and kissed him." He certainly does this under the influence of a deep affection. . ." (Dives in misericordia § 6).

43 Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, Fides et ratio (15 September 1998), § 80. Vatican translation. Cf. Vladimir N. Lossky, whom John Paul II references in litany of "great Christian theologians who also distinguished themselves as great philosophers, bequeathing to us writings of such high speculative value as to warrant comparison with the masters of ancient philosophy" (Fides et ratio § 74). In his, essay, "Faith and Theology" in, Vladimir Lossky, Orthodox Theology: An Introduction, Ian
On this score, Wojtyla/John Paul II enjoyed a great affinity with the theologians of the ressourcement, such as Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar, both of whom he would create cardinals during his papacy, and Joseph Ratzinger, whom he would name Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

and Ihita Kesarcodi-Watson (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1989), 13–25, he writes, “Theology as sophia is connected at once to gnosis and to episteme. It reasons, but seeks always to go beyond concepts. Here a necessary moment of the failure of human thought breaks in before the mystery that it wants to make knowable. A theology that constitutes itself into a system is always dangerous. It imprisons in the enclosed sphere of thought the reality to which it must open thought” (Orthodox Theology, 15). It would seem that John Paul II is suggesting that philosophy ought to accept this element of theological thought, and recognize in it a limitation of its own authority in the field of natural theology, lest it deny theology proper the true God of revelation, and “replace the mystery lived in silence” (Orthodox Theology, 15), which is the heart of true theology, “with mental schemata easily handled, certainly, and whose use can intoxicate, but which are ultimately empty” (Orthodox Theology, 15). Lossky’s remarks here, much less our own, should not be taken as a repudiation of rationality, or the accessibility to natural reason of the truth that God exists. It is only a caution against a certain presumption of human reason to fit God into our own intellectual categories, rather than allowing him to inform them, and trusting him somehow to open them out to his infinite incomprehensibility without destroying them altogether.

44 Weigel points out that, when he was created a cardinal by John Paul II, de Lubac was, “... assigned the Roman titular church once held by Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, a man on the other side of the theological controversies in which de Lubac was embroiled in the late 1940’s” (Witness to Hope, 446). Balthasar was scheduled to be incardinated, officially, on June 27, 1988, but died on the previous day.

45 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was appointed Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on November 25, 1981. He served in this office until succeeding John Paul II to the papacy as Benedict XVI. John Paul II’s funeral Mass had been held on April 8, 2005. The papal conclave was convened ten days later, on April 18, and Ratzinger was elected to the papacy the next day, April 19. He was inaugurated on April 24.
1.2: Wojtyla’s philosophical posture in the context of the historical situation of Poland in the twentieth century:

Between Nazism and Communism, Poland found itself trampled from two borders in the central decades of the twentieth century. It is in the struggle for the survival of Poland as a nation in every meaningful sense of that term, that Wojtyla’s particular motivating questions come to be posed. What is the relationship between truth and the human person? What is the proper relationship between the human person and the larger society, including its organizational structures? What is the proper relationship between the human person and the goods of the material universe? What is the relationship between the human person and his acts? In short, What is the human person? Weigel notes that even lectures in metaphysics were filled beyond capacity as even the average student at Catholic University of Lublin sought to find some sort of context within which to make sense of the horrors of the experience of Nazi and now Soviet occupation. He writes:

Everyone who had lived through the brutalities of the Occupation and the imposition of communism had confronted the ancient philosophical question, “What is a human being?” in urgent, unavoidable ways. Why had some men and women acted like beasts while others had shown remarkable heroism? What accounted for the fact that, while some people were grotesquely self-serving, to the point of betraying their friends, others were nobly self-sacrificing, laying down their lives for others they may have known only slightly? The only way to get at these problems, the KUL philosophers agreed, was through a deepening of philosophical anthropology, the subdiscipline of philosophy that dealt with the nature, the circumstances, and destiny of the human person. What is “human nature,” and how are we to understand its dynamics? How is that curious blend of matter and spirit, the human person, built? How are we to explain the difference in kind between human beings and other sentient creatures? What, if anything, is the point or goal of life? These questions, hardy perennials in the garden of philosophical inquiry since the ancient

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46 Weigel, Witness to Hope, 131.
Greeks, took on an especially sharp edge at KUL in the late 1940s and the early 1950s.47

As Weigel goes on to say, these questions came to be regarded as the well from within which the real solutions—from the point of view of Catholic Poland—to the societal disturbances of the twentieth century would ultimately be drawn. What is more, their approach was decidedly *personalistic*, deliberately assuming a starting point quite different from the cosmological starting point taken by neo-scholasticism. Yet it remained uncompromising in its conviction that the world was truly *intelligible*—that the world, as it really is, could be “known”, not simply in some abstract, approximate, or conventional sense, but in a genuinely rich and meaningful sense consistent with the tradition of moderate realism. In his essay, “Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin,” Stefan Swiezaski writes, of his experiences there, that, as soon as the war was over, there erupted, what he calls a “hunger for philosophy” among the members of the university community.48 He goes on to explain:

The experiences of the war, in their overwhelming realism, were too horrible to allow us still seriously to maintain a subjective or idealistic philosophy. Reality asserted itself so unequivocally that to question its objective character was absurd. On the other hand, the spiritual significance of the immensity of sufferings imposed itself so strongly that materialistic realism appeared to us all as too simplistic and paltry a hypothesis to explain the complex structure of the world and the processes taking place in it. And so we rejected idealism, as did the materialists, and we also began an unrelenting49 battle aimed at preventing materialism from becoming identified with realism, or idealism with spiritualism. Everything, then, favored opting for realism and being open to (if not yet affirming) a spiritual reality. At the same time,


49 We take the liberty to correct a typographical error in the text, where “unrelentless” is obviously not the intended reading.
metaphysics, as an attempt to penetrate the innermost structure of the whole of existing reality, emerged as the central philosophical discipline.\textsuperscript{50}

In this latter respect, of course, the KUL philosophers were on similar ground to that of the neo-scholastic Thomists. Swiezawski notes three premises upon which the Lublin school was united. The first was "realistic metaphysics, the metaphysics of concretely existing beings, as having primacy among the philosophical disciplines."\textsuperscript{51} He notes the centrality of this premise within the Lublin school, calling it, "the unshakable common denominator of our philosophical convictions," and stressing that, "[t]his tenet was acknowledged by the metaphysician Krapiec, by the logician and philosopher of law Kalinowski, by the ethicist Wojtyla, and by me [Swiezawski], the historian of philosophy."\textsuperscript{52}

The second point of unity in the Lublin school, according to Swiezawski, "was the key significance of philosophical anthropology," while the third was what he calls, "a clear opposition to irrational philosophizing."\textsuperscript{53} He explains what he means by "irrational philosophizing," which he calls, "the enemy of all philosophy."\textsuperscript{54} He writes:

This irrationalism shared common roots with the philosophical idealism of the day. There occurred here a particular \textit{coincidentia oppositorum}: extreme rationalism, which scorned realism, joined forces with irrationalism, which trampled the work of reason. Under the guise of a penetrating analysis of our existential experiences, subjectivism teamed up with irrationalism and ahistoricism. We then heard diatribes alleging the harmfulness of rational analyses, historical studies, and philosophical reasoning for theological reflection. The whole threat posed by Bultmann and his followers—as a prominent French exegete observed—arose as a result of a departure from a realistic and rational philosophy.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{50} Swiezawski, "Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin," ix--x.
\textsuperscript{51} Swiezawski, "Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin," xii.
\textsuperscript{52} Swiezawski, "Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin," xii.
\textsuperscript{53} Swiezawski, "Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin," xii.
\textsuperscript{54} Swiezawski, "Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin," xi.
\textsuperscript{55} Swiezawski, "Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin," xi.
Swiezawski admits, however, that while the Lublin school was basically Thomistic, variation could be found among the faculty, not only with respect to their scholarly emphases, but in their particular philosophical approaches. He says that, “upon closer analysis, existence appeared to each of us in a somewhat different light,”\textsuperscript{56} that, with respect to philosophical anthropology, the question was approached, “from various sides”\textsuperscript{57} by the different members of the faculty, and that, their “rationalism assumed various hues, some sharper than others.”\textsuperscript{58} Wojtyla’s personalist starting point gave even the realism of the Lublin school a rather different flavor. Swiezawski notes:

Karol Wojtyla made a unique contribution to the development of philosophy at the Catholic University of Lublin. For Wojtyla, philosophical reflection was a way of exploring the awesome mystery of the human person. He saw the human being as a remarkable psychophysical unity, each one a unique person, never again to be repeated in the entire universe. Wonder at the human being, a being that fulfills itself only by transcending itself, seems to be the point of departure as well as the central focus of all of Wojtyla’s philosophical reflection.\textsuperscript{59}

Swiezawski goes on to note, again, the faculty’s common interest in philosophical anthropology and natural law, but then offers a sort of confession in his acknowledgement of Wojtyla’s contribution to the school. He writes:

Our treatment of philosophical anthropology, however, was in danger of becoming overly intellectualistic and rationalistic. Although many of the questions we addressed belonged to the realm of practical philosophy, we had a tendency to succumb to the old Socratic temptation of thinking it is enough to know the good in order to do it. Our philosophy could have become distorted by focusing exclusively on the contemplative side and neglecting the whole sphere of activity. Kalinowski and Wojtyla were the ones in our department who helped us maintain the balance.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[56] Swiezawski, “Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin,” xii.
\item[57] Swiezawski, “Karol Wojtyła at the Catholic University of Lublin,” xii.
\item[58] Swiezawski, “Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin,” xii–xiii.
\item[59] Swiezawski, “Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin,” xiii.
\end{footnotes}
between *theoria* and *praxis*, a balance that might otherwise have been lost.\(^{60}\)

According to Swiezawski, Wojtyla had always understood that ethical *thought* alone could never be sufficient to make an ethical *person*, but that the person could become ethical—morally good—only by choosing to act, consistently, in an ethical way.\(^{51}\) Thus, for Swiezaski, Wojtyla had always found himself engrossed with the problem of the relationship between the act and the person, and explains his deep and abiding interest in the work of Max Scheler.\(^{62}\)

Swiezawski speaks further about the distinguishing features of Wojtyla’s personalist philosophy, noting his interest in forging a link between metaphysics and the phenomenological method. He writes:

The complex interdependence of these two elements in Wojtyla’s philosophical synthesis is still a matter of lively debate. Personally, I believe Wojtyla was trying to disclose the basis in concrete lived experience for theoretical—and especially for metaphysical—ethical considerations, and he found the phenomenological method particularly suited to this end. His aim was not to replace metaphysics with phenomenology, but to supplement metaphysical reflection with phenomenological description as a way of gaining access to the processes of knowing and acting. I do not believe Wojtyla ever rejected the primary and fundamental role of the realistic philosophy of being in anthropology and ethics, but he did see phenomenology as a useful tool for describing the experiential base, and he tended to view phenomenological language as more communicative than scholastic terminology.\(^{63}\)

Wojtyla thus emerges before us as a fascinating figure. Where some might presuppose a set of irreconcilable differences—between, for example, the subjective and objective approach to philosophy, or between the primacy of metaphysics and the phenomenological method—Wojtyla sees an opportunity for integration. In the following section of this chapter, we will explore representative passages from his early writings—those

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\(^{60}\) Swiezawski, “Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin,” xiii–xiv.

\(^{61}\) Swiezawski, “Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin,” xiv.

\(^{62}\) Swiezawski, “Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin,” xiv.

\(^{63}\) Swiezawski, “Karol Wojtyla at the Catholic University of Lublin,” xiv.
prior to The Acting Person—to see where he integrates St. Thomas, and where he integrates Scheler, in the development of his own philosophical approach. We will also consider the central tensions that lead him to depart in significant ways from each of these thinkers, in the formation of his own position.

1.3: The Problem of Kantian Formalism:

Wojtyła saw Kantian formalism as among the most serious ethical challenges of the day. A direct contradiction of an ethics based upon the primacy of being, Kantian formalism, for Wojtyła, rested entirely upon an idealized understanding of morality—morality associated with a will completely determined by abstract reason, divorced from the organism in his or her lived experience. Kant had developed his thesis in the wake of his own reading of David Hume, who, having accepted the epistemological starting point of Descartes, had, himself, considered Descartes to have failed to meet his own standards. Hume saw no foundation for certainty about future events on the basis of past events, and began to question even the ability to speak of the self as a unity in continuity. He says, on this point, that he can know of himself, only that he is “a bundle or collection of different perceptions.”

Kant had accepted the basic epistemological problem of the “being beyond consciousness” model of truth, which itself represented a radicalization of the traditional adequitio account of knowledge, with its emphasis upon objectivity in contradistinction from subjectivity. That is to say that the basis Western emphasis upon knowledge in terms of “objects” as distinct from the “subjects” who know them, must always contend with the problem of the mode of intellection proper to the knower. But this issue opens up to a tendency to demand an ever-widening separation between the subject and the object in the act of intellection, until, finally, the separation threatens to become unbridgeable. This is precisely what happens in light of the Cartesian turn, such that Kant finally

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posits a wholly unknowable realm of pure noumena, corresponding to the world of “objects” understood in the traditional sense, and which, on his model, may or may not exist in reality.

This hypothesis, then, forces Kant to restrict his world of knowledge to the realm of phenomena, and to provide an entirely knew account of knowledge, no longer based upon adequatio, but, instead, upon the structure of the mind itself. The structure of the mind becomes the structure of the world, and the measure of all truth claims that matter to us in any philosophically significant respect. In the end, however, Kant seeks a kind of mathematical certainty in human knowing that leads him this place, and, on the basis of which, even his account of morality finally takes its shape. This is not the place to provide an in-depth treatment of Kant on his own terms, of course. The present comments are provided, here, only to give context for understanding the dialogue in which Wojtyla was taking part in the twentieth-century. Kant had constructed a morality as theoretical as his epistemology—one totally unaccountable the particularity and historicity of lived-experience, reduced, as it was, to the structures of the mind as its sole measure of validity. Wojtyla writes:

Consciousness, according to Kant, has no access to objective transcendent being; consciousness is primarily of its own special a priori, cognitive forms, by means of which it organizes the whole multiplicity of phenomenal content. 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. Because this form commands unconditionally, the ethical content of consciousness centered around the imperative is reducible to the command.65

Wojtyla seems to admire Kant’s ability to construct a philosophy of freedom around this abstracted rational command ethic. It is a philosophy of freedom based entirely upon the problem of self-determination, which, as we have already said, represents, for Wojtyla, a non-negotiable issue in any philosophical anthropology with which he would finally align himself. “The experience of an imperative is linked,” Wojtyla writes, “in Kant’s view, with the experience of freedom.”66 Wojtyla explains:


All determination is an actual exclusion of free will. We find such determinism throughout the phenomenal world in the phenomena of nature. We also find determination in the human being when apprehended from the empirical side—in *homo phaenomenon*. When stimuli from the phenomenal world give rise to feelings of pleasure or pain, sensory consciousness undergoes determinations. Morality, however, excludes determination and is connected only with freedom. Consequently, we must seek morality, or the so-called ethical content of consciousness, in the transphenomenal *homo noumenon*. To it alone belongs autonomy, or freedom.\(^6^7\)

Wojtyla notes that, for Kant, duty must appear as totally free of any impulse of desire or affection, or from any felt connection—any responsivity—with the world of sense experience; for only in this way can the will escape, in Kant’s mind, any predetermining influence upon choice. Thus, for Kant, the only way to affirm the human person as free is to isolate him from his actual experience of being in the world, and to confine him to a world framed entirely by the structures of his own consciousness, and bound to the imperative of duty alone.\(^6^8\) Wojtyla sees Kant’s system, therefore, as totally abstracted from the material conditions within which the ethical act arises in human experience, and, thus, as lacking any real avenue for the articulation of an objective moral good or its contrary evil. He writes:

Nowhere in this view is there mention of moral good properly speaking. One might easily conclude, however, that if this good were to be found anywhere, it would be in that act of consciousness that is pure duty. Kant does not respond to the question of what kinds of human acts are good and evil, as earlier moral philosophers attempted to do. He only tries to show what it is that gives rise to the experience of freedom or self-determination in human consciousness, for it is within this experience that morality is contained. . . . Thus morality is explained by Kant without appealing to any objective factors—through an analysis of consciousness alone.\(^6^9\)

What is more, Wojtyla objects that Kant even destroys the concept of free will in the way he attempts to affirm it as a

\(^{6^7}\) Wojtyla, “In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics,” 50.

\(^{6^8}\) Wojtyla, “In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics,” 50.

\(^{6^9}\) Wojtyla, “In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics,” 50–51. My [insertions].
necessary moral postulate or, as Wojtyla puts it, "an *a priori* form of practical reason." He writes:

The subordination of the will to law as a pure *a priori* form of practical reason constitutes [, for Kant,] the actual ethical life of the human person. The immanence of the will in the moral law, however, resides in the noumenal sphere in such a way that theoretical reason cannot by reflection extract it from that sphere and objectify it in a scientific way. Hence, ethical life directs our attention to the transphenomenal sphere of the human being, to the person's noumenal depths, but it does not allow us to form an image of the essence of the human person that would have scientific certitude.

Nevertheless, Kant takes it as an *a priori* certitude that the ethical life of the human being is based on the will and on law. He calls the will a faculty, but his analysis in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and in the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* shows that all we have here is a term borrowed from the Scholastics, and not the reality that this term signified in their philosophy. The will, in Kant's view, is devoid of any innate dynamism of its own. This is because the will has no proper object of its own to which it would naturally turn in its activity, but is in each case subject to the motives that practical reason gives it. Kant so completely failed to perceive the real separateness of the will as a faculty that he sometimes even simply identified it with practical reason.  

We should be careful to understand Wojtyla's argument, here, in all its nuance. When he says, "all we have here is a term borrowed from the Scholastics, and not the reality that this term signified in their philosophy," he is referring to Kant's use of the term *faculty*, and only consequently to his understanding of the will, which Wojtyla sees as fundamentally distorted from within the formalist presuppositions at work in Kant's system. Wojtyla is saying that when Kant borrows the term *faculty* from the Scholastics, he does not accept the reality that the term is used, by the Scholastics, to signify. For the scholastics, the term *faculty* indicates an innate *power of operation*. Wojtyla does not see Kant as able to affirm

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that the will is a faculty in this sense. He thus sees Kant as destroying the concept of free will, which, on Wojtyla’s reading of the Scholastics, must be a power of self-determination, innate to the willing agent. He addresses this point still more explicitly in his essay, “The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act.” He writes:

Although Kant speaks of the immanent “causality” of the will, he portrays the will as a faculty that is basically submissive. The will is very submissive to the promptings of feelings, which impose their relation to various goods of the “empirical” world on it, and is less submissive to practical reason. When practical reason wants to impose its relation to goods—especially to moral good—on the will, it must resort to a command. This imperative, which has its chief significance in Kant’s ethical views, is an expression of his psychological views as well. Reason commands the will with a corresponding power, and the will passively submits its own “causality” to reason’s command. In such a treatment, however, all we see are causes operating on the will; we do not see the will itself operating as a cause. And so the cause of the will’s activity must lie either in feelings and practical reason or in practical reason alone. In the former case the will submits to inclinations; in the latter reason must command it. If there is a “causality” proper to the will, it exists only for the benefit of other psychic agents, and not so that the will itself can act in a causal way. 72

Wojtyla is skeptical, therefore, of Kant’s ability, within his system of ethical formalism, to provide any truly authentic motivation for human action, because his understanding of self-determination and ethical action require the total divorce of the will from the whole complex of lived experience. Wojtyla cautions that, from this perspective, which is really the abandonment of the teleological conception of the human person, the will no longer appears as a true faculty in the scholastic sense, because it has no proper object toward which it is oriented, nor any inner dynamism by which it can really emerge as a causal operation from within the human person as a self-determining agent. For Kant, the will is pointed, not outward to the world in which we live and act, and come into our fullness, but inward, to the realm of pure consciousness.

Wojtyla sees Kantian formalism, therefore, as an unacceptable framework within which to develop an ethical system. For

Wojtyla, both the objective moral order—objective because of its connection to the objective order of being—and self-determination in the ethical act, are non-negotiable. Wojtyla can find neither of these essential elements in Kant’s system, while what Kant does make perfectly clear, is his unwillingness to accept the whole field of lived experience as the true arena within which moral norms come to impress themselves upon the human person. Wojtyla writes, rather pointedly:

Kant calls such activity of the will [i.e., that which arises in response to lived experience] pathological or empirical. It really has nothing in common with ethical life, because ethical life is based on free will [and Kant understands free will in a rarefied, purely noumenal sense]. Consequently, as far as Kant is concerned, we have no right to use the term ethical experience for the empirical whole that every external or internal human act forms by virtue or arising consciously from the will and thereby having the person as its efficient cause. What served as an empirical basis for the founders of the concept of the ethical act ceased to do so for Kant.73

For all of Wojtyla’s admiration of Kant, Kant’s formalism represents a definitive turn away from the most fundamental canon of his own philosophical posture. He goes on, in his criticism of Kant:

Thus, the experience in which the activity of the will exhibits a dependence on feelings ceases to be an ethical act. But that is not all. Even the activity of the will that originates in practical reason but turns toward some good in the external or even internal world has no ethical significance. In addition to maxims, Kant also distinguishes so-called [hypothetical] imperatives [i.e., the assertion that, “If you want to achieve this or that good, which I regard as necessary, then you must do such and such”]. Hypothetical imperatives also have no ethical significance in Kant’s eyes, and for basically the same reason as maxims. They in no way change the fact that the relation itself is still not the basis of practical reason. Consequently, even the sort of experience in which a person consciously chooses a certain good for which to strive in action is not an ethical experience. And those human actions that bear a distinct mark of personal efficacy by virtue of

73 Wojtyla, “The Problem of the Separation of Experience from the Act in Ethics In the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant and Max Scheler,” 28. Emphasis is original to the source, except where it occurs in the [insertions], which are my own.
the fact that in them reason consciously directs the will toward a chosen good cannot be called ethical acts. One wonders, then, whether any human activity has the value of an ethical act. In any event, none of the experiences upon which Aristotle and St. Thomas based their view of the ethical act achieved such status in Kant's eyes.⁷⁴

Wojtyla is concerned that Kant has done nothing more than insist that the will is free from the whole sphere of emotion, pleasure, and pain. If this is the case, then, Kant has not escaped the problem of "angelism" normally associated with Descartes—namely, that the whole sphere of the body is somehow tangential to, or even at odds with, that which makes us essentially what we are as human beings. The sort of "freedom" built upon this foundation is really inadequate, for Wojtyla, as an account of our lived experience, for it frees us from the given truth about our manner of being and acting in the world.

1.4: Wojtyla/John Paul II's Integration of Aquinas:

In his pre-papal writings, particularly those prior to The Acting Person, Wojtyla concentrated heavily upon St. Thomas Aquinas. Typically, he focused upon a problem in contemporary philosophy to which Aquinas spoke, in Wojtyla's estimation, more adequately than the contemporaries themselves. His central concerns were those of the interior dimension of the human act in terms of motivation and moral responsibility, as well as the possibility of identifying objective moral truths upon which universal norms of action could be established. Wojtyla's Thomistic foundation meant that he would be concerned with metaphysics, at least insofar as it served his ethical objectives. Yet, he never concentrated the bulk of his energies on specifically metaphysical questions. As we will discuss later in this chapter, when we consider Wojtyla's critique of Aquinas, we caution that it would be going too far—and, indeed, would contradict the textual evidence—to suggest that

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Wojtyla followed Thomas through to the end on questions of metaphysics. Nevertheless, Wojtyla’s positive interest, and even his reliance upon, St. Thomas Aquinas in the early part of his career is undeniable.

As we discussed in the previous section of this chapter, one of Wojtyla’s main criticisms of Kantian formalism is its antiteleological character. For Kant, the will is good only insofar as it simply assents to duty. In Wojtyla’s reading of Kant, there is no verifiably real end toward which the human person strives in and through the act of willing. For Wojtyla, this problem renders Kantian formalism inadequate for dealing with the fundamental ethical question regarding the ethical value of moral goodness. In contrast to Kant’s formalistic, rationalistic approach to ethics whereby he reduces ethics, in Wojtyla’s view, to practical reason, Wojtyla sees Aquinas as framing the issue, “in an entirely different fashion.”

In his essay, “The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act,” He writes:

[Aquinas] realized that an act of will can be commanded by reason, but this command always relies on the will. Reason may formulate the command, but the will provides the power inherent in every command. According to St. Thomas, this process occurs as it does because the will’s whole dynamism has a distinct inclination toward the good (bonum in communi). By the power of this inclination that arises from the will’s own nature, the will shares in the act of command (imperium), 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. In such a view, the immanent power of action proper to the will is no fiction.

Wojtyla goes on to explain the content of this assertion later in the same article. He says that, Kant’s a priori forms, “insofar as they are divorced from action, are not de facto motives.” This is because they do not present the will with a genuine, “end in view,” but instead, present merely a framework within which action is to be interpreted as “rational” or “irrational,” for Kant, and thus as “good” or “evil.” As Wojtyla reads him, the agent strives for

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nothing, in Kant's system, except conformity to structure of the "Law" of practical reason, totally divorced from any personal good.

Wojtyla sees, however, in the findings of contemporary psychologists, evidence of a much richer dynamism at work within the human will. These findings take us, according to Wojtyla, beyond the explanatory power of Kant's system, or even the system of Max Scheler—a subject to be discussed later in the present chapter. Naming figures such as Michotte and Prüm, Lindworsky, Reutt, and, of course, Narziß Ach, Wojtyla offers a summation that:

These and other psychological works based on the experimental method show time and again that there is a strict connection between motivation and the will's activity. This connection can be verified experimentally: it can be investigated by empirical, statistical, and inductive methods. The results psychology achieves by these methods can even function as empirical laws for the formation of the will. If experimental psychology of the will is in keeping with experience in its stance that motivation is contained within the precincts of the process of the will, then ethicists must also adopt this stance when they attempt to interpret ethical experience in keeping with experience. Ethical experience, as I said earlier, is contained immanently in the efficacy of the person, in the whole act of will, which has its efficient source in the personal self. The immanence of ethical experience in the act of

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77 Wojtyla references, A. Michotte and N. Prüm, "Étude expérimentale sur le choix volontaire et ses antécédents immédiats," Archives de Psychologie (1910).

78 Wojtyla references, Johannes Lindworsky, Der Wille: Seine Erscheinung und seine Beherrschung (Leipzig: Barth, 1923).

79 Wojtyka references, Józef Reutt, Przedstawienie celu a postepowanie [The Presentation of Goals in Relation to Behavior] (Poznan, 1947).

will appears with particular intensity, however, in the process of motivation, in the weighing or outright conflict of motives and the ultimate choice the will makes. 81

For Wojtyla, these findings are compelling, both on account of the scientific methods employed in their discovery to an emerging discipline (remembering, of course, that psychology had not yet fully distinguished itself from its parent disciplines of medicine and philosophy, even by the time Wojtyla published this article in the mid-1950’s), and on account of its corroborative relationship to lived experience. The findings of these psychologists prove to Wojtyla’s satisfaction that the phenomenon of free will is more than merely phenomenal, but instead, reflects a genuine dynamism—a genuine “faculty” or “power of operation” within the human person. Wojtyla writes:

It should be noted that the psychology of Ach’s school, to the extent that its method of experimentation and field of empirical-inductive science permit, presents the psychological problematic in such a way that it interprets ethical experience in the context of its approach to the lived experience of the will. The will appears there in lived experience as a determinate experiential structure in which the efficacy of the personal self is organically connected with motivation. This is the type of experiential phenomenological structure that the psychologists of this school took as the basis of their research, which, by means of experimentation combined with introspection and statistically based induction, are meant to lead them to particular knowledge of the will as a lived experience. This empirically ascertained experience is contained within the framework of the phenomenological structure that empirical psychologists, using their own methods, investigate as the act of will.

The most important thing in this structure is the strict organic connection of motivation with the efficacy of the person and the activity of the will. 82

For Wojtyla, the findings of these psychologists represent a profound point of convergence with the interests of moral philosophers, and, in particular, with a Thomistic frame of reference. This point of convergence is important, for Wojtyla, not

as a mere curiosity, nor even as an evidentiary enhancement in support of a Thomistic thesis, but because it orients the project of moral philosophy according to the best available evidence concerning the facts philosophers are called upon to explain. Still, Wojtyla insists that, "Once we become acquainted with the phenomenological structure that empirical psychologists investigate as the experiential act of will in all its dimensions, and especially when we explore the essential connection between efficacy and motivation, we can see a definite relation to the teaching on the will contained in Thomas Aquinas' *Summa.*"\(^{83}\)

Aquinas, however, did not conduct experiments before formulating his theory of will. He merely applied his metaphysical conception of the human person to the observable characteristics of human motivation. Wojtyla describes Aquinas's thesis by saying that the substantial soul does not operate directly through its essence, but "through the medium of faculties (*potentia*)."\(^ {84}\) He explains:

The will, like reason, is a faculty for which the spiritual substance of the soul itself is the subject, whereas the other faculties of the human soul are subjectified in the *compositum humanum* as a whole.\(^ {85}\) 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 (*appetites*), and so it exhibits an inclination toward everything that is in any way good (*bonum in communi*).\(^ {86}\) Because this appetitive inclination constitutes the very nature of the will, the will does not need any external causal-efficient impulses in order to operate. The only such causal-efficient impulse is the Creator, who endowed the will with such a nature.\(^ {87}\) By virtue of this nature, the will is itself already a causal-efficient source of impulses in the human being, impulses that have various goods as their object. That which St.

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\(^{84}\) Wojtyla, "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act," 14.

\(^{85}\) Wojtyla references, here, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I.77.v–vi.

\(^{86}\) Wojtyla references, here, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II.9.i.

Thomas calls *motio quoad exercitium* comes from the will itself and is the will's natural motion.\(^8\)

Wojtyla’s reading of Aquinas on the auto-determinism of the will is essentially the same as the position for which we had attempted to argue elsewhere, in *Judged by the Law of Freedom*. There we are concerned with self-determination in the order grace, not in the order of nature; but our consideration takes self-determination in the order of nature as a given. We describe the basic contours of that dynamic, as we then perceived it in the thought of St. Thomas, along the following lines:

Efficient causality, then, connotes an energizing (in the sense of the Greek ἐνέργεια [energeia], i.e. a particular actuality) or making-to-be (ποιήσις [poiesis]), rather than an allowing-to-become or a drawing-forth, which is the work of final causality. While it is true, as we have said, that God acts toward us in both ways, we must understand the sense of that creative activity with respect to any given dimension of our being. We suggest accordingly, that efficient causality might be "softened" by final causality as the property of innate active power becomes more definitive of the kind of being that we are. In other words, as God creates a higher grade of being with a greater measure of innate power, the creature is, as it is created to be, more capable of contributing to its own action. Thus, God must do less, as the form he sustains in being can do more. Yet God remains—indeed, he is all the more—the creature’s final cause; and thus, he acts, by proportion, more as an end or motive than as an agent. Again, this is not to say that God is not an agent, but that God’s agency is directed toward the elevation and preservation of the form, which in turn, he makes capable of acting on its own accord.

What we see in ourselves as various modes of being, therefore, are the direct results of the manner of God’s causative activity. In a sense, the mystery is misstated when we ask how God’s causality allows for the creation of truly self-determining being. The appropriate way to state the mystery is to say that self-determining being is what happens when God causes being in a certain way. Thus, as we have said, contrary to God’s causality being incompatible with our self-determinability, our self-determinability derives precisely from that specific mode of God’s creative, causative activity which is "making-human.”

One dimension of that creative activity involves the creation of the free will, which is involved intimately with any properly

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human act (ibid. I-II.18–21); and the theological virtues are, though infused, properly human acts.\(^{89}\) Certainly, in accordance with *Summa Theologicae* I.2.iii, God is the first efficient cause of all things, which includes human-being and human-willing. Human-willing, however, is caused efficiently precisely as free; and God's causal activity with respect to our willing remains freedom-producing in the order of grace, just as in the order of nature. God's efficient causality with respect to the human will should thus be conceptualized in terms of the analogy of a therapist's supporting hand. Accordingly, the human will should be seen as the agent of its own action, but God as the agent who facilitates that action—the one upon whom the willing subject depends for the power of choice. For Aquinas, as *Summa Theologicae* I.105.v makes clear, this is an undeniable fact about the relationship of creature to Creator, both in the order of nature and in the order of grace. But precisely for that reason, the emphasis in his writings on the subject of human responsibility, even in the assent into faith, falls on the side of God's final causality with respect to the human will. As efficient cause, God makes human being with all that "making-human" implies, part of which is that we act of our own accord, without coercion, never being forced to will one object and not another (ibid. I-II.10.iv). But as final cause, God presents himself to us as other, and draws us forth to himself as an object of desire—an object which we may freely choose to pursue or not. God's efficient causality in this moment, which facilitates the will's power of choice for this supra-natural object (God himself), is sometimes called enabling grace. Enabling grace, however, does not, properly speaking, move

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\(^{89}\) Note original to text: While it might seem unusual to speak about a virtue, especially an infused virtue, as an *act*, this terminology is quite appropriate. A virtue implies a faculty functioning properly, i.e. fulfilled in its *telos*; and this is to be in act in that respect. Further, and more consistent with Aquinas' own usage, a theological virtue involves the will's movement, and that is for the will to elicit an act. The distinction here between the moral and the theological virtues on this point is that the moral virtues are operative habits inclining a person to a certain way of acting before a moral object in the created order, where a moral object may not always be present to elicit an act of the will. In the case of the theological virtues, however, the will's ultimate object is eternal and omnipresent, so that the inclination never ceases to culminate in an act of will, so long as the human being is conscious. The theological virtues, therefore, can be called human acts inasmuch as they represent the teleological fulfillment of those powers of the human being which constitute humanity's specific *differentia*, i.e. the intellect and the free will, and subsist through charity in the willing of their ultimate *telos*: God himself.
the will, but empowers it for motion. As we have said, this is not because efficient causality is never discussed in terms of motion, but because when it is, the allusion is always to the co-presence of some final causality, without reference to which, the efficient causality under consideration cannot be properly understood.\footnote{Richard H. Bulzacchelli, \textit{Judged by the Law of Freedom: A History of the Faith-Works Controversy and a Resolution in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas} (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006), 68–70. By the time this text was finally published, we were no longer persuaded of our original reading of St. Thomas on this point, but it is a reading shared, nonetheless—at least in précis—by Wojtyla and others who appeal to St. Thomas as they seek to defend the givenness of human self-determination in the face of the mystery of divine omnipotence. Later in this chapter, when we consider Wojtyla’s critique of Thomism, we will discuss alternative readings of Aquinas on this point, stemming from St. Thomas’ conception of the human person.}

According to this view, God’s omnipotence ultimately means that he possess the power to create a being itself possessed of a divinely-bestowed power to be the efficient cause of its own acts. For Wojtyla, this power marks the threshold of personhood. This is the point, in other words, at which a being has crossed over, ontologically and by nature, from one that is merely acted upon by its environment—caught up in an instinctive dance of stimulus/response—and has become the master of its own destiny, capable of directing, sublimating and transcending its urges in the interest of an overarching value, chosen by this being as the exemplar according to which it will determine itself through its own acts. Wojtyla goes on:

But since the will is a rational faculty, rationality permeates the inclination toward the good that the will has by nature as an appetitive faculty. The rationality of desire constitutes the essence of the will, which is why St. Thomas always defines the will as a rational appetite (\textit{appetitus rationalis}). The will’s natural rationality of desire is actualized when the will conforms its motion to reason and to reason’s judgment concerning objects of desire. These judgments have a practical import: they specify the goodness of particular object of desire. The proper object of reason is being and truth. 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. This objectification is the other source of the will’s
actualization. St. Thomas calls it *motio quoad specificationem*, and says that this motion, which comes from practical reason, consists in directing the appetitive efficacy that constitutes the essence of the will toward appropriate objects. These objects are the various goods objectified by reason. The will with its whole natural dynamism is in potency with respect to these goods, and this potency of the will is actualized by reason. That is why St. Thomas defines *specificatio* also as *motio*.92

Wojtyla is concerned, however, to avoid any reduction of the will to reason alone, in the way he attributes to Immanuel Kant. It is essential, for Wojtyla, that the will and the intellect be understood as distinct powers of the human person. Somehow, the will is able to direct reason, as well as be directed by it—or, it might be more accurate to say, the human person is able to direct his or her intellect by an act of will, as well as to assent, by an act of will, to the truth. He is also concerned with offering an account of the integration of the passions in the life of the will. Again, Wojtyla attributes to St. Thomas the metaphysical articulation of this dynamic. He writes:

St. Thomas is well aware, however, that the will’s activity as we know it from experience is not based merely on the peaceful, sedate objectification of reason. Feelings arising from the senses and from sensory desire—*passiones appetitus sensitive*—are always trying to affect this activity. According to St. Thomas, these feelings do not directly influence *motio quoad exercitium*. The will’s appetitive motion remains distinct from the motion of sensory desire (if this were not the case, it would be difficult to understand the rationality of the appetitive motion of the will). Rather, the feelings attempt to influence reason’s objectification of the objects of desire and to conform these objects to the feelings themselves and their own relation to the objects.93

In the end, Wojtyla sees St. Thomas as better able to address the findings of contemporary experimental research into ethical experience than are contemporary philosophers, because contemporary philosophers have tended, according to Wojtyla, to

destroy the "whole" of the ethical experience in the process of analyzing it. They do this by failing to see how the dimensions of willing and knowing remain distinct within the human person, while, at the same time, influencing one another in a reciprocal and ethically necessary way. He writes:

If . . . we consider the internal efficacy of the faculty that expresses itself in the desire for all that is in any way good and in the inclination toward the good of the whole human being, then it is not hard to agree that philosophers must find just such a faculty in their metaphysical analysis of the lived experience of the efficacy of the personal self, which is the basic moment of the phenomenology of the will. As to the strict connection of this experience with motivation in the process of the will, we must again acknowledge that the Thomistic view of the process of the will, in its notion of the will's dual motion (quoad exercitium and quoad specificationem), faithfully reflects what is presented in immediate experience as the unity comprised of the actual-dynamic moment and the objective moment.

Even in the case of feelings, we find that they play the same role in the experimental view as in the Thomistic view, for they are said to give a particular intensity to the lived experience of value and thereby influence motivation in the process of the will. The so-called determinate feelings that arise below the activity of the will are a separate issue. They are discussed by Ach, who focused mainly on the actual-dynamic aspect of the will. It would not be difficult to show that they constitute a new point of similarity with St. Thomas' view.94

For Wojtyla, what is essential, once again, is the integrity of the personal whole. No philosophically responsible analysis of the ethical act can allow this whole to be obscured. For Wojtyla, where we finally locate the ethical value cuts to the very core of this problem. The ethical value does not merely reside "in the person," as a non-essential accidental characteristic. Rather, the ethical value is precisely the ethical value "of the person", who, as person, is good or bad, and becomes good or bad in and through the performance of a human act. This theme will remain central for Wojtyla throughout the whole of his career. He writes:

*By ethical value I mean that through which the human being as a human being, as a concrete person, is simply good or bad. Ethical value is a qualification of the very person as a rational and free*

concrete being. And this is why the phenomenal "place" of ethical value is not its real place. From experience, we know that ethical value is not just that which we experience "in a person" as his or her "goodness" or "badness," but consists in the fact that this person as person is simply good or bad. If, in turn, we wish to emphasize the nevertheless accidental character of ethical value in relation to the very being of the person, then we will say that ethical value is that through which a given person as person is good or bad. 93

Wojtyla's language can be difficult to penetrate here. He wishes to distinguish between the statement, "this person, as a person, is bad," and "this person, insofar as he or she is a person, is bad." The ontic reality of personhood is inherently a good thing, and can never, for Wojtyla, be overwhelmed by a person's moral viciousness. But the moral value is unique among beings in the material universe. It is a characteristic that belongs only to human beings, such that the measure of what it means to be "excellent" as a human being must be calibrated to include an element totally beyond the reach of any other being in our plane of existence. To be "good" or "bad" as a dog or an oak tree, or even as a gorilla, does not involve anything more than a description of the biophysical functions of the creature. Even insofar as higher mammals may enjoy a degree of consciousness, the philosophical tradition has always been largely content to regard this consciousness as an inherently material reality—a reality so bound up with the physical constitution of the animal as to come into being and pass away with the bodily structure itself. Human beings, however, are not defined in their "goodness" or "badness" along merely biophysical lines, but along the moral trajectory, insofar as they are rational and free agents of responsibility in their actions. Moral goodness or badness subsists in the human person, precisely as person; they are personal properties, unlike mass, volume, or age. Wojtyla goes on:

The person, then, is not just the uniquely proper phenomenological subject of ethical values but is their ontic subject as well. This fact indubitably belongs to experience, which in turn belongs to the general human experience upon which ethics is primarily based. This experience is more fundamental than so-called phenomenological experience. It deals with concrete beings

themselves as genuine wholes, and not just with the “moments” of them that in some way or other “manifest themselves.”

For ethicists, the acting human being is just such a genuine whole. The human being is a person, a being that is conscious of itself. When the human being acts as such a person then each of his or her conscious acts is an ethical experience. In apprehending and investigating this lived experience as a phenomenological fact, we focus only on what happens in the person while performing an action. Although we then perceive the lived experience of efficacy and ethical value, these phenomenological elements do not present us with the actual whole so long as we do not apprehend what happens to the person through the act that person consciously performs. What happens to the person is that the person himself or herself becomes good or bad depending on the act performed. And this becoming good or bad of the person through the performance of a conscious action is what constitutes the essential core of ethical experience. This becoming of the person also belongs to the totality of experience: the person experiences his or her ethical becoming.96

It is easy to see, at this point, that Wojtyla is actually concerned with the relationship between our concept of human being and our understanding of the direction ethical action takes in the formation of the human person as a psychosomatic whole. He deals with the problem in his essay, “In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics.”97 There, again, he contrasts St. Thomas’s view of the role of morality and ethical action with those of his major interlocutors in the contemporary period—namely Immanuel Kant, and Max Scheler. Wojtyla’s concern, in this article, is to redraw the classical Aristotelian-Thomistic connection between human action and the moral improvement of the individual—a moral improvement bound-up, as we have said, with the ontological fulfillment of the person as an organismic whole.

Wojtyla sees Kant and Scheler, each in his own way, as falling short of providing any adequate foundation for a perfectionistic ethic, because neither founds his system on a “philosophy of being,” but, instead, upon a “philosophy of consciousness.” He equates these two approaches to anthropology and ethics with the dichotomy between metaphysical “realism” and “idealism”. Wojtyla insists that “only the assumptions of the philosophy of


being allow us to construct a consistent perfectionistic ethics.” 98

He writes:

Consciousness is understood realistically when it is connected with the person’s being as its subject, when it is an act of this being. Consciousness divorced from the being of the person and treated as an autonomous subject of activity is consciousness understood idealistically. This is how Kant understood consciousness, and this is also how Scheler—despite all his differences from Kant—understood it. Such a consciousness can only be a subject of values as intentional contents, but it cannot be a subject of values as qualities that really perfect the being. The objectivism of acts of consciousness upon which Scheler based his system in contrast to Kant is still in no sense an objectification of the conscious being. But without the objectification of the conscious being, we cannot speak in any meaningful way of perfectionism in ethics. 99

Wojtyla is more emphatic in his conclusion of this rather short article. Not only does he reiterate his conviction that a philosophy of consciousness cannot form the basis of a perfectionistic ethics, he insists, further, that a philosophy of being cannot avoid doing so. He writes:

A perfectionistic ethics cannot be constructed upon the assumptions of the philosophy of consciousness, whereas an ethics constructed upon the assumptions of a realistic philosophy of being cannot help but be perfectionistic in some sense. I am not sure which part of this conclusion is more important. In any event, this dual conclusion supports the thesis I advanced at the beginning of this essay. That is why I introduced Kant and Scheler in juxtaposition to Aristotle and St. Thomas in the above discussion.

One could easily succumb to the illusion that for the construction of ethics it is best to proceed from an analysis of consciousness: if whatever is moral is also conscious, an analysis of consciousness alone should allow us to discover all that is moral, all that forms the content of ethics. In the light of the above discussion, however, this turns out not to be the case. An analysis of consciousness alone allows us to discover only the contents of consciousness. Moral good, however, is not just a content of consciousness; it is also a perfection of the conscious being—and

it is this first and foremost. The perfection of a being can be apprehended only through an analysis of that being.\textsuperscript{100}

His conviction, here, is of paramount importance for an understanding of his whole approach to the problem of ethics. Wojtyla sees perfectionism as inherent to any authentically Judeo-Christian ethical system. From the Judeo-Christian perspective, we are bound to affirm that there is some genuinely good and fulfilling manner of being for the human person (i.e. "blessedness"), and, by contrast, other genuinely evil and harmful manners of existence (i.e., "sin" and "damnation"), and that the avenue to each of these modes of being is opened up for us through the arena of human action. This is the meaning behind the passage from the book of Sirach, where we read:

\begin{quote}
Do not say, "The Lord was responsible for my sinning", for he is never the cause of what he hates.  
Do not say, "It was he who led me astray", for he has no use for a sinner.  
The Lord hates all that is foul, and no one who fears him will love it either.  
He himself made man in the beginning, and then left him free to make his own decisions.  
If you wish, you can keep the commandments, to behave faithfully is within your power.

He has set fire and water before you; put out your hand to whichever you prefer.  
Man has life and death before him; whichever a man likes better will be given him.  
For what is the wisdom of the Lord; he is almighty and all-seeing.  
His eyes are on those who fear him, he notes every action of man.  
He never commands anyone to be godless, he has given no one permission to sin.\textsuperscript{101}
\end{quote}

Wojtyla notes, in this regard, that:

Aquinas proceeds, like Aristotle, from an affirmation of the strict connection that occurs between the good and being. This

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{100} Wojtyla, "In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics," 54–55.
\item \textsuperscript{101} Sirach 15:11–21. We cite from the Jerusalem Bible, which lists the book as Ecclesiasticus.
\end{footnotes}
assertion took on new force in light of numerous remarks in Genesis and other books of the Bible—and it had already been enunciated frequently by St. Augustine. Aquinas, in his philosophy of the good, appeals to the traditions of both Aristotle and St. Augustine. The good is the end of a being, since it makes the being perfect. And so the good is always the perfection of a being. 102

Wojtyla's concern, then, is the connection between human action, which we experience as intrinsically ethical (i.e., as carrying ethical implications), and the perfection of the human person. Wojtyla notes that in the Aristotelian framework, this connection is already presupposed. He writes:

Aristotle teaches that such a good makes us profoundly happy; it is also a befitting good [bonum honestum], one that makes us perfect and objectively worthy of esteem. The perfection in question here is a moral perfection, which finds expression in the possession of virtues that lead us to strive for various goods beyond ourselves, while constantly realizing the basic good that resides within our very own person. This inner good is the ultimate end of human activity; for it, we should do all that we do as rational, conscious beings. As can be seen, Aristotle's ethics is deeply humanistic, and his humanism is ethical to the core: human fulfillment is brought about by moral perfection. 103

Aristotle, however, does not develop an act-based ethical theory, but is more concerned with habit, whether habits of virtue or of vice. Wojtyla sees St. Thomas' contribution as essential in this regard. He seeks to articulate the connection, not simply between a pattern of action and the development of virtue and human perfection, but between this concrete act and the development, or negation, of virtue. St. Thomas articulates that relationship at the ontological level, and, to this extent, Wojtyla is content to speak, in a preliminary way, of a "Thomistic personalism." Wojtyla employs this term in a perambulatory sense—that is, insofar as he sees St. Thomas speaking of the objective framework within which the person, as subject of his or her own acts, can exist. Again, for Wojtyla, this objective framework is a missing ingredient in the

103 Wojtyla, "In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics," 47. Wojtyla's [insertion].
contemporaries, according to Wojtyla's assessment, and a prerequisite for any fully adequate personalism.\textsuperscript{104} He writes:

> According to St. Thomas, consciousness and self-consciousness are something derivative, a kind of fruit of the rational nature that subsists in the person, a nature crystallized in a unitary rational and free being, and not something subsistent in themselves. If 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. The person acts consciously because the person is rational. Self-consciousness, in turn, is connected with freedom, which is actualized in the activity of the will. Through the will, the human being is the master of his or her actions, and self-consciousness in a special way reflects this mastery over actions.

> We can see here how very objectivistic St. Thomas' view of the person is. It almost seems as though there is no place in it for an analysis of consciousness and self-consciousness as totally unique manifestations of the person as a subject. . . . He shows us the particular faculties, both spiritual and sensory, thanks to which the whole human consciousness and self-consciousness—the human personality in the psychological and moral sense—takes shape, but that is also where he stops. Thus, St. Thomas gives us an excellent view of the objective existence and activity of the person, but it would be difficult to speak in his view of the lived experience of the person.\textsuperscript{105}

Wojtyla derives from St. Thomas the idea he will later go on to develop in his work on \textit{The Acting Person}, and in several subsequent essays, of the “transitive and the intransitive” dimensions of the human act. In the human act, the human person, through the dynamism of the intellect and the will, efficaciously imprints reality with his or her own mark, not merely as one who responds to stimuli, but as one who imposes upon reality a new actuality from within the person's own power of operation. Wojtyla is explicit, and somewhat radical on this score. He writes:

\textsuperscript{104} As we will discuss later in this chapter, under the heading, “John Paul II’s Critique of Aquinas,” Aquinas cannot really be considered a personalist in the sense that Wojtyla understands the term.

\textsuperscript{105} Karol Wojtyla, “Thomistic Personalism,” in \textit{Person and Community} (165–175), 170–171. According to Sandok's editorial note, this essay had been presented by Wojtyla, originally, on February 17, 1961, at the Fourth Annual Philosophy Week at the Catholic University of Lublin.
[T]he better we know ourselves—or possibilities, capabilities, and talents—the more we are able to derive from ourselves and the more we are able to create, making use of the raw material we find in ourselves.

We are by nature creators, not just consumers. We are creators because we think. And because our thought (our rational nature) is also the basis of our personalities, one could say that we are creators because we are persons. Creativity is realized in action. When we act in a manner proper to a person, we always create something: we create something either outside ourselves in the surrounding world or within ourselves—or outside and within ourselves at the same time. Creating as derived from thinking is so characteristic of a person that it is always an infallible sign of a person, a proof of a person’s existence or presence. In creating, we also fill the external material world around us with our own thought and being. There is a certain similarity here between ourselves and God, for the whole of creation is an expression of God’s own thought and being.\(^{106}\)

The reader will note that, for Wojtyla, conceptualizing the person in substantialist terms is essential to providing an account of the experience of efficacy. While St. Thomas does not provide an analysis of this experience, as such, he provides the basis for such an analysis by insisting that the human person possess its own active power, in and through its own act of human-being. We considered this point in St. Thomas in \textit{Judged by the Law of Freedom}, where we wrote:

For Aquinas, the creature bears a likeness to God, because any movement from potential being to actual being is, by definition, a movement closer to God, who is Pure Actuality (ibid. I.2.iii).\(^{107}\) By coming closer to God in this way, a being gains a higher measure of active power, because active power is the power inherent in the act of being.\(^{108}\) In other words, God’s pure actuality is synonymous with his absolute active power, or omnipotence (\textit{Summa Theologiae} I.25.ii–iii). The creature, however, sustained in


\(^{107}\) Note original to the source: If the fourth way is read in light of the first way, it becomes clear that to be “more noble” is synonymous with being more fully in act. Thus, to be more like God is to be more fully in act, and conversely; and to be a higher substance is to be more fully in act, and thus, closer to the divine nature.

\(^{108}\) Note original to the source: \textit{Summa Theologiae} I.25.i, \textit{Summa Contra Gentiles} II.7.iii.
existence by God, has within itself, a degree of active power corresponding to the degree to which it is in act. As *Summa Theologiae* I.105.v thus makes clear, the creature’s power is its own, rooted in the very reality of what the creature is; but is derived from the power of God. This is because the creature’s act of existence, though its own, arises only because God imposes being upon nothingness so what is potential (on account of God’s power) might realize actuality. Thus, the individual acts which the creature performs are truly the creature’s acts, because they proceed from the creature’s own active power. Nonetheless, the creature is entirely dependent upon God for the performance of those acts, because the creature’s power, by which it can act in its own right, itself derives from the God who undergirds the creature in the creature’s act of being.

All of this said, Wojtyla sees the basically realist understanding that rests at the basis of Aquinas’ conception of the human person and human consciousness as the basis for a perfectionistic ethic that takes account of the goodness or badness of the person as a self-determining agent of responsibility. He sees this element as something lacking, generally, in the philosophical ethical systems articulated by the contemporaries, and he understands it as essential in capturing the real moral stakes at issue in ethical debates. Even as he urges a necessary movement in the direction of a normative approach to ethics, he sees this realist foundation as essential to the success of that very project, because, without it, we cannot move beyond a mere description of rational or affective states, and thus, to the true heart of the acting person.

1.5: Wojtyla/John Paul II’s Integration of Scheler:

Among the most distinct characteristics of Karol Wojtyla’s thought—a characteristic that rather clearly remains even in his papal work as John Paul II—is the integration of the thought of the pioneering phenomenologist Max Scheler. The profound influence

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of Scheler upon the mind of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II is not widely recognized beyond the mere acknowledgment that Wojtyla had studied and admired Scheler. Yet, Scheler figures as a prominent interlocutor of Karol Wojtyla in his prepapal work, and receives, as we mentioned earlier, Wojtyla's credit for the very foundation of his thinking about the human person. In the preface to the English-language edition of The Acting Person, he writes:

'Granted the author's acquaintance with traditional Aristotelian thought, it is however the work of Max Scheler that has been a major influence upon his reflection. In my overall conception of the person envisaged through the mechanisms of his operative systems and their variations, as presented here, may indeed be seen the Schelerian foundation studied in my previous work.'

What, however, is the central thrust of this influence? We have already considered, in summary fashion, Wojtyla's intellectual dialogue with the thought of Immanuel Kant, and his critique of the shortcomings of Kant's system in terms of his one-sided concern for the moral value of duty in action. Wojtyla was concerned that, while Kant rightly affirmed duty as a necessary value in moral action, he did so to the exclusion of perhaps still more primal dimensions of the structure of morality. Kant appears, in the end, finally hostile to the motivations of sentiment—to the emotional dimension of morality. For Wojtyla, this fact about Kant represents a distortion of the real essence of morality. While there is, for Wojtyla, clearly more to human morality than emotion, a moral act performed for the sake of duty alone, without an authentic love for persons, must be taken, in Wojtyla's thinking, to represent a mere skeleton of moral action, and not a genuinely living moral reality.

We can also say, however, that Wojtyla is aware of a new problem for philosophy in the post-Cartesian period—a problem with which Kant is attempting to grapple in his own profound, but ultimately inadequate way. Wojtyla accepts the legitimacy of this problem with its challenge to move beyond what he had received in the philosophy of St. Thomas as it stands on its own. Scheler represents, then, for Wojtyla, an interlocutor who can point a way forward in his pursuit of a solution to the new problem of subjectivity. Wojtyla explains the problem in the handwritten draft.

of his preface to the English/American edition of *The Acting Person*. He writes:

The concept of the acting person which I am presenting was born from my previous work, especially from my analysis of M. Scheler, above all of his *Wertethik*. As it is known, Scheler built his concept of material *Wertethik* with the thought of challenging the aprioristic ethic of pure form, or rather, of pure duty, which, as Kant's heritage, dominated throughout the nineteenth century. Scheler's critique, irrespectively of his scholarly relations with Husserl, followed the line that had been charted by the master of phenomenology on the foundation of the principle *zurück zum Gegenstand*. This basic controversy, conducted in the name of a return toward that which is objective in ethics (and above all in morality), presents at its very root the problem of the subject, namely, the problem of the person, or of the human being as a person.

This presentation of the problem, completely new in relation to traditional philosophy (and by traditional philosophy we understand here the pre-Cartesian philosophy and above all the heritage of Aristotle, and, among the Catholic schools of thought, of St. Thomas Aquinas) has provoked me to undertake an attempt at reinterpreting certain formulations proper to this whole philosophy. The first question which was born in the mind of the present student of St. Thomas (certainly a very poor student) was the question: What is the relationship between action as interpreted by the traditional ethics as *actus humanus*, and the action as experience. This and other similar questions led me gradually to a more synthetic formulation in the form of the present study *The Acting Person*.

Scheler represents, for Wojtyła, not merely the intellectual guide in terms of pointing a direction for further development in the midst of the present "problem of the person," but as the key figure in shaping the very structure of the solution. While it is true that Wojtyła never abandons a basically Thomistic realist understanding of the human person, and finds a "philosophy of pure consciousness" to be finally inadequate in Scheler just as it is in Kant, Wojtyła explicitly credits Scheler with providing that element in his own thinking that moves his thought beyond mere Thomism, enabling him to formulate at least the beginnings of a genuine solution to "the problem of the person," and to account in some meaningful way, for, "the relationship between action as interpreted by the traditional ethics as *actus humanus*, and the

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action as experience."¹¹³ In The Acting Person, Wojtyla would undertake, "an individual attempt . . . at reaching this reality which is the man-person as seen through his actions,"¹¹⁴ but this attempt is very much an attempt to incorporate the valid and profound insights afforded him by Scheler with the realist "philosophy of being" he inherits from St. Thomas. He writes, "The author of the present study owes everything to the systems of metaphysics, of anthropology, and of Aristotelian-Thomistic ethics on the one hand, and to phenomenology, above all in Scheler's interpretation, and through Scheler's critique of Kant, on the other hand."¹¹⁵

Of course, at the very foundation of a realist metaphysic, rests the presupposition that, as Aristotle explains, our understanding of the world begins with sense perception and our ability to hold distinct perceptions together across time and place to form what we call "experience", wherefrom general principles are abstracted.¹¹⁶ It is on the basis of this presupposition that Aristotle is able to assert that, "what happens all of the time, or nearly all of the time, happens by nature,"¹¹⁷ and thus, that, "all human beings, by nature, desire to know."¹¹⁸ Aristotle, however, is everywhere concerned with the common object of experience and does not go on the raise the question of the subjective content of experience—that is to say, the contuition of the subject who is experiencing, in and through the very fact of experiencing the object. Wojtyla is convinced that the contuition of the subject in the experience of the object, and with it, an understanding of the inner structure of lived experience, is essential to forming a more complete account of objective reality.

Kenneth L. Schmitz offers a particularly salient explanation of the distinction Wojtyla has in mind between these two dimensions of experience—that is, between that understanding of "experience" at work as the root of conventional realist metaphysics in the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition and that understanding of "experience" at work in the project of phenomenology. He writes:

¹¹⁴ Wojtyla, The Acting Person, xiv.
¹¹⁵ Wojtyla, The Acting Person, xiv.
¹¹⁶ Aristotle, Metaphysics I.1 (980a22–982a2).
¹¹⁸ Aristotle, Metaphysics I.1 (980a22).
It is not as though experience had not been consulted from the dawn of consciousness. Even the metaphysician, supposedly the most abstract of minds, nonetheless consults it. How could he not? The difference, however, does not lie in the fact that experience is consulted, but rather in how that consultation takes place. Indeed, the phenomenologist Husserl always attended to the how (Wie). And so, it is a matter of two different approaches to experience. The metaphysician consults experience as offering him evidence from which he can reason and infer. He then resolves the evidence into principles and causes which provide an explanation of the evidence. I have tried to show that Wojtyla accepts such reasoning from evidence as essential, even if not wholly adequate, to an integral account of ethical action. But not just any metaphysics will do. Again and again, he insists that an existential metaphysics of actual being (esse actu) is required to situate the moral agent in the actual context in which one acts.\footnote{Kenneth Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama*, 126.}

In classical metaphysics, experience mainly serves to provide evidence to suggest that the metaphysician is reasoning consistently from the principles previously discerned. This is why the science of epistemology precedes metaphysics pedagogically, but not logically. We can make sweeping assertions on the basis of more or less cursory observations, arriving, through induction, upon the intuition of a certain set of first principles, which, as such, cannot be demonstrated by appeal to anything else, but which form the foundation of all further argumentation. Once those principles are intuited, the metaphysician can soar above the realm of concrete experience, and extrapolate conclusions from the principles themselves.

In the phenomenological method, however, experience is constantly interwoven with any argument or explanations we might construct. Experience is the constant touchstone of reason, holding the key to any fully adequate understanding of reality. On a related point, Merleau-Ponty explains Edmund Husserl’s relationship to Science through phenomenology. What he says can be applied with equal accuracy to metaphysics as to any scientific discipline. He writes:

The first instruction which Husserl gave phenomenology . . . is first of all the disavowal of science . . . Everything I know of the world, even through science, I know from a point of view which is mine through an experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless. The whole universe of
Science is built on the lived world [le monde vecu]; and if we wish to conceive science itself with rigour, while exactly appreciating its sense and significance, we must first re-awaken this experience of the world, for science is its second expression. Science does not have and will never have the same kind of being that the perceived world has, for the simple reason that science is a determination or an explanation of that world. To return to things themselves is to return to this world as it is before knowledge and of which knowledge always speaks, and with regard to which all scientific determination is abstract, referential and dependent, just as is geography with regard to the landscape where we first learned what a forest is, or a prairie or river.  

Schmitz explains that, qua phenomenologist, Wojtyla was able to bring something new to the realist metaphysical tradition from which he had emerged. While there can be no question that Wojtyla sees the philosophical value of metaphysics, especially as it can be brought to bear upon our understanding of ethics, he does not see metaphysics as holding unilateral supremacy among the philosophical sciences. Phenomenological analysis, while itself requiring a perfection in metaphysics, imposes an obligation upon metaphysics as well. Metaphysics must provide an account of what has been discovered through lived experience. Lived experience holds within itself the elements of the real state of affairs—it is the medium of our encounter with reality, and thus, the locus of that which we are “given” as real. From this point of departure, we must reject any metaphysical account that serves merely to explain away, on the basis of a preconceived metaphysical principle, that which is given in lived experience. Schmitz writes:

The phenomenologist . . . consults experience in order to release concepts within experience as lived, as felt, as sensed. And so, the phenomenologist Wojtyla consults the living act of thoughtful experience, and must be more descriptive than explanatory, at least inasmuch as explanation is made in terms of more general principles that hold for all being, for ens inquantum ens. Thus, for example, in Wojtyla’s phenomenology the concept of lived causation is not formed by the observation of various causative acts performed by oneself and other beings within the overall context of being. The concept of lived causation is formed phenomenologically within the actual living experience of one’s

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own personal agency and takes shape as the concrete double task of personal integration and transcendence. Such an analysis must address each person’s concrete experience of their [sic] own agency. And this personal character gives to the analysis an intimacy that observation cannot and should not be expected to give.121

Where Schmitz does not appear to grasp the full implications of Wojtyla’s embrace of the phenomenological method, is in its implication for the relative authority metaphysical speculation holds in relation to lived experience. Classically understood, because metaphysics is the science of being qua being—the science wherein we provide an overarching account of the way things really are across the whole of reality—metaphysical principles, once derived on the basis of argument, can be used as a corrective of lived experience. But for Wojtyla, lived experience must always be the ultimate reference against which metaphysical speculation checks itself. Lived experience has the authority to demand of the metaphysician a rethinking of long-standing arguments and conclusions.

In any event, Wojtyla’s encounter with the phenomenological method, which he came to embrace as his own, was mediated, for him, originally, and most fundamentally, through his encounter with Scheler. Thus, beyond that which can be classified as “broadly phenomenological” in the thinking of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, we can discover still more precisely Schelerian influences. As already noted, central to the Schelerian dimension of Wojtyla’s thinking, of course, is his conception of the person. Even Wojtyla’s reference to “the problem of the person,” is a reflection of Scheler’s own phraseology in his Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values.122 After criticizing the Kantian formalistic understanding of the person along hyper-Boethian lines as basically reducible to the faculties of reason and will, he begins to frame the concept of the person as irreducible, but still knowable as a unique subject of acts. He writes:

121 Kenneth Schmitz, At the Center of the Human Drama, 127–128.

Neither the being nor the problem of the "person" would exist if there were beings (whose natural organization we set aside in the reduction) endowed only with knowing (as thought and intuition) and those acts belonging to this (specifically theoretical) sphere. (Let us call such beings purely rational beings.) Of course these beings would still be (logical) subjects that execute rational acts: but they would not be persons. Nor would they both be persons if they had both inner and outer perception and often dealt with knowledge of the soul and nature, that is, even if they found an object "ego" in themselves and others and could perfectly observe, describe, and explicate experiences of "the ego" as well as all individual egos. The same would hold for beings whose entire contents were given only as projects of willing. They would be (logical) subjects of a willing, but not persons.123

Scheler goes on to explain that the person is that which forms the very foundation of action, and thus, as the point of intersection between subject and object, making intersubjectivity and responsibility possible, as an ontological reality, and not merely as a set of "moral postulates." It is precisely at this point of intersection in the "person" that we discover the true source of action, and not merely an elaborately manipulated moment in a string of secondary causes. He writes:

We can now enunciate the essential definition in the above sense: the person is the concrete and essential unity of being of acts of different essences which in itself (and therefore not \( \pi\ \rho\ \sigma\ \zeta\ \iota\ \mu\ \upsilon\ \varsigma \)) precedes all essential act-differences (especially the difference between inner and outer perception, inner and outer willing, inner and outer feeling, loving and hating, etc.). The being of the person is therefore the "foundation" of all essentially different acts.124

Let us be clear on Scheler's point in this passage. The term, \( \pi\ \rho\ \sigma\ \zeta\ \iota\ \mu\ \upsilon\ \varsigma \) (\( \rho\ \theta\ \kappa\ \iota\ \mu\ \alpha\ \nu\ \varsigma \)) means, literally, "with us" in a strong sense: i.e., "bound-up-with us". Scheler means to stress the uniqueness and incommunicability of the fundamental being of the person as someone who, qua some-one, is not in any way finally reducible to others, even if the person finds fulfillment in communion with others. This is a critical insight. For Scheler, when we encounter a genuine person, as opposed to a hallucination, we encounter the one who is given, and not merely

123 Scheler, Formalism, 382–383.

124 Scheler, Formalism, 383.
the *impression* we receive. His point is directed squarely at the Kantian idea of the noumenal dimension beyond our epistemic grasp, in which the thing-in-itself, and even the self-in-itself or the “transcendental ego”, reside.

Scheler's assertion is that, insofar as we do not grant access to the noumenal person, we tacitly exclude the whole category of personhood from the universe of our experience, and thus, from the moral arena within which we live and act. Scheler's critique, if we accept it, exposes Kantian formalism as morally vacuous for its implicit *personlessness*. Indeed, the realm of the *interhuman* or the *intersubjective*, and thus, the emergence of the realm of the *we*, becomes possible only upon the foundation of the irreducible person, where the person is understood as fundamentally *not* ἄριστος ἴδιος.

Scheler further develops this concept as he explains that the person, who is known in the execution of acts, is never an object, *qua* personhood. Of course, Scheler is not suggesting that the person is not a reality, but that the reality of personhood is the reality of being a subject of acts, and thus, that it is in the execution of acts that the person comes to light as the responsible source of those acts—i.e., as the one from whom those acts proceed, and to whom those acts are attributable. The moment we consider the person as an *object*, it is no longer the *person* that we are considering, but an abstraction of the person. It is not enough to say, merely, that we are considering *this person* here as a *thing*, because to be *this person* here is to be *someone*.

Scheler paves the way for Wojtyla's writings on the irreducibility of the person, when he distinguishes between the *functions* of a person and the *acts* of a person. He writes:

First, all functions are ego-functions; they never belong to the sphere of the person. Functions are psychic; acts are non-psychic. Acts are executed; functions happen by themselves. Functions necessarily require a lived body and an environment to which the “appearances” of functions belong. But with the person and acts we do not posit a lived body; and to the person there corresponds a

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125 Indeed, Scheler's thesis reveals the interior moral structure of the sin of lust, wherein the person is reduced, in the perception of the offender, to a mere object—a good belonging to the other or merely ordained to the service of the other—and not for his or her own sake. In Buber's language, it rests in the reduction of the other to an *ich* rather than a *du*—to an *it* rather than a *you-my-dear*. There can be no doubt that Wojtyla is concerned with lust from precisely this point of view.
world, not an environment. Acts spring from the person into time; functions are facts in phenomenal time and can be measured indirectly by coordinating their phenomenal time-relations with measurable lengths of time of appearances given in functions themselves. For example, seeing, hearing, tasting, and smelling belong to functions, as do all kinds of noticing, noting, and taking notice of (and not only so-called sensible attention to) vital feeling, etc. However, genuine acts, in which something is "meant," and which among themselves possess an immediate complex of meaning, are not functions. Functions can have a twofold relation to acts. They can be objects of acts, e.g., when I try to bring my seeing to intuitive givenness; and they can also be that "through" which an act is directed toward something objectified, though without this function's becoming an object in the process.126

Scheler's point, in this passage, is to say that while functions involve the realm of intersection between the physical environment and the person, acts involve the realm of decision, where "something is 'meant,'” and wherein there can be found "an immediate complex of meaning." A non-person can perform a function, but only a person can act. Wojtyła fully embraces this thesis, and, in doing so, adopts an understanding of the human act that moves beyond what we find in St. Thomas and the classical Thomistic tradition, wherein the human act is, itself, a secondary cause and thus, an effect of God's providential activations. From within this Schelerian framework, such a view of human action reduces the human act to a mere function, distinguished from other functions merely in the mode of its operation, but not in its causal origins. Here, both Scheler and Wojtyla appear to embrace a more Scotistic understanding of the human person as a truly spontaneous cause of his or her own acts. For his own part, Wojtyla writes:

It seems that in more than anything else, freedom is present and manifests itself in the ability to choose; for this ability confirms the independence of the will in the intentional order of willing. In choosing, the will is not cramped by the object. This is how indeterminism enters into the formula of autodeterminism. Independence of the object, of the values as the end of willing, confirms for its part self-determination, which, so far as the grasping of the will is concerned, seems to be the most elemental experience of all. If, however, there was in man—within his whole accessible sphere of experience—anything that would allow his being determined in advance by the object in the intentional order, then self-determination would be impossible. Such determination

126 Scheler, Formalism, 388.
would unavoidably abolish within the domain of the person the experience of efficacy and self-determination, the experience of decision or simply of willing. It would also mean the suppression of the person, insofar as in all these experiences he reveals himself and evidences his own existence. The person's existence is identical with the existence of a concrete central factor of freedom. 127

We addressed the structure of this problem in our article, “Duns Scotus’s Third ‘Volitional Posture’ and a Critique of the Problem of Moral Indifference in Our Time.” 128 There we write:

In the absence of Scotus' third volitional posture [that is, the ability to refrain from eliciting any act of the will in response to an object presented to it by the intellect], we are left with the inevitable conclusion that the subject must either will an object once it is apprehended by the intellect, or nill it. This means that the will must always react with a positive movement to any object presented to it by the intellect. Since the will may never refrain from reacting once an object is presented to it, goodness, when the intellect considers it, will always be met with an act of willing, and evil, in its turn, with an act of nilling. The will may direct the intellect to deliberate further, to consider alternative goods, or to desist from its consideration of a given object; but for the agent to resist acting toward a given moral object 129, that object must either be removed from the attention of the will, or else be re-cast in a different light. 130 The will is therefore determined, at least in this sense: that, at bottom, it must of necessity elicit an act upon

127 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, .3.6 (132).
129 Article’s n. 12: For our purposes in this article, the term moral object refers to any object considered as “good” or “evil” in any respect. A person can, for example, prefer one flavor of ice cream over another with no moral burden. It would, nonetheless, be evil in a real sense to force oneself to consume, say, pistachio ice cream, if this flavor were found displeasing, unless, for example, the person ate the unpleasant ice cream as a gesture of hospitality, good-will, or diplomacy. To simply torture oneself with unpleasantness, in other words, is a morally evil act, even if the unpleasantness is associated with a non-moral object. See n. 20 [in the original article].
presentation of the object by the intellect. If this is so, then the will may very well be contingent insofar as it is subject to the intellect which encounters objects by chance; but as far as Scotus is concerned, it cannot, under these circumstances, properly be said that the will is free. But if the will is not free, then the will is not very much of a will at all, in any human sense.

Now, Scheler explains his idea of the irreducible person still further, where he writes, “What we mean by the term person, in contrast to the ego, is something of a self-sufficient totality. A person acts, for example. He ‘takes a walk,’ etc.” His purpose in saying this is to note that the idea of the “ego” is merely an abstraction—an objectification of the subject—while the person is the subject as it is in itself. When we say, “I go for a walk,” we do not really mean, explains Scheler, that “my ego goes for a walk,”

131 Article’s n. 14: Cf., for a contrasting reading of Scotus, C. R. S. Harris, Duns Scotus (2 vols.), (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1927) 2:305–357. Harris’ account of free-choice in Scotus differs, in its specifics, not at all from the view held by Aquinas on this issue. According to Harris in this work, freedom, for Scotus, is found in the will’s ability to turn the attention of the intellect from one object to another. He makes no mention of anything resembling our “third posture,” and seems unaware of the implications of the texts used to support the thesis in the current article. Harris goes so far as to say, after twenty-one pages on Scotus’ moral teaching, “Up to this point the ethical teaching of Scotus is in substantial agreement with that of Thomas; the points of difference are only concerned with comparatively minor matters” (326). In the end, Harris notes but one difference between Aquinas and Scotus on the subject of free-choice. Scotus speaks of the will as a distinct power in clearer terms than does Aquinas, who, according to Harris, relies more heavily upon Aristotle, who, in turn, “. . . has no faculty of will at his disposal to explain the connexion between knowledge and conduct. . . .” (322). Such an assessment, however, reveals an inattentiveness, on Harris’ part, to the subtleties of three quite distinct thinkers.

132 Richard H. Bulzacchelli, “Duns Scotus’s Third ‘Volitional Posture’, 82–83. Article’s n. 15: Henry of Ghent advances essentially the same argument at Quodlibet IX.5, but stops short of applying this line of thinking to the highest good. With respect to the issue of happiness, therefore, Ghent stands with Aquinas. Both maintain that happiness, as a general concept, is necessarily willed, but that it is not necessarily willed in particular, since one cannot will what is not known, and human beings, at least in this life, do not have knowledge of happiness in particular (Ghent, loc. cit. CCCLXI.F; Aquinas, Summa Theologiae I-II.5.viii). See nn. 2, 8, and 19 [in the original article].
because "my ego" is really an intellectual construct created by the person as a linguistic vehicle through which to place the reality of one's inner Self into the sphere of communicable ideas. The "ego" does not go for a walk in reality. Rather, the person does.

Scheler is intent upon resisting any tendency to reduce the person to an accident of relatedness to other objects, or to a set of functions or capacities. It may well be that the person is related to other things—and especially to other persons—as a matter of fact, and properly, and it may well be that the person is capable of certain sorts of operations, like sensing and thinking, but, for Scheler, none of that is enough. Rather, the person is given in acting—in meaning what he or she does in this act. The person is known only in self-revelation through self-communication in act. Wojtyla speaks of this reality in terms of the propositions, "man-acts" and "I-act." He writes:

The experience of human action refers to the lived experience of the fact "I act." This fact is in each instance completely original, unique, and unrepeatable. And yet all facts of the type "I act" have a certain similarity both in the lived experience of the same person and in intersubjective dimensions. The lived experience of the fact "I act" differs from all facts that merely "happen" in a personal subject. This clear difference between something that "happens" in the subject and an "activity" or action of that subject allows us, in turn, to identify an element in the comprehensive experience of the human being that decisively distinguishes the activity or action of a person from all that merely happens in the person. I define this element as self-determination.

This first definition of self-determination in the experience of human action involves a sense of efficacy on the part of the personal self. "I act" means "I am the efficient cause" of my action and of my self-actualization as a subject, which is not the case when something merely "happens" in me, for then I do not experience the efficacy of my personal self. My sense of efficacy as an acting subject in relation to my activity is intimately connected with a sense of responsibility for that activity; the latter refers mainly to the axiological and ethical content of the act. All of this in some way enters organically into the experience of self-determination, although it is disclosed in this experience in varying degrees, depending to some extent on the personal maturity of the action. The greater this maturity, the more vividly I experience self-determination. And the more vividly I experience self-
determination, the more pronounced in my experience and awareness become my efficacy and responsibility. 133

Scheler explains that there are times when a person, though no less real, is invisible to other subjects. This occurs because our initial awareness of the person is mediated through our observation of the person as a responsible agent. But knowing that there is a person even where we do not witness action directly, is a dimension of a properly-formed moral sensibility, such that Scheler can appeal to the epistemic value of love as the precondition for receiving the gift of the other without reference to any particular function. We must remember that the person, being irreducible to any particular function, is neither reducible to any particular action, but instead, is revealed in his or her acts. The reality of the person pre-exists his or her self-revelation in action, as well as his or her discovery through love. There can be no question that this whole line of thought finds its place in the thinking of Karol Wojtyla and later, John Paul II.

This line of thought leads to Scheler’s insistence that “The person is therefore essentially never an ‘object.’ On the contrary, any objectifying attitude (be it perception, representation, thinking, remembering, or expectation) makes the person immediately transcendent.” 134 When he says, that “any objectifying attitude . . . makes the person immediately transcendent,” he is referring, once again, to the problem of noumenal transcendence in Kantian formalism, and insisting that such attitudes put the person wholly out of reach. For Scheler, as we had discussed earlier, in the objectification of the person, the person is simply bracketed from consciousness precisely as person, and becomes a mere intellectual construct or idea.

Scheler is, in fact, so resistant to the transcendentalizing of the person, and so insistent upon the recognition of the person in his or her uniqueness as a concrete individual, that he comes to sound, at times, like a relativist. In his Formalism, he argues at great length that the quest for the so-called “thing in itself” can lead to distortions, precisely because it presupposes a mode of existence foreign to our experience. Scheler is not suggesting that we cannot arrive at truth through our encounter with the world, nor that truth lacks the quality that characterizes it for the classical mind—


134 Scheler, Formalism, 390.
namely, that of providing a common nexus of consciousness between persons and a criterion for judgment. Rather, Scheler is suggesting that this quality of truth does not rest in the "thing in itself" as an abstraction, but, rather, in the concreteness of lived-experience, through which, each subject arrives at a nexus of intersubjectivity, whereby the common truth is disclosed to each in the context of his own particularity.

Scheler sees the reductive, cosmological understanding of the person as a "part" of the cosmos, in terms related to this basic epistemological problem. In response to this whole complex of presuppositions, Scheler wants to emphasize the radical uniqueness of each subject. He explains that:

... there is an individual world corresponding to every individual person. Just as every act belongs to a person, so also every object "belongs" by essential necessity to a world. But every world is in its essential structure a priori bound to interconnections of essence and structure that exist for essences of things [Sachwesenheiten]. Every world is at the same time a concrete world, but only as the world of a person. No matter which realms of objects we may distinguish—the realm of objects of the inner world, of the outer world, of bodiliness (and thereby the total possible realm of life), the realm of ideal objects, or the realm of values—they all have an abstract objectivity. They become fully concrete only as part of a world, the world of a person. But the person is never a "part" of a world; the person is always the correlate of a "world," namely, the world in which he experiences himself.135

Scheler goes on to explain that, "This correlate also contains an ultimate peculiarity, an original trait, belonging only to the 'world' of this person and nobody else."136 For Scheler, because the person is a kind of "world" constituted precisely in its particularity, the excersize of abstraction does not bring us to what the person himself actually experiences, which is always concrete and particular. Even though particularity is not isolation, and belongs to the nexus of the intersubjective, precisely as concrete, it, "cannot be grasped in terms of essential concepts pertaining to general essences."137 Scheler explains this dynamic in terms of the concept of "givenness". He writes:

135 Scheler, Formalism, 391.

136 Scheler, Formalism, 393.

137 Scheler, Formalism, 393–394.
The fact that this is so is not empirically found, nor is it this individual a priori essence itself. It is, rather, a general essential trait of all possible worlds. Therefore, if we reduce everything that is "given" to a concrete person in general to the phenomenal essences that are purely self-given to the person (i.e. to facts that are perfectly what they are), so that even all abstract qualities, forms, and directions of acts, and what we distinguish among acts, enter into the sphere of givenness for a pure and formless act of the person, here alone we have a world that is not relative to life [daseins-absolut], and we find ourselves in the realm of things themselves. However, so long as a single world exists for different individual persons, a world that is regarded as "self-given" and "absolute," its singularity and sameness are necessarily an illusion [Schein]. Here, in fact, only realms of objects that are relative to the types of bearers of concrete personalities (e.g. living beings, men, races, etc.) are given.138

Scheler sees, then, that such an abstraction is not, in fact, a means of encounter between persons, and, thus, fails to meet the classical criterion we considered above. This sort of "absolute" reference is an "illusion" because, as he says, in them, we grasp not the thing as it is, but the thing as it is for the knowers that we are. The problem gets worse, for Scheler, however. It ends in Kantian formalism. He explains that abstractions are never given in our experience. Rather, he writes:

... it is "the world," i.e. the one concrete world encompassing all concrete worlds, that is "given"; but it is not "self-given," only meant. That is, "the world" becomes in this case a mere "idea" in Kant's sense of the term (but not with the token of reality that he attributes to it). For Kant believed that he could degrade the nature of "world" to an "idea." But "the world" is by no means an idea. It is an absolute, always concrete, individual being. The intention toward it becomes an idea that is in principle unfulfillable, something only meant, as soon as we demand that it be "given" to a plurality of individual persons and thus self-given. This is also the case when we allow ourselves to believe that we can make the "universal validity" of the establishment and the determination of its being and content the condition of its own and every kind of existence through general concepts and propositions. For such a determination of the world is in principle not possible. As we showed earlier, the so-called transcendental concept of truth, existence, and object, which volatizes the object in a necessary and universally valid combination of representations, is in fact a

138 Scheler, Formalism, 394.
subjectivistic falsification. And it is this falsification which entails that absolute being become an unrecognizable \( X \) of a "thing in itself."\(^{139}\)

Once again, Scheler sees the realm of the interpersonal—the nexus between subjects as they encounter reality—as the real epistemological center for truth, if truth is to have precisely that quality that characterizes it as "truth". Discussing the limits of the classical approach to metaphysics, in particular as it came in contact with the post-Cartesian radicalization of the subject–object dichotomy, Scheler offers a correction. He writes:

Hence metaphysical truth, or "the" truth itself, must have a different content, within the limits of the a priori structure of the world, for each person because the content of world-being is, in every case, different for each person. Therefore, the fact that truth about the world and the absolute world is, in a certain sense, a "personal truth" (as the absolute good is a "personal good," as we shall see later) is due not to any supposed "relativity" and "subjectivity," or "humaness," of the idea of truth, but to the essential interconnection between person and world. The fact that this is so and not otherwise has its foundation in the essence of Being, not in the essence of the "truth." Of course one who from the very beginning looks on personality as something "negative," for instance, as a contingent bodily or egological limitation of a "transcendental reason," will not see this point, nor will one who regards the person merely as a factual part of the empirical world or a world in general, one who does not regard the person as having his foundation in absolute Being and as representing absolute Being (and world). He will always believe that in order to reach Being itself, one must set the person aside, "rise above" him or "get rid" of him.\(^{140}\)

Precisely at this point, however, Scheler turns Kant's idea of God as a "necessary moral postulate" on its head, insisting that it is precisely the concreteness of God—that is to say, the reality of God as personally present and self-revealing—that allows for universally recognizable truths in all arenas of human knowing, including the moral arena. In an elaborate argument in favor of the existence of God, he borrows from Anselm's so-called

\(^{139}\) Scheler, Formalism, 394.

\(^{140}\) Scheler, Formalism, 394–395.
"ontological argument" in the *Proslogion* and St. Bonaventure's idea of "contuition" expressed in his *Quaestiones Disputate de Scientia Christi*. Scheler writes:

141 In his *Proslogion*, St. Anselm seeks to construct an argument in favor of God's existence that leaves his interlocutor incapable of adopting a skeptical posture. His argument, though widely criticized even within the Christian Scholastic tradition generally sympathetic to his agenda, represents a moment of true genius and philosophically anachronistic insight on the part of a pioneering mediaeval thinker. His argument is quite clearly *proto-phenomenological*, though Anselm himself could not have perceived the full implications of his approach to this problem. For Anselm was attempting to construct his argument upon the structure of human consciousness, and thus, upon the implications of what it means to experience ourselves engaged in an act of intellection. Aquinas' first objection to Anselm's argument, where he points out that, "not everyone who hears this word 'God' understands it to signify something than which nothing greater can be thought, seeing that some have believed God to be a body" (*Summa Theologiae* 1.1.i. ad 2), misses the mark entirely. Anselm is not resting his argument upon the assertion that the term "God" is to be defined in this way, but upon the concept to which he assigns the name "God". In this respect, Anselm's argument for "that than which no greater can be thought" no more relies upon a prior conception of God than do Aquinas' arguments for a Prime Mover or an Uncaused Caused. It is not so much that when we hear the word "God" we think these thoughts, but that when we think these thoughts, we think a thought, "to which everyone gives the name of God" (*Summa Theologiae* 1.2.iii), and, as Anselm shows, it is only possible to think precisely that thought as actually corresponding to something extra-mental.

142 In his *Quaestiones Disputate de Scientia Christi*, Bonaventure argues that because all things derive their existence from God, and it is on account of the commonality of existence—the common foundation to reality—that things in the world are capable of any exchange or mutual influence at all, the fact that we are capable of knowing anything beyond ourselves is already evidence of God's presence. God, in this sense, is like the abstracted *intellectus agens* (i.e., *agent intellect*, or *intellect acting*) of Aristotle's *de Anima* III.5, as the common foundation through which particularity of knowledge is actuated in the personal *intellectus activa* (i.e., *intellect activated or intellect actualized according to its potential for knowledge*). Bonaventure subscribes to a basically Augustinian notion of *divine illumination*, whereby God is conceptualized as the giver of knowledge. He does not go so far as the Averroists, who reduced human knowing to a mere *affection*, but relies upon the super-intellectus of God to stand as the mediating referent for the *intellectus agens*, which, like Aquinas, he sees as a *faculty* or *power* of the person. It is in and through God, who is the account of the existence and nature of all things, that any given thing is knowable to any possible knower, who, in "abstracting" the
All microcosms, i.e., all individual "personal worlds," are, notwithstanding their totality, parts of the macrocosm—if there is one concrete world into which all persons look [hinblicken]. And the personal correlate of the macrocosm would be the idea of an infinite and perfect person of spirit, one whose acts would be given to us in their essential determinations in act phenomenology, which pertains to the acts of all possible persons. But this "person" would have to be concrete simply to fulfill the essential condition of a reality. Thus the idea of God is cogiven with the unity and identity and singularity of the world on the basis of an essential interconnection of complexes. Therefore, if we posit one concrete world as real, it would be absurd (though not "contradictory") not to posit the idea of a concrete spirit [Geistes]. However, only a concrete person who is in immediate communication with something corresponding to this idea, and to whom its concrete being is "self-given," can posit the idea of God as real; philosophy can never do so. The reality of "God" therefore has its only foundation in a possible positive revelation of God in a concrete person. 143

Scheler sees this point as essential. God's personal self-disclosure stands as the foundation of all shared knowledge of reality—as the foundational reality out of which the interpersonal nexus of experience can arise. No alternative, for Scheler, can provide that foundation. He writes:

Without going into this question in detail, we would like to stress one point: every "unity of the world" (including all kinds of monism and pantheism) without regress to the essence of a personal God, and, simultaneously, every kind of "substitute" for a personal "God," be it a "universal world-reason," (Kant), an ordo ordinans (Fichte in his earlier period), an infinite logical "subject" (Hegel), or an impersonal or self-styled "suprapersonal unconscious," etc., is an "absurd" philosophical assumption. For such assumptions do not agree with evidential essential interconnections. One who speaks of concrete thought or concrete willing posits at the same time the totality of personality. For otherwise he would be concerned only with abstract act-essences. But concreteness itself belongs to the essence of reality, not only to reality's being posited. One who speaks about and posits "the"

formal character (the inner architecture) of the object of knowledge, finds a connection precisely to the divine idea upon which the particular existent is structured, and, thereby, comes to share knowledge of the object with other knowers.

143 Scheler, Formalism, 396–397.
Scheler's argument in this passage is intimately bound up with thesis concerning the irreducibility of the person. Through it, not only does he manage to preserve the possibility of universally accessible truth and the communion of personal, particular experience—and thus, of doing metaphysics—but he also demonstrates that the idea of “person” does not derive from the idea of “ego”, because the concept of the “ego” is really something foreign to the idea of a personal God. God is personal, but he is not an ego. Scheler writes:

If, on the other hand, the essence of personality were based in the “ego,” e.g., as Eduard von Hartmann presupposes in his subtle but purely dialectical investigations of the question, the idea of a divine person would be nonsense. For to every “ego” there belongs by essential necessity a “outer world” and a “thou” and a “lived body,” all of which it would be a priori nonsensical to attribute to God. Conversely, it is the meaningful idea of a personal God which shows that the idea of the person is not founded in the “ego.”

Scheler goes on to argue that the foundation of all communion of experience in the “cogivenness” of God, or, as Bonaventure would say, in the “contuition” of God, means that the personal God is the necessary condition and referent for all universally applicable judgments. Scheler is not suggesting merely that God is a necessary metaphysical precondition for being, order, and reason, but, more precisely, that in our intuition of the unity of an ordered, rational universe, God himself is given to us as a self-disclosing subject. He writes:

If, however, the unity and singularity of world are not founded in the unity of the logical consciousness (in which only the unity of objects of cognition is founded, objects which in turn essentially require belongingness to a world), and if it is a fortiori not founded in “science” (as a special symbolic and universal type of cognition of objects relative to life) or in any other spiritual root of culture, but in the essence of a concrete personal God, then we must also say that all essential communities of individual persons are not founded in some “rational lawfulness” or in an abstract idea of

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144 Scheler, Formalism, 397.

145 Scheler, Formalism, 397.
Communion involves, of course, some form of encounter; and, for Scheler, this means interpersonal encounter. The person can be known, for Scheler, but, as we have already said, can never be known as an object. It is precisely here that Scheler develops his idea of the “individual-personal value-essence”, and the epistemic value of love—two concepts that clearly come to permeate Wojtyla’s thinking. He writes:

What mediates the intuition of the person’s ideal and individual value-essence is, first of all, the understanding of his most central source, which is itself mediated through love of the person. This understanding love is the great master workman and (as Michelangelo says so profoundly and beautifully in his well-known sonnet) the great sculptor who, working from the masses of empirical particulars, can intuitively seize, sometimes from only one action or only one expressive gesture, the lines of the person’s value-essence. This essence, which is concealed more than it is revealed by our empirical, historical, and psychological knowledge of the person’s life, never comes to complete appearance in any one action or life expression, but is the condition of any full understanding of either of them. Hence, this value-essence cannot be reached by any inductive procedure. Even all inherited and acquired dispositions of a person would not suffice to determine this essence. On the contrary, it is the light streaming from the intuition (even though inadequate) of the person’s essence onto all of his empirical experiences that raises the cognition of him far above a mere sum of general concepts of which—whether taken individually or together—one can always find another person as a “case of application” or an “example.” It is only when I know to which person the experiencing of an experience belongs that I can have a full understanding of this experience. 147

But what does Scheler mean, exactly, by individual-personal value-essence? It is clear that he means to indicate by this term something of the inherent “mystery of the person,” which Pope

146 Scheler, Formalism, 397–398.

147 Scheler, Formalism, 488.
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John Paul II will later become fond of referencing, for the Greek μυστεριον [mysteirion] indicates precisely that, "light streaming from the intuition (even though inadequate) of the person’s essence," and, in this sense, is always a dimension of personal encounter, and never merely a matter of impersonal metaphysical paradox. Scheler explains:

*Essence*, as we mentioned earlier, has nothing to do with *universality*. An essence of in intuitive nature is the foundation of both general concepts and intentions directed to *particulars*. It is only when we refer an essence to an object of observation ("the essence of something") and inductive experience that the intention through which this reference occurs becomes something that pertains to either a universal or a particular. Therefore there are essences that are given only in one particular individual. And for this very reason it makes good sense to speak of an individual essence and also the individual value-essence of a person. 149

Scheler has in mind the intuition that personal value is more than the mere fact that an abstract nature is instantiated in this individual (according to the classical, Boethian definition of person: *an individual substance of a rational nature*), but that we are encountering a *someone* who holds value as *this-someone*, and

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148 We need not supply an exhaustive catalogue here, as a few representative examples of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II’s employment of this phrase, or the very similar phrase, “mystery of man,” will suffice. In his letter to Henri de Lubac, he says, “I devote my very rare free moments to a work that is very close to my heart and devoted to the metaphysical sense and mystery of the PERSON” (Cited from, Henri de Lubac, *At the Service of the Church*, 171. EMPHASIS as in source). He repeats this phrase again in the same passage, saying, “. . . the inviolable mystery of the person” (172). In his “Address on the Occasion of the Congress on the Biological and Psychological Foundations of Prenatal Education”, (20 March 1998), he says, “It is a pleasure to see how medicine and psychology, with their respective resources, can serve unborn life and its progressive development. While some current lines of research and experimental intervention risk forgetting the mystery of the person present in the life that is maturing in the maternal womb, you have decided to develop your studies starting from this premiss. Indeed, you know that the worst disaster for humanity is to lose the sense of the value of human life from its beginning” (§ 3). We use the Vatican Translation. The phrase, “mystery of man” is used, for example, in *Redemptor hominis*, § 8. Quoting directly from *Gaudium et spes*, § 22; it is used in *Redemptor Mater*, § 4; *Veritatis splendor*, §§ 2, 28; *Fides et ratio*, §§ 12, 60.

149 Scheler, *Formalism*, 489.
not as an instantiation of an abstraction. Scheler, who understands ethics in decisively covenantal terms (at least in his *Formalism*), links the idea of the personal value-essence to the concepts of *vocation* and *election*, and thus, to *personal salvation*, all within the context of his ethical framework. "It is this value-essence of a personal *and* individual nature," he writes, "that I also designate 'personal salvation.'" He goes on to explain:

If, however, an ought becomes a moral and genuine ought whenever it is based on insight into objective values—i.e., in this context, into the morally good—there is also the possibility of an evidential insight into a good whose objective essence and value-content contain a reference to an individual person, and whose ought, therefore, comes to this person and to him alone as a "call," no matter if this "call" is addressed to others or not. This, therefore, is to catch sight of the value-essence of my person—in religious terms, of the value-picture, so to speak, which God’s love has of me and which God’s love draws and bears before me insofar as this love is directed to me. This peculiar individual value-content is the basis on which a consciousness of an individual ought is built, that is, the evidential knowledge of a "good-in-itself" but precisely in the sense of a "good-in-itself-for-me." The latter does not contain any logical contradiction. Its being good "for" me (in the sense of my experiencing it) does not make it a good-in-itself. In that case, there would be an evident contradiction. It is good precisely in the sense of being "independent of my knowledge." For this includes the "good-in-itself." Yet it is the "good-in-itself" for "me" in the sense that there is an experienced reference to me which is contained (descriptively put) in the special non-formal content of this good-in-itself, something that comes from this content and points to "me," something that whispers, "For you." And precisely this content places me in a unique position in the moral cosmos and obliges me with respect to actions, deeds, and works, etc., which, when I represent them, all call, "I am for you and you are for me."

In his *Ressentiment*, Scheler develops these ideas around his analysis of the narrative of the rich young man in the Gospel of Matthew. It is difficult to ignore the extent to which this passage resembles John Paul II’s own analysis of the passage in his encyclical letter, *Veritatis splendor*. A comparison between these

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150 Scheler, *Formalism*, 489.

151 Scheler, *Formalism*, 490.
two passages, in light of Scheler's treatment of the vocational character of the "good-in-itself-for-me", reveal the depth of Scheler's influence on the ethical thought of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II.

John Paul II writes:

In the young man, whom Matthew's Gospel does not name, we can recognize every person who, consciously or not, approaches Christ the Redeemer of man and questions him about morality. For the young man, the question is not so much about rules to be followed, but about the full meaning of life. This is in fact the aspiration at the heart of every human decision and action, the quiet searching and interior prompting which sets freedom in motion. This question is ultimately an appeal to the absolute Good which attracts us and beckons us; it is the echo of a call from God who is the origin and goal of man's life. Precisely in this perspective the Second Vatican Council called for a renewal of moral theology, so that its teaching would display the lofty vocation which the faithful have received in Christ, the only response fully capable of satisfying the desire of the human heart.

What John Paul II goes on to say resembles Scheler's much earlier treatment of the story of the rich young man. Both for Scheler and John Paul II, the question concerns not the condition of the poor, or even a this-worldly moral obligation to redistribute wealth to the needy, but instead, a personal call to enter into an act of love—to maximize love. Scheler explains:

Love is not valuable and does not bestow distinction on the lover because it is just one of countless forces which further human social welfare. No, the value is love itself, its penetration of the whole person—the higher, firmer, and richer life and existence of which its movement is the sign and the gem. The important thing is not the amount of welfare, it is that there should be a maximum of love among men. The act of helping is the direct and adequate expression of love, not its meaning or "purpose." Its meaning lies in itself, in its illumination of the soul, in the nobility of the loving soul in the act of love. . . . When the rich young man is told to divest himself of his riches and give them to the poor, it is really not in order to help the "poor" and to effect a better distribution of property in the interest of general welfare. Nor is it because poverty as such is supposed to be better than wealth. The order is

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given because the act of giving away, and the spiritual freedom and abundance of love which manifest themselves in this act, ennoble the youth and make him even "richer" than he is.\textsuperscript{153}

Expressing strikingly similar ideas, John Paul II writes:

As he calls the young man to follow him along the way of perfection, Jesus asks him to be perfect in the command of love, in "his" commandment: to become part of the unfolding of his complete giving, to imitate and rekindle the very love of the "Good" Teacher, the one who loved "to the end". This is what Jesus asks of everyone who wishes to follow him: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24).

Following Christ is not an outward imitation, since it touches man at the very depths of his being. Being a follower of Christ means becoming conformed to him who became a servant even to giving himself on the Cross (cf. Phil 2:5-8). Christ dwells by faith in the heart of the believer (cf. Eph 3:17), and thus the disciple is conformed to the Lord. This is the effect of grace, of the active presence of the Holy Spirit in us.\textsuperscript{154}

At this point it becomes clear that Wojtyła’s treatment of the vocational character of the “truth about the good” in Veritatis splendor is born of a Schelerian influence. Indeed, we simply cannot appeal to a this passage as a mere reiteration of previous formulations along the standard, Thomistic lines, because, in the passage we have already quoted, John Paul II says, explicitly, that, “Precisely in this perspective the Second Vatican Council called for a renewal of moral theology, so that its teaching would display the lofty vocation which the faithful have received in Christ, the only response fully capable of satisfying the desire of the human heart.” Indeed, even the language within which he frames the Council’s inner motivation reflects a Schelerian sensibility, resting as it does upon the notions of vocation and response as principles of moral action in the satisfaction of the desires of the heart.

We find noteworthy in all of this the underlying idea that love and the realm of affectivity, are possessed of epistemic value. We come to know a dimension of the truth of things, to understand the world more deeply, and to find the path to providing a conceptual


\textsuperscript{154} John Paul II, Veritatis splendor, §§ 20–21.
account of reality, through the sphere of the emotional life. While Wojtyla is not satisfied that Scheler actually succeeds in showing how this actually happens in the moral arena—how it is possible to attain, through emotion, to the level of the "truth about the good,"—he does hold, explicitly, that Scheler has come to an essential insight on this point, capable of liberating philosophy and ethics from a long-standing prejudice in favor of a stoic apriorism that diminishes the human person through a reduction to the merely rational. That said, Wojtyla is reticent to assign specific cognitive content to the emotions, but it is clear, nonetheless, that he sees them as a possible avenue for the discovery of truth, and not merely as an obstacle to such discovery or a distraction from genuinely rational thought. Like colors, emotions, explains Wojtyla, "can be mixed, they overlap and interpenetrate, they also enhance or complete and destroy each other. They constitute a separate and powerful realm within man, a separate sphere of the human subjectivity." 155

Again, in calling emotions, "a separate sphere of the human subjectivity," Wojtyla does not seek to relegate them to an arena of mere subjectivism, within which nothing can become the object of rational action—of a "human act". He goes on to explain that, "Already the Greek philosophers noticed that emotions did not depend on the mind and in their essence were 'irrational' — This alleged 'irrationality' of human affectivity has perhaps been the cause of the one-sided and oversimplified tendency to identify it with sensuousness." 156 Wojtyla holds that the human person, in this consequent stoic, aprioristic turn, is disintegrated as a complete, dynamic whole, because the dimension of emotivity, which is phenomenologically given as a constituent dimension of our experience of ourselves, is bracketed from our understanding of the person, as irrelevant. It may well be that this difficulty finds its root in a genuine insight—namely, that the rational dimension of consciousness distinguishes the human person specifically from other beings in the world of our experience—but it ends in a false inference—namely, that because emotivity is shared with other beings who lack the power of reason, emotivity lacks epistemic value, and is thus a source of disintegration in our ethical lives. In contrast to this view, Wojtyla defends a Schelerian position, standing against Kant as the representative of the extreme stoic, aprioristic prejudice. He writes:


156 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 6.6, 241.
The fact that with the emergence of an emotion or passion man is prompted to seek some sort of integration and this becomes a special task for him, does not signify in any way that they are in themselves a cause of disintegration. The view about their disintegrating role appeared in the philosophy of the Stoic school and in modern times, was to some extent revived by Kant. If the position advocating in various ways a rejection of emotions so as to allow man to act solely according to reason (Kant's idea of the Categorical Imperative) were to be maintained, then it would be necessary to accept the whole emotive capacity as being a source of disintegration in the acting person. 157

Wojtyla finds himself bound to reject this view and to accept Scheler, at least as far as this matter goes, on the basis of the givenness of lived-experience. Accepting the stoic, aprioristic prejudice would mean denying a basic element of experience of morality. He explains:

The broadly conceived experience of man, with due attention paid to morality, prevents us, however, from accepting this view—just as it was rejected, for instance, by Aristotle in his anthropology and ethics or in his critique of the Stoics, and in Scheler's critique of Kant. The view that conceived of human emotivity—and in particular human emotionality—as a source of disintegration is a manifestation of a special sort of ethical and anthropological apriorism, and the essence of any apriorism is to disregard the evidence of experience. When we treat man's emotivity and emotionality solely as a source of disintegration in the acting person, we assume to some extent that he is a priori and inevitably doomed to disintegration. In this respect the Stoic position has to be seen as pessimistic. The pessimism in this question is derived, especially in Kant, from a specific sort of idealism. 158

But, as indicated in the passages from Ressentiment and Veritatis Splendor, which we have already referenced, if the emotional-affective sphere can comport epistemic content, it is really, most of all, the primary affective moment of love that, both for Scheler and for Wojtyla/John Paul II, constitutes a genuine source of knowledge about the good, and especially about the dignity of the person. Wojtyla developed this notion around the idea of "purity of heart" in contrast to the attitude of "lust." He explains, in a manner reminiscent of Martin Buber, that the perception of the person as

158 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 6.7, 243–244.
person is only possible where the person is encountered through the dynamic of giving and receiving—what he will call, “the law of the gift.” If this is so, just necessarily precludes knowledge of the person as person, and, when introduced into the dynamic of interpersonal relationship, destroys the possibility of real intersubjective communion. Lust, understood in its sexual dimension, is not the only objectifying sentiment capable of destroying knowledge of the person. Indeed, any sentiment that produces in our conceptual predisposition toward other persons, a reduction of the person to the status of an object, necessarily undermines the possibility of perceiving the true status of that person as person.

For both Scheler and Wojtyla, therefore, the idea of ressentiment became a pivotal concept, precisely because of the tendency of this process to deepen and consolidate the experience of alienation between persons, precluding the dimension of love by recasting our experience of the other in terms of the other’s opposition to our own flourishing. This notion reveals a profound insight for late Continental philosophy, because it identifies a paradox it is much easier to overlook than to explore and correctly describe. As Harold J. Bershady explains, the concept of ressentiment rests in, “a negative sentiment expressed by persons who aim to devalue, but at the same time secretly covet, the achievements of others,” and is emerges in, “weaker parties who place themselves on the same level as their injurer.” Originally introduces into the philosophical dialogue by Søren Kierkegaard, and later developed more fully in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, who constructed around this concept a scathing indictment of Christianity, ressentiment should be distinguished from the English word resentment. The English resentment indicates a hostility in the face of others’ seeming freedom from one’s own suffering. We resent those whom we see as somehow linked to our suffering but do not appear to us to experience our pain in a way proportional to our own. The concept of ressentiment, however, indicates something deeper and more insidious than mere resentment, because it implies an actual re-

sentiment—a change in our affective response to a particular circumstance, constructed on a subconscious or preconscious level. What at first begins as sorrow for loss or anger at an affront is transmuted without our being aware of it, into a diminishment of our whole horizon of values. We come to see the higher good, which now seems beyond our grasp, as something less desirable, or even undesirable, precisely because it lies beyond our grasp. Again, preconsciously, we undergo a reaffectation in response to the higher good that we perceive, until, referencing all good against our personal position, the higher value is lost to us, and the lower value within our grasp becomes the "true" telos of our desires. This view, however, always involves a kind of insipid hatred, both of the good that we have come to reject and of those we believe to possess it. It entails, once again, a referencing of value against myself as the standard of measurement, and thus, a perverse subjectivism rather than an authentic subjectivity, which would allow for the apprehension of something as true or good, irrespective of my subjective awareness of it. From within this perspective, those who possess the higher good that I truly desire but which I have bracketed from my horizon of values, are seen as inferior to me precisely because this value is realized for them. A person guilty of ressentiment might have contempt for another person for taking delight in a fine wine just as a psychically healthy person might disdain a man for taking delight in pornography. Pornography is a base, subhuman "good," that cannot be integrated into the personalistic norm, such that one who delights in it is debasing himself. The person given to ressentiment will begin to view others who enjoy genuine goods—goods worthy of personhood—in the same way, because these goods, lying beyond our reach, must also be somehow beneath us. The insidious move, of course, is the move into pride, because, by making ourselves the referent against which all values are to be assessed, we place ourselves in the position of God, beyond whom there can be no higher value. Thus, just as what God cannot enjoy is necessarily beneath him rather than beyond him, so what we cannot enjoy must also be beneath us, and not actually beyond our grasp.

Ressentiment constitutes a particularly distilled moment of sin, for Scheler, because it undermines the given moral order—the hierarchy of values upon which an authentically human and living non-formal ethical framework is built. Scheler calls this hierarchy of values, value-modalities—a concept adopted wholesale by Wojtyla in his lectures on The Acting Person. Scheler explains the
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significance of this concept in his *Formalism*, suggesting that there exist certain *a priori* ranks among value-modalities—that some goods are nearly universally preferred over others as we opt for or against certain courses of action in our lived experience. He writes, "The most important and most fundamental *a priori* relations obtain as an *order of ranks* among the systems of qualities of non-formal values which we call *value-modalities*."162 Essential to the concept of value-modalities is the idea that certain relations of value to dis-value are perceptible by us *insofar as* we are the sort of being that intuits, through our mode of existence in the world, certain sorts of goods. In what seems a bit like an Aristotelian-Thomistic ranking of the stages of life from the nutritive to the intellective, and finally to the spiritual, Scheler establishes ranks based upon the dimensions of human psycho-somatic existence.

The agreeable : disagreeable opposition corresponds to sensible feelings and the ability to distinguish pleasure from pain. He explains that, "this modality is *relative* to beings endowed with sensibility in general,"163 and is not specific beyond that point. Rather, in spite of the fact that one person may experience something as agreeable that another experiences as disagreeable, the fact remains that, "the difference between the values of agreeable and disagreeable as such is an *absolute* difference, clearly given prior to any cognition of things."164 For Scheler, this sort of analysis provides a foundation for a universal moral normativity because the modalities are *given *a priori, and are thus a basic structure of the moral reality we are attempting to discern, and within which we are attempting to live out our moral lives. He writes that this opposition, "is not based on observation and induction. The preference lies in the essential contents of these values as well as in the nature of sensible feelings."165 We may believe, he explains, that this or that individual takes pleasure in something we find unpleasant, but we receive as absurd the assertion that this individual prefers displeasure over pleasure.

The next modality Scheler calls the modality of "vital values."166 It concerns the opposition between that which pertains to life as it

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162 Scheler, *Formalism*, 104.
163 Scheler, *Formalism*, 105.
164 Scheler, *Formalism*, 105.
165 Scheler, *Formalism*, 105.
166 Scheler, *Formalism*, 107.
stands in opposition to that which tends toward death. It can be characterized as a \textit{flourishing} : \textit{withering} opposition. All beings capable of sensing their own lives prefer health to sickness—not merely at the level of pleasure vs. pain, but at the level of being better or worse as \textit{this living being}. In non-human animals, this modality is, of course, prereflectively operative, but it remains the case that living organisms prefer health over illness. For Scheler, this is a vast category of possible value assessments. He writes:

\begin{quote}
The feeling-states of this modality include all modes of the feelings of life (e.g., the feelings of “quickening” and “declining” life, the feelings of health and illness, the feeling of aging and oncoming death, the feeling of “weakness,” “strength,” etc.). Certain emotional reactions also belong to this modality—(a certain kind of) “being glad about” or “being sad about,” drive reactions such as “courage,” “anxiety,” revengeful impulses, ire, etc. Here we cannot even indicate the tremendous richness of these value-qualities and their correlates.\textsuperscript{167}
\end{quote}

Scheler insists that this modality represents, “an entirely \textit{original} modality,” and that it, “cannot be ‘reduced’ to the values of the agreeable and the useful, nor . . . to spiritual values.”\textsuperscript{168} While he does not provide a detailed response to the sorts of arguments one might wage in favor of such a reduction, he appears to hold that we perceive a basic value in the sheer fact of existing as opposed to not existing, irrespective of the question of pleasure or pain. If we do not exist, then we can experience neither pleasure nor pain, and are removed from any consideration of the agreeable or the disagreeable. This modality presupposes our being alive. But vitality comes in degrees. We can be more or less alive, in the sense of being more or less healthy, younger or older, at the prime of life or in our decline. We do not prefer existence over non-existence because non-existence is more painful than existence, since one must, in fact, exist in order to experience pain at all. Indeed, everyone understands this truth, frequently assess the matter in the opposite way, concluding that we could escape our pain if we could escape our existence. Yet, in spite of this assessment, it remains basic to our motivations that we act to preserve and enhance our grasp on life, even where life is painful. Exceptions to this rule are rare, indeed, when weighed against the

\textsuperscript{167} Scheler, \textit{Formalism}, 106–107.

\textsuperscript{168} Scheler, \textit{Formalism}, 107.
broad sweep of human self-determination. Thus, explains Scheler, "Previous ethical theories made a basic mistake in ignoring this fact,"\textsuperscript{169} about the distinct modality of so-called, "vital-values."

Scheler draws yet another line in marking out the "realm of spiritual values . . . as an original modal unity."\textsuperscript{170} It is precisely with the capacity to perceive the values proper to this modality that the moral landscape comes into view for the person. This modality concerns a realm that transcends the merely bodily dimension of our existence, reaching into aesthetic appreciation and judgment. We begin to see the world in terms of that which is "beautiful" or "ugly," that which is "right" or "wrong" as moral assessments distinct from that which is "factually true" or "factually errant." Here, Scheler points to the philosophical consideration as transcendent over the merely scientific one.\textsuperscript{171} It is not enough, for Scheler, that we know what is, we must also perceive what ought to be; and that is the moral and "spiritual" moment of our intuition.

Scheler does not stop at this point, however, for he recognize a fourth and final modality in that of the holy : unholy opposition. It is at this point that the moral arena becomes a concrete, living community, because the perception of the holy, according to Scheler, always pertains to the perception of a person. Persons, in other words, are the arena of the holy; holiness belongs to the interpersonal dimension of experience. He writes:

\begin{quote}
"Faith" and "lack of faith," "awe," and "adoration," and analogous attitudes are specific reactions in this modality.

However, the act through which we originally apprehend the value of the holy is an act of a specific kind of love (whose value-direction precedes and determines all pictorial representations and concepts of holy objects); that is to say, in essence the act is directed toward persons, or toward something of the form of a personal being, no matter what content or what "conception" of personhood is implied. The self-value in the sphere of the values of the "holy" is therefore, by essential necessity, a "value of the person."\textsuperscript{172}
\end{quote}

At this point, then, it becomes clear that the interior moral movement of re-sentiment (i.e. re-sentiment) is a thoroughgoing

\textsuperscript{169} Scheler, \textit{Formalism}, 107.

\textsuperscript{170} Scheler, \textit{Formalism}, 107.

\textsuperscript{171} Scheler, \textit{Formalism}, 107–108.

\textsuperscript{172} Scheler, \textit{Formalism}, 109.
reshaping of our value-modalities. To the extent that ressentiment takes root in the person, the person’s ability to perceive the moral landscape as given is undermined, and what we might call, “the distortion of conscience” begins to occur. Ressentiment concerns inter-personal relations, however, which means that this distortion of conscience concerns not merely concrete ethical acts, but the very community that peoples the moral landscape and makes it holy. Ressentiment is, thus, antithetical to solidarity insofar as it tends to cultivate and entrench the divisions among human beings along the lines of class. It leads beyond struggle to hostility and antagonism, and makes genuine communion between persons impossible. Indeed, ressentiment obscures the perception of the person. If solidarity depends upon our ability to make the interests of our fellow human being a matter of our personal concern—if it consists in an awareness of human interpenetration and the affirmation of that interpenetration as a positive value, ressentiment is clearly antithetical to solidarity.

On the basis of what we have seen so far, then, it is fair to say that there exists a Schelerian sensitivity to Wojtyla’s analysis of the lived experience of the affective dimension of human life. If Kant had attempted to emphasize the rational dimension of human life to the exclusion of the affective, as if the affective dimension was something sub-human or even counter-human, and thus antimoral, Scheler challenges this presupposition with an emphasis upon the inherent intelligibility of the affective dimension of existence. In this way, he moves beyond classical philosophy wherein the affective dimension was merely reasoned about, but not generally reasoned from in an attempt to arrive at the truth about the world. While it is clear that many Christian philosophers came, ultimately, to intuit something of the importance of the affective dimension, Scheler takes a great step forward in the tradition on this matter, in response to what he sees as a hyper-rationalist force in Immanuel Kant, deriving from a tendency already present in the philosophical dialogue from ancient times, but now threatening to undermine the link between reason and humanity in our lived experience. Scheler’s point, ultimately, is to say that the affective dimension of human experience communicates moral truth, and reveals the moral structure of the inner person. It is not enough merely to do what we ought. Moral relativism and nihilism have, as far as this point goes, correctly intuited the failure of Kantian formalism, but Scheler’s response to that problem is an attempt to restore, rather than to “transcend” the moral framework within which human experience is primordially
framed. Scheler insists that there must be something more than mere fact, mere form, and mere duty. It is not enough merely to do as we ought; we must love as we ought, and do what we do on the basis of the architecture of our love. This is what Scheler means when he says that there can be no actual duty in love. Scheler explains, on this point, that, when we speak about the "satisfaction" of love in the apprehension of the beloved, we introduce an equivocation. Love, for Scheler, has no τέλος (telos) or purpose beyond itself, such that it cannot be "satisfied" in the strict sense. It cannot be, literally, "done enough" (from the Latin: satis factum). Scheler notes, then, that "satisfaction, in this sense, can only mean something more akin to "a feeling of delection".

Indeed, there can be no question that Scheler is at least partially correct in this observation, since, within the Christian tradition, love for God is often said to be "satisfied" in fructio and delectio in the beatific vision, and is thus presented as having this τέλος as a human act, though it must be observed that there is clearly a tension on this point in the tradition. The human person is completed in loving God for God's own sake, and, thus, experiences delight. The act of love is a moral act, but, strictly speaking, it leads (for Thomas, at least) to an intellective actuation (i.e., apprehension of the divine essence), which puts the will's movement to rest. In this sense, then, the person intends a goal in the act of loving, namely, his or her own perfection. But this perfection is found precisely in the person's orientation toward another (i.e., God) for the other's own sake. This fact then comes to be understood in terms of a moral obligation or "duty" in justice to love God, because God, as ipsum esse subsistens (i.e., that which exists in-and-through itself), deserves to be recognized as for his own sake, and thus, loved in the proper sense. This dynamic represents a paradox in St. Thomas' thought; but it leaves open the possibility of recasting the whole problematic along very different lines.

Scheler attempts to do exactly that. He writes, "Love may give rise to all kinds of effort, desire, or longing for the beloved object, but these are no part of it. It follows an opposite law to that of effort. Whereas the latter exhausts itself and comes to rest once it is satisfied, love either remains the same or increases in its activity, becoming ever more engrossed in its object, and ever more

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perceptive of values not at first disclosed."174 For Scheler, love consists in the awakening of the value of the beloved in the heart of the lover, and thus, of its nature, transcends the category of "duty" altogether. To speak of a "duty to love" is to speak of an obligation, not actually to love in the proper sense (since, for Scheler, such language would be oxymoronic), but, instead, to imitate love by performing the sorts of outward acts lovers perform. For Scheler, love is a matter of the interior disposition of the person, and, as such, is not subject to obligation; this category simply does not apply to it.175

While Wojtyla, will ultimately reject Scheler's assertion as reactionary rather than genuinely philosophical, he takes Scheler's point about the epistemic value of the affective dimension of experience as a fundamental insight in Scheler's system, and integrates this insight into his own thought—for example, in his view of the meaning of human suffering, according to which John Paul II finds, along with Scheler, a way to read human suffering as a call to maximize love. John Paul II's major treatment of this issue comes in the form of his apostolic letter, Salvifici doloris,176 described in the document's own heading as being a treatment "of the meaning of human suffering."177 It would be difficult to imagine that John Paul II had not intended to reference Max Scheler's essay on the same topic.178

For both John Paul II and Scheler, suffering calls a human person into a higher mode of activity—namely the activity of the active virtue of love. Both conceptualize that activity as a participation in the love God has for human beings in Jesus Christ, and thus, that this natural event, when taken in all its starkness, without attempting to soften or reinterpret it, and without blaming the innocent for their plight, evinces in Christianity the influence of grace in our lives, which becomes available to the human person

175 Cf., Formalism, 220–226, where he treats this whole problem at length.
177 The Latin reads, "de Christiani doloris humani significatione."
precisely in the context of the gospel. For Scheler, this Christian understanding of suffering represents a unique posture, among classical treatments, on the problem of pain, since all non-Judeo-Christian treatments attempt to reinterpret the very reality of suffering, or else to assign blame for the problem of suffering upon the one who suffers. Of course, the Book of Job makes clear that such reinterpretations and assignment of personal blame for suffering are not authentic to the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is true, of course, that human beings can and do suffer at their own hands, or in consequence of their own behavior, but this is not always so, and to pretend that it is fundamentally distorts the real spiritual genius of the Judeo-Christian insight. Christ himself corrects his disciples, in fact, precisely for making this essentially pagan assumption, when they ask, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"179 Christ's response strips away the basis for the assumption that suffering can be neatly explained away. He declares, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him."180

Again, for Scheler as well as for Wojtyla, an authentically Christian approach to suffering involves no reinterpretation of human feeling states, but a raw acknowledgment of them precisely as they are. In itself, suffering is neither a punishment nor an illusion, but a fact—yet a fact that can be received as a gift as it purifies the human person and draws the sufferer into the dynamism of God's own Love. Scheler discourses on this point at length. He writes:

Jesus gave voice openly on the cross to the most profound suffering, the feeling of being separated from God: "Why have you forsaken me?" And in this there are no reinterpretations: pain is pain, it is misery; pleasure is pleasure, it is positive bliss, not mere "tranquility" or "redemption of the heart" which Buddha considered the good of goods. In Christianity, there is no diminution of sensitivity, but a mellowing of the soul in totally enduring suffering either alone or with others. However, an entirely new source of power emerges that sustains suffering, a power that flows out of a blessedly intuited higher order of things as revealed through love, insight, and action. The endurance of suffering has a new meaning—it is a purification by God's

179 John 9:2.
180 John 9:3.
compassionate love, which has sent suffering as a friend of the soul.\textsuperscript{181}

Again, for Scheler, this willingness to accept suffering unfiltered is a uniquely Christian breakthrough. This is precisely the breakthrough that allows the image of the suffering servant finally to become visible and comprehensible, and, thus, allows the idea of personal suffering to find a place for each individual person in the context of salvation. Scheler writes:

Only through these two thoughts together did Christianity, without reinterpretation, apparently succeed in integrating the full gravity and misery of suffering as an essential factor with the order of the world and its redemption. In spite of its torment, Christianity succeeded in making suffering a welcome friend of the soul, not an enemy to be resisted. Suffering is purification, not punishment or correction. The great paradox of Judaism, “suffering righteousness,” vanishes as a drop in the ocean of the innocent man who freely receives suffering for others’ debts—the man who is at the same time God himself and invites everyone to follow him on his way to the cross. Suffering may again be innocent yet also acquires, through the divine quality of the suffering persons, a wonderful, new nobility.\textsuperscript{182}

Scheler then goes on to provide a deeper analysis of his basic thesis. He explains that “purification” has a special meaning in the Christian context, and is not to be confused with the concept as it is associated with pagan philosophies. Scheler sees as distortions the common variants on the theme of human suffering represented in the world religions, and even within certain strains of pious devotion internal to Christianity. Purification is not about moral or religious growth, nor about a hunger for pain to draw closer to God. Rather, purification is about filtering out of our value-horizon those extraneous elements that clutter our vision of the central spiritual values constitutive of the covenantal life. He writes:

Purification means that the pain and suffering of life fix our spiritual vision on the central, spiritual goods of life and salvation—the goods offered to us, before all else, according to the faith of the Christian in grace and redemption of Christ. Purification does not mean the creation of a moral or religious quality, but the discrimination of genuine from baser qualities, a

\textsuperscript{181} Scheler, “The Meaning of Suffering,” 110.

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gradual sloughing off of lower characteristics from higher ones in the center of our souls. The interpretation that suffering in itself brings men nearer to God is far more Greek and Neoplatonic than Christian.183

It is essential, for Scheler, that we grasp, "the innermost union of suffering and love in Christian doctrine." This element lies at the heart of the meaning of suffering in human life from within the perspective of the gospel. It makes sense of the Cross, which is understood, now, in the context of love rather than mere punishment or even persecution. Scheler explains:

The invitation to suffer with and in Christ in the community of the cross is rooted in the more decisive invitation to love like and in Christ. The community of love in not rooted in the community of the cross; rather, the community of the cross is rooted in the community of love. Christian asceticism does not have a normative meaning as though it were a self-sufficient way to God; it is only a technique to learn to sacrifice goods and happiness for an end, to learn to be able to offer these sacrifices when love demands it. This asceticism does not diverge from the path to community, but returns to it. The ascetic attitude is not taken to ready one for an ecstatic contemplation of God, but for the labor of love in whose achievement the believer knows himself to be most deeply in God and in Christ. Within Christian asceticism the so-called passive virtues of submission, patience, and the humble reception of suffering remain subordinated to the active virtue of love.184

Anyone familiar with Salvifici Doloris will immediately perceive the similarity between Scheler's line of thought in this paragraph and that of John Paul II. Indeed, the parallels are striking. John Paul II writes:

Following the parable of the Gospel, we could say that suffering, which is present under so many different forms in our human world, is also present in order to unleash love in the human person, that unselfish gift of one's "I" on behalf of other people, especially those who suffer. The world of human suffering unceasingly calls for, so to speak, another world: the world of human love; and in a certain sense man owes to suffering that unselfish love which stirs in his heart and actions. The person who is a "neighbor" cannot indifferently pass by the suffering of another: this in the name of fundamental human solidarity, still more in the name of love of

neighbour. He must "stop", "sympathize", just like the Samaritan of the Gospel parable. The parable in itself expresses a deeply Christian truth, but one that at the same time is very universally human. It is not without reason that, also in ordinary speech, any activity on behalf of the suffering and needy is called "Good Samaritan" work. 185

Again, however, Scheler and Wojtyla appear to be thinking along similar lines when they speak about the salvific dimension of the mystery of suffering—the dimension of the mystery as it touches the reality of grace, making it real, felt, and evident in our lived experience. Scheler writes:

[T]he Christian doctrine of suffering receives its deepest meaning through an insight that also confirms the secular psychology of our present age. This is the insight into the character of grace, the ease and poise yielded by any profound emotion of happiness. Lawful conformities exist between deep levels of emotion, their effects and fulfillment. The Christian doctrine of suffering asks for more than a patient tolerance of suffering. It asks for—better put, points to—a blessed suffering. At its core, the Christian attitude toward suffering is based on a belief that only the person who is blessed and depends upon God can tolerate pain and suffering correctly, can love and, where necessary, seek suffering out. In Letters to the Corinthians, Paul allows the soul to sing a hymn of rising joy while envisioning the ongoing ruin of its body and earthly goods. Paul permits the soul to attract to itself the suffering of the world that it will become even more blessedly aware of the centrality of its salvation and deliverance in God. What was experienced and preached by Paul was described as lived in the deeds of the martyrs. It was not the glowing prospect of a happy afterlife, but the experienced happiness of being in a state of grace of God while in throes of agony that released the wonderful powers in the martyrs. 186

Wojtyla, for his part, writes:

Suffering as it were contains a special call to the virtue which man must exercise on his own part. And this is the virtue of perseverance in bearing whatever disturbs and causes harm. In doing this, the individual unleashes hope, which maintains in him the conviction that suffering will not get the better of him, that it will not deprive him of his dignity as a human being, a dignity

185 John Paul II, Salvifici doloris, § 29.
linked to awareness of the meaning of life. And indeed this meaning makes itself known together with the working of God's love, which is the supreme gift of the Holy Spirit. The more he shares in this love, man rediscovers himself more and more fully in suffering: he rediscovers the "soul" which he thought he had "lost" because of suffering. 188

Continuing, he writes:

In the messianic programme of Christ, which is at the same time the programme of the Kingdom of God, suffering is present in the world in order to release love, in order to give birth to works of love towards neighbour, in order to transform the whole of human civilization into a "civilization of love". In this love the salvific meaning of suffering is completely accomplished and reaches its definitive dimension. Christ's words about the Final Judgment enable us to understand this in all the simplicity and clarity of the Gospel. 189

1.6: Wojtyla/John Paul II's Critique of Scheler:

Wojtyla does not accept Scheler, however, without certain important qualifications. Most notably, Wojtyla reads Scheler as a pure sentimentalist—as a thinker who cannot ground his moral intuitions in the world of "things as they are in themselves," but who is, by contrast, bound to a morality received, in the end, from external influences. We have already considered an important text in Scheler's formalism that appears to parallel Wojtyla's own line of thought on the grounding of moral sentiment, and which we suggest stands among Scheler's influences upon Wojtyla's philosophical perspective. Nonetheless, Wojtyla does not regard this text alone as sufficient to establish a fully-developed reliance, in Scheler's system, upon Wojtyla's system, upon the world as it is, regardless of our perceiving it. Wojtyla makes clear in many more passages than it

187 Note original to the document, standardized according to the format of the present text: Cf. Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24; John 12: 25.
188 John Paul II, Salvifici doloris, § 23.
189 John Paul II, Salvifici doloris, § 30.
would be necessary to reference here, that he understands Scheler to be saying that values are merely received, passively, by the person, rather than chosen for himself or herself. This understanding of the apprehension of values, in Wojtyla's estimation, is a serious limitation for Scheler's system, since values stand as the central motivating principle of our concrete acts. If these values are received passively from external influences, then we do not, in the end, choose our own motivations for action, and, thus, cannot be considered fully responsible for our acts. Our concrete acts may become an influence upon our value structure, but still, only in the same passive way that they begin in us, since the acts performed are motivated by values we do not choose in and through our acts. Wojtyla is insistent that, while values remain the principle motivating influence upon the initiation of our concrete acts, those values themselves are chosen by us, and thus, affirmed by our acts. We can change what we value by choosing and acting in accord with a different value, and thus, are not pre-determined in our acts in our moral constitution by any pre-voluntary influence. The human person, through the power of his own will, is, for Wojtyla as for Scotus, a completely free and responsible, spontaneous cause of his own acts. Of course, this does not mean that the human person is capable of generating a volition in a complete vacuum, but only that the acts one solicits within himself or herself are not mere responses to pre-determined motives that draw the will inexorably to its end. We can do or not do, regardless of the value presented to us, because we are able to determine our values by an interior choice.

It is important to note, of course, that Wojtyla is critical of Scheler's final systematic construction (if, in the end, we can even say that Scheler attempts to present one), not his ultimate intentions. Wojtyla does not believe that Scheler does what he needs to do in grounding the apprehension of values in order for Scheler's main idea to succeed in forming a foundation for a moral system compatible with an authentic and adequate Christian morality, according to which human agency must play the pivotal role. It cannot be denied, whether he succeeded, in the end or not, that Scheler was interested in the same goal as Wojtyla, and that this shared intention between the two thinkers is what Wojtyla found so compelling in his presentation of the person. In fact, Scheler goes further on this score than Wojtyla was ever willing to go. While Wojtyla does accept, from Scheler, that personhood ought to mean, and therefore morally imposes, certain clear and serious demands upon the human person in terms of self-mastery
and intentional action, he does not share Scheler’s view that there can exist a living, functioning human organism who is not, for that very fact, a person. Scheler is clear in this regard; and one can argue that he finally undermines his most important point—namely, the irreducibility of the person. He insists that intentional action and self-mastery are constitutive dimensions of personhood, rather than vocational responses to the givenness of one’s personhood. In language we would, today, find shocking, Scheler writes:

Animals have had legal proceedings instituted against them, and they have even been sentenced to death. But in closely examining such cases, we find that it was assumed that the animal was a bewitched person, or that extrahuman personal units, such as “evil spirits,” expressed themselves through the animal and that the creature was believed to be “possessed” by a person. But “man” qua man never has determined the limits within which beings are to be taken as persons. The concept of the person is applicable only to a certain level of human existence. Even if, after we have come to see the phenomenological essence of the person, we broaden the concept of the person and grant that there are seeds of personhood in still-undeveloped levels of human beingness (e.g. in children or imbeciles), there remains the fact that the place, as it were, in which the nature of the person first flashes before us is to be sought only in a certain kind of man, not in man in general—a kind, that is, which varies considerably in its positive historical delineation. 190

Scheler goes on to develop this thesis at considerable length, excluding from the category of “personhood” the mentally ill, children, and those who, though fully mature in their self-awareness, live lives of enslavement to their bodily desires. Even virtue, understood as an abiding disposition to behave as we ought, does not suffice as a criterion of personhood for Scheler, but, instead, personhood requires living and acting intentionally—living in such a way, that is, as to constitute ourselves as agents performing fully intentional acts. 191

Although Wojtyła/John Paul II worked tirelessly to ensure personal recognition to every member of the human family, from conception to natural death, there can be no question that the reflections in Scheler’s formalism contributed directly to Wojtyła’s

190 Scheler, Formalism, 476.
191 Scheler, Formalism 476–489.
own understanding of human personhood, as Wojtyla freely confessed. But Wojtyla did not accept Scheler’s limited criteria for establishing the *ontological fact* of personhood. Instead, he accepted, from Scheler, not so much the *criteria*, but the *standard* against which human personal excellence should be measured. For Wojtyla, there can be no question that the intentional act constitutes the highest functioning of the human person, especially insofar as this intentional act can be directed both to the interiority of the person, and to the external world. But the fact that some human beings do not yet, no longer, or may never fully manifest such acts, does not, for Wojtyla, exclude them from the category of “personhood.” On this score, Wojtyla’s Thomistic sensibility toward an ontologically based philosophy is clearly apparent. “Personhood” is a property of human being—that is to say, to be a human being is necessarily to be a person, however imperfectly instantiated. He writes:

> In virtue of his self-governance and self-possession man deserves the designation of “somebody” regardless of whether he has this distinctive structure actually or only virtually. Thus man is somebody from the very moment of his coming into existence as also when and if something intervenes and prevents his fulfillment of himself in actions, that is to say, of his mature actualization of self-governance and self-possession was to be prevented. That the designation “somebody” is appropriate to man can be deduced also in an analysis of man’s being and not only from the experience of the person’s transcendence.192

Again, however, perhaps the most important point of divergence between Wojtyla and Scheler, and, indeed, the point Wojtyla makes repeatedly in his critiques, is that Wojtyla views Scheler as unable to account for valuation itself as an act, but sees valuation as a wholly affective dimension of human awareness, such that this very core of human motivation in action is, itself, not within the realm of our self-determination. For Wojtyla, this thesis reduces Scheler to a pure sentimentalist, and serves to undermine his understanding of the person as fundamentally self-determined. Unless the very motives for our action are themselves subject to our own determining choice, the whole realm of human agency is an illusion, and we are, once again, trapped in a form of determinism. Wojtyla writes:

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192 Wojtyla, *The Acting Person* 4.7 (180).
Although Scheler is a phenomenologist in his assumptions, he derives his view of the ethical life of the human being primarily from the set of emotional factors he sees as comprising that life. He realizes that ethical experience is connected with the willing of value. For Scheler, however, this willing of value is only a tendency connected with the presentation of a desirable object. Because Scheler believes values cannot be adequately presented in any image or concept but can only be felt, he connects willing with the feeling of value and not with the efficacy of the person. For this reason, too, ethical experience is not contained immanently in willing, in the act of will, but has its source, according to Scheler, in emotion. The very core of ethical experience, in Scheler’s view, is not the efficacy of the person, but the emotional experience of value.193

Wojtyla sees Scheler’s position as avoiding the central ethical question, namely, that of personal responsibility for one’s own moral life. Do we, in fact, at any level, choose the values that serve as our motives in action? Wojtyla reads Scheler as answering this question in the negative, or at least, of failing to perceive its central importance. He goes on:

I cannot agree with his [Scheler’s] system, precisely because he completely disregards the efficacy of the person. If persons are not the efficient cause of their actions, then there is no explanation for where ethical values come from. The experience upon which ethics is based reveals that persons who experience themselves as the efficient cause of their actions simultaneously experience themselves as subjects of ethical values—moral good and evil.

If our actions flow from our values in one direction only, and our actions do not constitute a genuine option for the values that motivate us to action but only a response to those values, then Scheler has fallen into a form of determinism without even noticing it, and has undermined very heart of our lived-experience of moral responsibility. Wojtyla points out that the phenomenological moment in question points directly to, “a confirmation of the relation that exists between an action’s moral value and the person’s efficacy.”194 For Wojtyla, this confirmation applies both before and in the midst of the act, suggesting that


person's experience involves, precisely, the option to ratify or deny a value in and through the act undertaken by the agent. Thus, says Wojtyla, "The lived experience of responsibility points to the will as the psychological factor that constitutes the very core of ethical experience." In describing values as a constellation of unchosen, irresistible psycho-affective movers within his ethical account, Scheler has denied any basis for the experience of our being true subjects of ethical values—of our being good or bad persons, morally, from within. Wojtyla writes:

The distinct immanence of ethical experience appears, therefore, in the lived experience of the efficacy of the person, that is, in the phenomenologically apprehended act of will. This is also suggested by the sense of responsibility that accompanies action and is related to ethical value. If the efficacy of the person is the basic element of the experiential whole we call ethical experience, and if the experience of responsibility is connected with it, then ethical value originates, so to speak, between these two elements. Ethical value originates in the lived experience of efficacy, that is, in the act of will apprehended phenomenologically—and this is what gives us the experiential basis for connecting ethical value with the person as its proper subject. When Scheler speaks of the purely emotional experience of happiness and despair, these experiences already presuppose an action involving the efficacy of the person. These experiences are elicited by the awareness that the ethical value arising from an action remains in the person as a subject, and its presence is for this person a source of happiness if it is a positive value and of despair if a negative one.

Wojtyla sees this whole problem resting in a failure on Scheler's part adequately to address the authority of καθ’ αυτό (kath auto) being in matters of morality—that is to say, being as it is with respect to itself. Wojtyla contrasts Scheler to Thomas on this matter, and sides with the latter. "The essence of the spiritual life based on reason," for Wojtyla, is "the truth of the good." The good presents itself to us as an a thing to be valued—it presents,


itself, in other words, as imposing a moral demand upon the person whether it affects us emotionally or not. It is simply true—it is a moral fact—that some things are good, and, therefore, out to be valued. This uncomfortable fact sets the stage upon which we can opt for values even against our desires. But Scheler’s view appears, to Wojtyla, incompatible with this claim, precisely because, in his Scheler’s approach, “the moral life consists in the emotional experience of moral value.” Since, for Scheler, such values arise spontaneously in the context of moral events, and go on to situate themselves within our experience in relation to a hierarchy of similarly spontaneously-emergent values, Scheler’s approach treats the moral experience as something restricted to the realm of consciousness alone—the very outcome Scheler had originally sought to avoid in his critique of Kant. Wojtyla explains that, for Scheler, “the essence of a particular moral ‘experience’—is not the positing of norms, that is, the ‘lived experience’ of the truth of the good of our action, but the ‘lived experience’ of value alone.”

This distinction between the classical view and that held by Scheler represents a significant point of departure—one that Wojtyla must finally reject. He writes:

The “lived experience” of value has—one could say—eliminated the “lived experience” of the truth of the good. Thus a real element has disappeared from the Schelerian view of the moral life—the element of positing norms, understood as the lived experience of the truth of the good. And this seems incompatible with experience and incompatible with reality: the essence of the moral life is not just the “lived experience” of value (or even of the good), but precisely the “lived experience” of the truth of the good that is an object of action and that is realized in this action.

For Wojtyla, the truth about the good carries with it an obligation to respond with an affirmation of the good’s value for the subject. Wojtyla holds that this obligation is given in our

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experience—that it is part of the "lived experience" of the ethical. Here, he critiques Scheler for his unqualified rejection of the category of "duty" in ethics, even as he praises Scheler for attempting to construct the first real post-Kantian ethics of value based upon confidence in our ability to apprehend "the essence of a thing just as it appears to us in immediate experience."\(^{201}\) Wojtyla is clear in his praise of Scheler here, but his praise must be qualified by a critique as well. Wojtyla affirms that:

Scheler perceives in ethical experience an intentional element, and along with it the structure of an intentional act. The intentional element that resides in every ethical experience is value. On behalf of value, Scheler declares war on the ethics of Kant, who detached the whole ethical life of the human being from values, from goods, and confined it to the noumenal sphere, relegating it entirely to duty.

Wojtyla clearly agrees with Scheler that Kant has reduced the ethical life to a rational category that has nothing to do with lived experience. This fact renders Kant's system for all its brilliance and insight, finally inadequate as an ethical system, because ethical questions refer precisely to the problems of lived experience, and not merely to abstractions, which can never be "subjects," but are always only "objects," which can be neither genesis nor term of moral responsibility. Even Kant's own second formulation of the categorical imperative seems to rest on an awareness of this fact, as he articulates a decidedly personalistic ethical norm, declaring that we must act toward any rational entity in such a way as to treat that entity, "always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means."\(^{202}\) Yet, in spite of this principle, Kant's system does not rest upon it—upon the incommensurable value of the person—as the foundation, but upon duty alone, stripped of any incentivizing value or concern. While Wojtyla agrees with Scheler in rejecting a conceptualization of ethics as a matter of pure duty, he disagrees with Scheler's rejection of duty altogether as a relevant category in our assessment of the moral act. He writes:

Scheler goes on to reject duty in ethics completely, seeing it as a basically negative and destructive factor. Only value as an

\(^{201}\) Wojtyla, "The Problem of the Separation of Experience from the Act in Ethics: In the Philosophy of Immanuel Kant and Max Scheler," 32.

objective content of experience has ethical significance. The possibility that duty might be an objective content of experience is something Scheler does not even consider, and the notion that duty could arise in this objective content from value itself is something he refuses to admit into his system at all. Value and duty oppose one another and are mutually exclusive. It would be difficult to deny that Scheler here set himself in opposition to Kant; on the other hand, he lost touch with the real, organic, empirical whole of ethical experience. There can be no doubt that this experience includes the element of duty. I do not, of course, mean duty as merely a feeling of respect for the law, as a psychological factor detached from the lived structural whole of ethical experience. I mean the element of duty within the structural whole of the ethical experience of the human person. Scheler rejects this element and presents value as the sole content of this experience.

From what we have see, therefore, we can say that, while Wojtyla has taken a great deal from Scheler, he nonetheless departs from him on three significant points. He does not accept Scheler’s assessment that a distinct human individual might not—or, indeed, in likelihood is not—a human person. He also rejects as mere “emotionalism” Scheler’s failure to account for the origination of values. While acknowledging a debt to Scheler in attempting to construct an ethics of values, Wojtyla cannot accept Scheler’s presentation of values as mere affections, passively received, but insists that genuine self-determination requires that we are capable even of choosing the very values upon which we construct our personal moral lives. Finally, because the ethical experience is an experience of responsibility for our actions, Wojtyla sees duty itself as an essential element of the experience of the ethical. Responsibility for our actions is relevant precisely because our choices represent a free assent to, or dissent from, the actual truth about the good to be done here and now, which, as such, represents in our experience, the element of “duty” or “obligation” in the moral sphere.

1.7: Wojtyla/John Paul II's Critique of Classical Thomism:

We have already acknowledged the widely-known and obvious fact that Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II integrated a great deal of Thomistic thought into his own philosophical perspective, maintaining throughout the whole of his life a deep appreciation for the contribution the Thomistic tradition has made, and continues to make, to philosophical thought in general, and to the Catholic philosophical and theological patrimony, more specifically. But with our subsequent consideration of the extent to which Wojtyla had come to see "the problem of the person" through a Schelerian lens, integrating Scheler's ideas into his own philosophical assessment, we will have to expect that certain serious challenges to Thomism are likely to emerge, for Wojtyla, in light of what he has received into his own thinking from the thought of Max Scheler.

That said, the fact that Wojtyla critiques Scheler in light of St. Thomas is widely acknowledged, but the fact that he critiques the Thomistic tradition in light of Max Scheler's influence has received comparatively little treatment. For Wojtyla, however, the basically cosmological and objectivistic understanding of the human person at work in the Thomistic perspective is a matter of serious concern. It introduces, according to Wojtyla, a series of reductionistic distortions along naturalistic, teleological lines that obscure the truth about the person as an irreducible, incommensurate, for his-or-her-own-sake value. Indeed, this thread is long and tightly-woven throughout the classical Thomistic tradition, from the writings of St. Thomas himself, through Domingo Báñez, and into the contemporary period in the writings of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange and others.

This cosmological, naturalistic thread will run through the classical Thomistic approach to matters of sexual ethics and political philosophy, and into our understanding of the human person in the order of salvation. To be sure, the implications of this divergence between Wojtyla's personalism and classical Thomism run deep, indeed.

As we have said, John Paul II criticizes Aquinas' view of the human person as being too "naturalistic," and suggests, instead, that we ought to construct a more thoroughly developed
personalism. Practically speaking, this means that, in moral matters, our emphasis must be placed upon the issue of "normativity" in addition to natural functionality. The human being, precisely as a person, enjoys a certain irreducibility to the purely natural and cosmological, with the result that analyses that may seem perfectly warranted within the purely metaphysical realm cannot stand unconfronted by the truth available to human reason through the careful application of the phenomenological method.

Aquinas is operating within the context of a fundamentally Aristotelian metaphysic, even if, as Wojtyla rightly notes, the Thomistic synthesis terminates in an entirely new system of thought. The Aristotelian structure of thought remains, at least skeletally, and with it, a certain stultification of the vision of the human person Aquinas was never, himself, quite able thoroughly to overcome. As we have already seen, of course, it is not, per

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204 Of relevance, here is, Karol Wojtyla, "Ethics and Moral Theology," in Wojtyla, Person and Community, 101-106. According to the bibliographical note appended to the essay in Person and Community (p. 101), the published essay is a summary of a lecture he had delivered at the Tenth Annual Philosophy Week at the Catholic University of Lublin, February 17, 1967. In this little-studied but singularly pivotal essay, written six years after his essay on "Thomistic Personalism," Wojtyla begins to describe rather clearly what he had come to perceive, in the maturation of his own analysis, to be the limits of the Thomistic approach to moral reasoning against the horizon of contemporary philosophical insight.

205 Of course, in the space available to us, our examination of these questions can only be preliminary. They will inevitably open up much larger questions, not only for ethics, but for metaphysics as well. Indeed, it would seem that John Paul II was aware of this fact as he called, in his encyclical letter, Fides et ratio (September 14, 1998), not merely for a restoration of Thomism, but for philosophy in its full historical and intellectual maturity, inclusive of the contributions of contemporary thinkers, and making full use of their legitimate methods, to strive, once again, with renewed vigor, to stake out, for philosophy, a "genuinely metaphysical range" (Vatican Translation, § 83).

206 Wojtyla speaks along these lines in, for example, his article, "In Search of the Basis of Perfectionism in Ethics," in Wojtyla, Person and Community, 45-56, especially 46-49.

207 Neo-Thomists in line with Domingo Báñez, who pledged, "in all things to follow St. Thomas," found themselves, whether consciously or unconsciously, imprisoned within these limitations—limitations that the
se, the content of the Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysic that Wojtyla sees as the problem to be overcome, but what that metaphysic has left out. In support of the basic content of the system, he writes:

If ethical experience essentially consists in this specific becoming of the person, then the only interpretation of it that can be considered adequate is one that apprehends and expresses this ethical becoming. This is what also leads me to believe that we should consider the view of the human act developed by Thomas Aquinas an adequate interpretation of ethical experience. . . . St. Thomas based his view of the human act on Aristotle’s theory of potency and act, a theory by which the philosophy of being explains all changes that take place in beings. . . . A conscious human act is, for St. Thomas. . . . an ethical experience because it is an act of will. . . . [and thus,] a passage from potency, since the will is a faculty (potentia) of the soul. . . . [Because it cannot give an account of this becoming,] a phenomenology of the will alone does not suffice for interpreting ethical experience.208

Church would finally begin to confront, if only indirectly at first, in the Twentieth Century, beginning with the Ressourcement, proceeding through the Second Vatican Council, and continuing through the papacies of John Paul II and now, Benedict XVI. This confrontation is certainly still ongoing. Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II was a participant in this process, both as Pope, and as a private thinker. Though never hostile to Aquinas—indeed, always filially loyal and even adoring of him—Wojtyla forced a return to the question of the human person, confident that the true Thomas, as a saint and lover of the Truth, would have embraced such a re-examination and confidently undertaken the call to rethink his previous conclusions in light of new and deepened insights.

208 Wojtyla, “The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act,” 20. The present study will make clear that when Wojtyla says that a “phenomenology of the will alone does not suffice for interpreting ethical experience,” the stress must be placed upon the word alone. As Wojtyla uses the term phenomenology in this essay, he means specifically only a certain careful method of observation involving the distillation of what is given in experience. Because he understands phenomenology-proper in this way—that is to say, as a kind of technique for conducting observation—it cannot, by definition, stand alone in providing a philosophical explanation. All it does is provide the basis of raw data upon which philosophical explanations can be constructed. That said, there can be no question that Wojtyla believed deeply in phenomenology’s suitability for precisely this essential task, and considered himself a phenomenologist.
Again, Wojtyla makes it quite clear that, for him, the problem is not the Aristotelian or Thomistic metaphysical framework as such. It is the fact that, within this framework, there is a tendency—a tendency to which both Aristotle and Aquinas succumb in their respective treatments of key questions—to reduce the human person to the status of an object: a thing among other things in the cosmos. 209 When this reduction is made, the unique and unrepeatable value of the human person as a for-its-own-sake being is obscured, and a mechanistic functionality is allowed to replace that uniqueness in our consideration of the person, of the person's dignity and worth, and thus, of moral and even broadly theological questions. 210 Indeed, this tendency toward naturalistic reductionism is so pervasive a threat from within the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophical and theological tradition, that everything from anatomy to cosmology can give expression to it, and that, in sometimes rather disquieting ways. 211

The problem before us can be illustrated, for example, when we consider the Thomistic approach to the question of the relative dignity of woman to man. From within an Aristotelian-Thomistic framework, all contingent beings have some telic orientation and cosmic place. All things in the universe tend toward some end, and seek their ultimate resolution therein. All movement is understood on the basis of this premise. Heavy objects seek their downward place, and acorns the maturity of the oak. But since all change is understood according to the reduction of some potentiality to a corresponding actuality, the development of a substance involves the interrelationship between some active and some passive principle. The active principle imparts form to matter, and thus defines the object's kinetic trajectory. 212 On this model, the father—who is male—is seen as the source of the active principle in the generation of human beings, while the mother—who is female—is seen as the source of the material principle which finds itself disposed to receive a form: i.e., the form of the father, who,

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209 On this point, see Wojtyla, "Ethics and Moral Theology," especially p. 104.


211 For example, cf. Summa Contra Gentiles III.94.xi and 122.iv.

again, is male. Given the limited information available to Aristotle, and even to Aquinas—indeed, to any human being prior to the rise of contemporary biology—there seemed sound metaphysical reasons for holding this view, including the observable fact that children, who are less fully developed than adults, more closely resemble women than men in their overall morphology.\(^{213}\) Still, the Aristotelian-Thomistic thesis fails the test of irreducibility, and ends, at least for Aristotle, with the assertion that the highest form of friendship is not available in the relationship between husband and wife,\(^{214}\) because such a friendship requires equality of dignity, while the woman, as something half-formed,\(^{215}\) is ontologically inferior to her husband.

\(^{213}\) Aristotle mentions this point in several places. In his, *On the Generation of Animals*, he observes, for example, that boys who are rendered eunuchs prior to puberty do not develop body hair beyond the pubic region, nor do their voices change, and that men rendered eunuchs tend to lose their body hair, except in the pubic region (784\(^{a}\)5-12). Similar discussions occur in *Problems* (294\(^{b}\)19-38, 895\(^{b}\)32-36, 897\(^{b}\)23-27). Aristotle also mentions the relationship between children and women when he speculates about why in the bovine, the calf's voice tends to be lower than in the adult of the species, while this is typically not the case in other animals. He notes that this fact is consistent with his overall observation that the child bears a closer resemblance to the female in any given species than to the male, since, in the bovine, the voice of the cow tends to be lower than that of the bull (*Problems* 901\(^{b}\)24-29). Of course, today, we know that the physiology at work in the process of development from conception to adulthood is far more complex than Aristotle could have expected to have imagined it to be. Given this complexity, the fact that children bear a closer resemblance to women than they do to men cannot, in any way, lead to the inference that women are somehow ontologically stunted.

\(^{214}\) See Aristotle’s discussion of friendship in Books VIII–IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1156\(^{b}\)5–1172\(^{a}\)15). While he maintains that perfect friendship is based upon perfect equality (1156\(^{b}\)5–35), he goes on to say that the friendship of husband and wife is based upon a condition of inequality between the parties (1158\(^{b}\)13–18). To be fair to Aristotle, however, he does hold out the possibility that a friendship based upon virtue can arise between husband and wife, in the event that both are virtuous (1162\(^{b}\)25–26), but he simultaneously holds that men and women cannot be virtuous in qualitatively the same way in every respect (*Politics* 1277\(^{b}\)8–33).

\(^{215}\) *On the Generation of Animals*, 737\(^{a}\)27-29.
Admittedly, Scripture makes quite clear the fact that this mistake is difficult for fallen man to avoid, and thus Aristotle can be excused, to some extent, for making it. But what of Aquinas? He has the benefit of revelation, in which the primeval equality of man and woman is made plain and femininity revered as the fundamental expression of the human person’s posture in relationship to God, who seeks us as his bride. Still, Aquinas does not fully perceive this truth.

Of course, Aquinas rejects Aristotle’s conclusion that the highest form of friendship is not available between husband and wife, but he does not reject the underlying premise upon which Aristotle advances his argument. Instead pointing to the sacramental

216 In the story of the Man and the Woman in the Garden (Genesis 2:4b–3:24), it is only after sin that the woman becomes subjugated to the man, and given over to his exploitation (3:16). This point is made, not only in God’s utterance of the curse at 3:16, but also in the fact that the Man goes on to name her, in the proper sense, as they leave the garden (3:20). In the Decalogue, then, the commandment against coveting one’s neighbor’s possessions and that against coveting his wife, are given together in a single proposition (Exodus 20:17, Deuteronomy 5:21), underscoring the point that the real meaning of the commandments concerning these questions can only be discerned if the heart is pure. Only, in other words, if we are sensitive to the personalistic norm, will we be able to see, given the concupiscible burden of fallenness, that a woman simply cannot be a possession, and thus, that the sin of coveting one’s neighbor’s ox is qualitatively different from that of coveting his wife. John Paul II points out that the predominating language of the Old Testament did tend to objectify the woman as a kind of property belonging to her husband, and that the legal recognition of polygamy was, itself, a manifestation of this tendency (see his Wednesday Audiences of August 13, 1980–August 20, 1980). With Christianity, the ambiguity of the commandments is overcome, not only with Christ’s restoration of the pure state of matrimony as it was “from the beginning,” and thus, the prohibition of divorce (Cf. Matthew 19:3–9), but also in Paul’s development of the Bridegroom imagery according to which he works out a fully sacramental understanding of the relationship between husband and wife in the life of grace (Ephesians 5:21–33). For John Paul II’s work on the Theology of the Body see, John Paul II, Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body, Michael Waldstein, trans. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006). On the points mentioned, here, see pp. 177–204 and 267–274.

217 Summa Contra Gentiles III.123.vi.

218 Indeed, Aquinas is quite explicit on the ontological inferiority of women. See, for example, Summa Theologicae, I.92.i. ad 2; I.93.iv. ad 1; Summa Contra Gentiles III.94.xi; and De Veritate, V.9. ad ix.
fullness of matrimony as an image of Christ's relationship to the Church, he appeals to the gift of grace by which a lower nature can be raised to a higher posse, such that, through the sacramental grace of matrimony, the woman is given a sort of analogous condignity with her husband, just as the human person is, in this way, given condignity with God through the infusion of sanctifying grace, without, thereby, altering the brute fact of the creature's inherent inferiority.

It is worthy of note, of course, that while Aquinas accepts the claim that God presents his "image" in human being in both sexes, he does not suppose that there is really anything about human sexuality, per se, to manifest that image. The inner co-equality of relationality belonging to the nature of the Triune God does not, for Aquinas, find expression in the phenomenological given of human sexual differentiation, as such. Indeed, he

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219 Summa Theologiae, III-Suppl.49.3. Here, Aquinas argues that indissolubility is the effect of grace in matrimony, and thus, that this imprints a kind of character upon the recipients of the sacrament. In this case, it gives the man and the woman power over one another at the bodily level, extending beyond what natural procreative obligation appears to require. This kind of union gives the wife a share in her husband's life, and thus, inferentially, a kind of equality with him, through the grace the sacrament affords. This degree of equality would not be possible in a purely natural marriage. Now, in his Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics (Lect. XII.1723), Aquinas grants Aristotle's observation that if both husband and wife are virtuous, their marriage can be based on virtue (Nicomachean Ethics 1162a19-24). But this alone does not raise the status of their friendship to the highest form, since the highest form of friendship requires equality in all ways (1156b5-35), while the virtues proper to husband and wife are different, in a way analogous to, but not quite reducible to, that proper to master and servant (Politics 1277b8-33). While, for Aquinas, a form of equality exists even in a purely natural (i.e., licit, but non-sacramental) marriage (Summa Contra Gentiles III.124.iv-v), that equality is really one based upon a kind of constitutional arrangement whereby a micro-political organism is formed. The husband and wife are equal in the sense that the foot and the eye are equally oriented toward the good of the body, even as the eye possesses the greater dignity (Ibid. III.94.xi). The friendship of husband and wife may be based on virtue, but it is not the same sort of virtue; it is a virtue of inequality, and thus, preclusive of friendship's highest form without some superaddition to nature (Cf. Ibid. III.123.vii).

220 Summa Theologiae, I.93.iv.

221 Summa Theologiae, I.93.vi.
explicitly denies this assertion—a fact that, ironically, evinces the presence of the concept in his own time. Rather, Aquinas sees the image of God in the human being expressed exclusively in the specifying differentia of human nature: i.e., rationality. He thus sees the distinction of the sexes as essentially twofold in purpose, at least as far as so-called “pure nature” is concerned. First, it affords the opportunity for the continuity in generative unity of rational animality, wherein the image of God, who is rational, is manifest in the material universe. Second, precisely inasmuch as sexual distinction rests, according to this Aristotelian perspective, in a diversity of ontic nobility, it allows God to manifest his qualitative infinity in a universe of finite beings, by expressing his majesty in the multiplication of creatures across a vast ontological gradation.

John Paul II takes, with respect to this question, a rather different stance; and he does so on the basis of the personalistic norm that allows room for the philosopher to “pause at the irreducible,” and question his metaphysical presumptions on the basis of what is clearly given about the person in the phenomenological moment. John Paul II is able to acknowledge that human sexual differentiation, as such, manifests the image of God. Human persons discover, in their maleness and femaleness,

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222 Summa Theologiae, I.93.vi. ad 2.

223 Summa Theologiae, I.93.vi.

224 Summa Contra Gentiles III.94.xi; De Veritate, V.9. ad ix.

225 Cf. Summa Theologiae I.92.i-ii; Summa Contra Gentiles III.94.xi; and De Veritate V.9. ad ix.

226 Karol Wojtyla, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being,” in Person and Community (209–217), 213–214. This essay, is pivotal for any real understanding of Wojtyla’s broader philosophical views. According to the editorial notes appended to the translation, this paper is considerably earlier than its first publication would suggest; Wojtyla sent it to a conference in Paris held June 13–14, 1975. Beyond the date of the conference, no further specifics of the event are provided.

227 Cf. Man and Woman He Created Them, 163–164. In this passage, delivered November 14, 1979, John Paul II not only suggests that the creation of the human being as “male and female” does present us with an image of God in and through sexual differentiation, but that, in fact, this relational dimension of the divine image, “constitutes perhaps the deepest theological aspect of everything we can say about man” (164). The view expressed by John Paul II, here, borrows very closely from the Trinitarian model discussed by St. Augustine in his De Trinitate XII.5—a view
a mutual orientation to the other. Most of all through sexual differentiation, the human person is able to know and be known, both by himself and by the other; and thus, in his own deepened self-aware self-possession, he is able to make a gift of himself to one who receives him and embodies him without consuming and negating him. This philosophical awareness prepares John Paul II to receive the Scriptural witness of Genesis in a way that seemingly escapes the horizons of Aquinas’ theological imagination; and thus is born, for the Church, a new and revitalizing theological approach—that of somatic theology or, as it is more commonly known, the theology of the body.

For Wojtyla, experience, and the roots of that experience, provide the brute facts concerning which whatever else we say must give account. These given are to be the matter of our philosophical discourse—a matter already disposed to a certain form that comes to be known through a process, not of manipulation or contrivance, but of discovery, precisely in and through our encounter with the concrete evidence presented to us by the world.

Here, Wojtyla appears much closer to Scotus than he is to Aquinas; for it was Scotus who demonstrated, among the high-Scholastics, a profound sensitivity to the phenomenological given, and a readiness to “pause before the irreducible”. He did not hold the Aristotelian-Thomistic view of the woman as an ontological inferior, but instead saw, consistent with revelation, that the woman, along with the man, operates as an active principle in the order of generation.

Although Scotus possessed no more

Aquinas had come to dismiss as “manifestly absurd” (Summa Theologiae, I.93.vi. ad 2).

228 This is precisely the line of reasoning employed by Paul VI in his encyclical letter, Humanae Vitae, (§§ 8–9). Wojtyla discusses this idea in his essay, Karol Wojtyla, “The Teaching of the Encyclical Humanae Vitae on Love: An Analysis of the Text,” in Person and Community, 301–314. Wojtyla originally delivered this essay in September 1968 at a theological conference on Humanae Vitae (editorial note in Person and Community, 301). This theme is also consistent with his thinking in Love and Responsibility, and is thoroughly developed, early in his papacy as John Paul II, in the context of his theology of the body.

229 Indeed, what we describe, here, is the essential thrust of the whole project. Again, see Man and Woman He Created Them (in toto).

230 Ordinatio III, dist. 4, q. unica. This text, in both Latin and English, with a worthy complement of notes, is readily available in, John Duns
scientific information about reproductive biology than Aquinas, he was able to step back and allow what was given in the phenomenological moment, to, as Wojtyla says, "have the upper hand" over metaphysical abstraction, and thus, to set a task for metaphysics as a discipline. Scotus was prepared to accept the challenge of re-examining his metaphysical principles and their implications in light of the givenness of real life experience.

By contrast, because St. Thomas lacks the habitus to, "pause before the irreducible," a he comes to embrace, on the basis of abstractions alone, a rather distorted view of human sexuality, even in the face of the Scriptural witness. From within this distorted view of human sexuality, we are led, moreover, to still other


231 In his essay, "Subjectivity and the Irreducible," Wojtyla says, "We cannot complete the picture through [metaphysical or naturalistic] reduction alone; we also cannot remain within the framework of the irreducible alone (for then we would not be able to get beyond the pure self). The one must be cognitively supplemented by the other. Nevertheless, given the variety of circumstances of the real existence of human beings, we must always leave the greater space in this cognitive effort for the irreducible; we must, as it were, give the irreducible the upper hand when thinking about the human being that is invisible and wholly internal and whereby each human being, myself included, is an 'eyewitness' of his or her own self—of his or her own humanity and person" (214). A bit later in the same essay, he writes, "What does it mean to pause cognitively at lived experience? This ‘pausing’ should be understood in relation to the irreducible" (215). Given the discussion in the whole of the essay, and in particular, in the passages immediately following this second quote, it is clear that Wojtyla is speaking of the prerogative of the phenomenological method in directing and correcting metaphysical analyses. Indeed, he goes on to say, "The thinker seeking the ultimate philosophical truth about the human being no longer moves in a 'purely metaphysical terrain,' but finds elements in abundance testifying to both the materiality and the spirituality of the human being, elements that bring both of these aspects into sharper relief. These elements then form the building blocks for further metaphysical construction" (216).

232 In the end, it is precisely the fruits of his phenomenological sensitivity with respect to this point that disposed Scotus, philosophically, to receive from within the deposit of faith as a theologian, the truth of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary and the scope of its importance to the whole of the faith (Ordinatio III, dist. 3, q. 1). Again, the reader may find this text in Latin and English with notes in Four Questions on Mary, 29–62.
distorted conclusions—again, on the basis of an overly naturalistic understanding of the human person.\textsuperscript{233}

Of course Wojtyla agrees with Aquinas in asserting that the sexual act is by nature oriented to generation, and, thus, that any intentional subversion of the generative dimension of the act is immoral precisely insofar as it constitutes a free and informed choice—a human act—to contravene what is proper to nature. It is an offense against the natural law because, as rational beings, we are able to understand the order of nature, and are thus bound to assent to that order as our own good.\textsuperscript{234} If, however, we follow this line of reasoning too far before taking the time to “pause before the irreducible,” we end by weighing the relative gravity of various sexual sins in an intuitively absurd, and really quite thoroughly offensive way. For, according to Aquinas, this line or reasoning leads inexorably to the conclusion that masturbation, homosexual acts, outright bestiality, and the deliberate exclusion of the generative potency of the act between heterosexual partners are all qualitatively more serious than rape and adultery.\textsuperscript{235} Indeed, Aquinas states quite explicitly that these sins rank second only to homicide.\textsuperscript{236} Wojtyla, of course, takes these sins seriously, but he does not appear to be concerned with defending a Thomistic ranking of them on the basis of a biologistic, teleologistic line of argument that, in the end, he criticizes as a form of reductionism that obscures the dignity of the human person.

Aquinas’ analysis on these matters fails, for Wojtyla, the test of irreducibility. From within the scope of a personalist analysis, these acts, however similar at the purely biological level—


\textsuperscript{234} Summa Contra Gentiles III.122.iv–v.

\textsuperscript{235} Summa Theologiae II-II.154.xii.

\textsuperscript{236} “Nor, in fact, should it be deemed a slight sin for a man to arrange for the emission of semen apart from the proper purpose of generating and bringing up children. . . . [T]he inordinate emission of semen is incompatible with the natural good; namely the preservation of the species. Hence, after the sin of homicide whereby a human nature already in existence is destroyed, this type of sin appears to take next place, for by it the generation of human nature is precluded” (Summa Contra Gentiles III.122.ix). We quote, here, from Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles, 5 vols., Anton C. Pagis, F.R.S.C., trans. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975).
considering the natural generative purpose of the sexual organs—are really not reducible in the way Aquinas suggests. Phenomenologically, the real issues involved here are obvious. It is true, as Aquinas points out, that homosexual acts and acts of bestiality differ, biologically, on the basis of the fact that the first involves the use of the sexual organs within the context of an encounter with an individual of the wrong sex, while the second involves such use with an individual of the wrong species; and he is probably correct to say that the latter is more seriously disordered than the former. But in naming the reason for the relative gravity of these sins, he misses the more fundamental issue—that in the case of the homosexual act, the act is performed, not merely with a member of the same species, but with a person. Failure to take this fact into account—the fact of the personhood of the sexual partner, with everything that personhood implies—cuts us off from a fully mature analysis of the moral stakes in question. Wojtyla makes this point rather clearly, describing the naturalistic approach represented by St. Thomas as “one-sided” and, therefore, misleading for its incompleteness. He explains that, “the norm that emerges from an understanding of the nature and purpose of the sexual urge must be supplemented with the personalistic norm.” He explains that this “supplementation” of the traditional line of argumentation is the only way to preserve what is actually correct in that line of argument avoid distortions. “The necessity,” he explains, “of combining these two norms into one—which involves, of course, the necessity of properly situating the norm that emerges from an understanding of the purpose of the purpose of the sexual urge within the objective content of the personalistic norm—is indispensible for preserving the order of nature.” For this reason, Wojtyla held that a modification from the dominant Thomistic line of argument needed to occur in Catholic teaching on the subject of sexual ethics, not because the Church’s positions do not reflect a personalistic sensibility, nor

237 Summa Theologiae II-II.154.xii, ad 4.

238 Summa Theologiae II-II.154.xii, ad 4.

239 Cf. “Catholic Sexual Ethics” 284–291. Wojtyla does not concern himself here, at all, with the question of homosexuality, but the reasoning he employs is easily applied.


even that such a sensibility was wholly lacking in St. Thomas, but because before personalism had come to develop as its own specific philosophical approach, these sensibilities could not find articulation and expression consistently, and were often obscured from view. Wojtyla writes:

[Wojtyla, "Catholic Sexual Ethics," 288.]

Wojtyla goes on to explain, then, that the personalistic norm, which he characterizes as the governing axiom that the proper form of relating to a person is through love—that is, that persons deserve to be loved by other persons because they are persons—

[Wojtyla, "Catholic Sexual Ethics," 289.]

is necessary for the realization of even the naturalistic dimension with which traditional approaches are concerned. He says, "To realize merely the ends of the urge without realizing the personalistic norm would not satisfy the normative principle of the order of nature." 244

We can see how far-reaching the implications of the introduction of the personalistic norm will be for a classically Thomistic approach to sexual morality when we consider the basic line of reasoning Aquinas follows in his considerations of these issues, asking what happens when we introduce an awareness of the


243 Cf. Wojtyla, "Catholic Sexual Ethics," 289. The personalistic norm, of course, represents a great challenge. At a practical level, this norm will mean that we can only claim to be relating to a person as a person and not as a thing when we act toward that person in such a way as to give expression to the person as one loved by us in and through our acts. This fact thus leads to the further conclusion that only acts displaying this quality of love can be morally permissible as acts in which other persons are implicated. Insofar as we act in such a way as to implicate other persons, in other words, our act must reveal from within its inner architecture, love for the person implicated in our act.

244 Wojtyla, "Catholic Sexual Ethics," 289.
incommensurate value of the person who is central to the act, whether as the agent or as the patient. Aquinas’ classification of masturbation as a more serious offense than rape provides a poignant illustration. For Aquinas, rape is not as serious a sin as masturbation, because while masturbation positively frustrates the generative orientation of the sexual organs in their use, rape does not; it is, at least in theory, possible for a rapist to impregnate his victim. Indeed, for Aquinas, any sin in the sexual order that precludes the generative dimension of the sexual faculty in the context of the sexual act is more serious than rape as such. But are we really prepared to say that even contraceptive intercourse between husband and wife is morally worse than an act of rape in which the generative orientation of the sexual organs is not positively frustrated? Once we “pause at the irreducible,” it becomes clear that to intrude upon the psychosomatic self-determination of the person (as in rape) is an offense fundamentally more perverse than giving reciprocity to another person’s voluntarily self-exploitive inclinations (as in, for example, fornication, contracepted sex, etc.). Both sorts of acts are morally wrong, and gravely so; but it remains important to name the precise nature of the sin in each case. If we fail to do so, in this case especially, we end by violating the dignity of the human person by a sheer act of philosophical analysis, inasmuch as we fail to give the irreducible person the upper hand over metaphysics.

245 Summa Theologiae II-II.154.xii.

246 In the case of fornication, both parties sin, while in the case of rape, only the offender sins. Paradoxically, however, rape is more serious precisely because the victim is denied any real participation in the governance of her own person—her own psychosomatic integrity. This, after all, is really what it means to be raped. The exercise of the sexual faculty cuts to the very deepest reaches of our psychosomatic unity, such that to deny someone, in this very sphere, the dignity of personal subjectivity—that is, being the subject of his or her own actions—is to reduce that person to the status of a mere object. The offender fundamentally excludes his victim from the act, even as he absorbs her in it as its direct object. Rape, therefore, is among the most acute instances of what Wojtyla names, alienation—that is, the opposite of participation, which requires subjective affirmation, through personal action, of a commonly-affirmed value, as a consciously and freely affirmed dimension of each agent’s self-fulment (Karol Wojtyla, “The Person: Subject and Community,” in Person and Community, 219–261, [252–258]. We can and should argue, of course, that fornication also objectifies the person in a certain sense. But lived experience makes clear that human beings respond in profoundly different ways to these two modes of exploitation. Rape is
Under the papacy of John Paul II, the new emphasis in the direction of a personalist approach to sexual ethics would gain a great deal of ground and, though it is not plausible to argue that the project has come to fruition, we can see practical consequences of this shift in emphasis already occurring. For example, many moralists who confess explicit fidelity to magisterial authority, and who ground their considerations in the personalist approach of John Paul II himself, would regard the presence of seminal fluids, with their potential to result in a wholly uninvited pregnancy consequent upon a violation of the woman's personal self-possession, as a continuing assault, and would countenance the use of strictly anti-ovulatory measures provided there is no risk of abortion. These thinkers reject the characterization of such measures as properly "contraceptive," since the question of contraception is taken to involve a willingness to engage in the sexual act, but with the intention, then, of frustrating its purpose. In the present case, however, there is no intention to frustrate the purpose of a sexual act, since no properly sexual act qua act, has

total objectification, fornication is not, no matter how close it may come to the line. Indeed, this is precisely the point at issue in society's outcry against "date rape drugs," which are used to dissociate a woman's psychical discretion from her somatic activations, reducing her to a non-participating sexual robot. The Casanova may care little about who his conquest is, but his thrill can only come through her voluntary self-surrender. The date-rapist has lost sight of even this value; he takes the outward appearance of surrender at the expense of its inner, voluntary character. This is an essential difference between fornication and date rape—an act which is really and properly rape. From a personalist point of view, this difference places rape at the very top of the hierarchy of sexual sins.

Indeed, this is the official position of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, as articulated in, Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services, Fourth Edition (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, June 15, 2001), III.36. The bishops advise that, "A female who has been raped should be able to defend herself against a potential conception from the sexual assault. If, after appropriate testing, there is no evidence that conception has occurred already, she may be treated with medications that would prevent ovulation, sperm capacitation, or fertilization. It is not permissible, however, to initiate or to recommend treatments that have as their purpose or direct effect the removal, destruction, or interference with the implantation of a fertilized ovum."
really occurred. Rather, the idea is to preserve what remains, if anything, of the self-determination of the woman, whose somatic boundaries constitute a sacred space not to be transgressed through an act of interpersonal trespass wholly antithetical to her will. These moralists would argue that a woman enjoys a clear right, never to abort a pregnancy conceived under any circumstances, but certainly to prevent a pregnancy consequent upon rape—and that, precisely on the basis of the personalistic norm, apart from which the deeper meaning of human sexuality and thus, of the sexual act, cannot be fully understood. For the time being, at least, the Church appears to entrust this question to the academic debate, and to tolerate within the bounds of Catholic moral conduct the recommendations of these moralists. That fact alone speaks volumes about the Church’s refusal to reduce the sexual act to the level of a purely natural purpose; and it indicates precisely the sort of personalistic organic ethical approach of which Wojtyla had spoken. The purpose of the sexual organs is of relevance to our consideration of sexual ethics only within the context of our consideration of the person who engages in the act, or, as in the present example, is merely acted upon by another.

The implications of the naturalistic approach to the human person go deeper, of course, than the dimension of sexual ethics. For Aquinas, because the human person exists for the purpose of instantiating a nature—the rational nature—which can be done according to varying degrees of perfection, the human being is really viewed, not principally as an end in himself, but as a means to a still higher end determined by God. The primary value here

248 Wojtyla is quite insistent on this point in *The Acting Person*. He draws the distinction between an activity or activation, on the one hand, and an act in the full and proper sense, on the other. The latter implies efficacious auto-determinism. Thus, Wojtyla essentially equates the terms act and human act. Rape is, by its very definition, not a human act, because it does not proceed from free will (as in the case of forcible rape) or understanding (as in the case of statutory rape, for example).

249 See, for example, *Summa Theologiae* I.22–23; *Summa Contra Gentiles* III.94.xi. Aquinas is explicit in his assertion that the human person is not an end in himself, but an end ordered to something greater—something for the sake of which the individual person’s naturally (or even supernaturally) ordered good may have to be frustrated according to God’s providence. In spite of this, the contrary view is widely assigned to him. That said, it may well be the case that, in the mediaeval West, Aquinas first cast certain questions or concepts in a light that allowed for later development in the direction the Church, and even the wider philosophical
is not the individual person, but the species, for the sake of which the individual person exists. Wojtyla recognizes and even legitimizes what is correct in Aquinas' intuition, here—namely that the human individual cannot be understood solely in respect of himself, but always, at the very core of his being, is already a kind of reference to the other—to a community of persons. But this does not mean that we can simply equate the view of Wojtyla with that of Aquinas on this point. Indeed, it is precisely the question of capital punishment that bears out, for us, their point of departure.

On the question of capital punishment, Aquinas is an enthusiast. Because the human being exists to instantiate the rational nature, and has his fundamental value as an individual precisely in this, a descent from rationality—as through sin—means a diminution of his objective value. To be sure, Aquinas' metaphysic prevents him from suggesting that the human being ceases to be human by discussion, have been able to follow to a fully personalist conclusion. This fully personalist position is affirmed consistently by Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, and finds articulation at the Second Vatican Council in the claim that the human person, "... is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself" (Gaudium et spes § 24). It would be difficult to deny that this position expresses the mature mind of the Church, and that the Church sees this articulation as expressing in a rich and penetrating way, the inner content of revelation. Nonetheless, this position is emphatically not that of Aquinas himself. In an earlier work of my own, I am guilty of ascribing the personalist view of the individual human being to Aquinas (Richard H. Bulzacchelli, Judged by the Law of Freedom: A History of the Faith-Works Controversy and a Resolution in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006], 53). Wojtyla seems to do this as well ("Thomistic Personalism", especially 166–167, 174), since he does not draw any distinction between the propositions, "human beings are the noblest creatures in the universe" and "human beings are made for their own sakes." For Aquinas, the first proposition is true, but not the second. He would acknowledge that all things in the universe are ordained for the good of human beings, but he would not accept the claim that the universe as a whole is so ordained. Aquinas does not say, in other words, that, "the universe exists for the sake of the human person," but that, "the human person exists for the sake of the universe" (Summa Theologiae I.23.vii).


Summa Theologiae II-II.64.ii ad 3.
nature on account of sin;\textsuperscript{252} and as far as this point goes, Wojtyła finds, in Aquinas, something of profound importance, especially for today’s debates over the whole panoply of life issues.\textsuperscript{253} Wojtyła also finds, in Aquinas, as we have already seen, the important intuition that the human being can change his moral character in and through his acts.\textsuperscript{254} But where Aquinas holds that, not only the moral character of the person, but also the person’s fundamental value as an individual, is tied to his acts, Wojtyła and Aquinas must part company. Again, Aquinas’ conclusion, here, is really the result of his tendency to engage in natural reductionism, whereby the natural purpose of the person is subordinated to a larger social purpose in quite the same way that a body part has its purpose and value in the whole.\textsuperscript{255} Ironically, where Aquinas underemphasized this wholeness in his consideration of sexual issues, he now overemphasizes it in his treatment of this political issue. In both cases, he has lost sight of the person as the irreducible reference point of our considerations. For in Aquinas’ view, the sinner is regarded, precisely in his descent from rationality, as a

\textsuperscript{252} Cf. Summa Theologiae II-II.64.iii. ad 2. For Aquinas, nature pertains to what is essential in the human being, while sin is an accidental characteristic. It is one of the possible contraries a substance is capable of assuming; but the substance is capable of assuming it only on account of that which is essential to it. The fact that the human being is capable both of sin and repentance (even if repentance is only possible through grace) reveals to us that a substance—the human being—perdures through sin.

\textsuperscript{253} Cf. Acting Person, 3.2 (112–113), 3.3 (120), 3.6 (130–131), 3.9 (146–147). Veritatis splendor § 75, 78.

\textsuperscript{254} This is among the central points at issue in The Acting Person, for example. In his magisterial writings, of course, this point remained, for John Paul II, a central issue, and is at the root of his comments in Veritatis splendor, when he critiques a wide range of contemporary ethical theories (§§ 65–70, 74–75). Cf., also, Fides et ratio, § 89.

\textsuperscript{255} Summa Theologiae II-II.64.ii. Wojtyła sees this as a problem to which the events of the twentieth century drew the Church’s attention in a definitive way. He writes, “We know that such situations in history have frequently led to a deeper reflection on Christian truth as a whole, as well as on particular aspects of it. That is also the case today. The truth about the human being, in turn, has a distinctly privileged place in this whole process. After nearly twenty years of ideological debate in Poland, it has become clear that at the center of this debate is not cosmology or philosophy of nature but philosophical anthropology and ethics: the great and fundamental controversy about the human being” (Wojtyła, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 220.)
Mary and the Acting Person

diseased appendage of the body politic—a kind of cancerous limb to be amputated and cast away. Aquinas regards this action—the execution of the sinner at the hands of the State—as something praiseworthy. Indeed, when he argues in favor of the execution of heretics, he provides as a justification of the practice, the fact that still lesser offences, like forgery, are rightly punished by execution. That being said, from within a personalist perspective, his argument in favor of capital punishment is stunning indeed. Unlike Augustine, who sees the practice as falling within the objective rights of the State, but nevertheless discourages it for the sake of a witness to nobler things, Aquinas encourages capital punishment as long as it can be administered without harm to the innocent. He writes:

It is lawful to kill dumb animals, insofar as they are naturally directed to man’s use, as the imperfect is directed to the perfect. Now every part is directed to the whole, as imperfect to perfect, wherefore every part is naturally for the sake of the whole. For this reason, we observe that if the health of the whole body demands the excision of a member, through its being decayed or infectious to the other members, it will be both praiseworthy and advantageous to have it cut away. Now every individual person is compared to the whole community as part to whole. Therefore, if a man be dangerous and infectious to the community, on account of some sin, it is praiseworthy and advantageous that he be killed in order to safeguard the common good, since a little leaven corrupteth the whole lump (1 Cor. v. 6).

For Wojtyla/John Paul II, it is not so much that what Aquinas says here is wholly false, but again, that it is false by way of its insufficiency, which belongs to it on account of its reductionism, which does not allow space for us to “pause before the irreducible”. Thus, John Paul II’s treatment of capital punishment in Evangelium vitae does more than simply urge the State to temper justice with mercy; it represents much more than a

256 Summa Theologiae II-II.11.iii, 64.ii.
257 Summa Theologiae II-II.64.ii.
258 Summa Theologiae II-II.11.iii.
259 Augustine, Letters 133, 134.
260 Summa Theologiae II-II.64.ii. ad 1–2.
261 Summa Theologiae II-II.64.ii.
departure from Aquinas on a question of emphasis. Precisely on the basis of the personalistic norm,\textsuperscript{262} John Paul II reconsiders the objective moral character of the public act of execution, and denies the State moral license to perform it unless absolutely necessary. Again, while Aquinas argues that capital punishment is to be favored even for lesser crimes, unless its application poses a mortal danger to the innocent along with the guilty, John Paul II takes precisely the opposite stance, declaring that, in the contemporary world, the circumstances that would justify its application are, "very rare, if not practically non-existent."\textsuperscript{263}

No matter what other issues may come before us, however, there looms above all, a fundamental theological question—and that is a question of the ultimate destiny of the human person. For Aquinas, again, the human person is to be understood, not as a for-its-own-sake being, but as a being for the sake of a higher, divine agenda. It is important for us to understand what this means, for Aquinas. He does not hold simply that the human being is made by God for the purpose of becoming more than he already is by nature, as is commonly thought. Rather, Aquinas holds that the human person, qua human person, exists to serve a larger cosmic goal intended by God, namely, the manifestation of the divine glory.\textsuperscript{264} The individual human person is subordinated to this end, and finds his real value precisely in this, most of all. For Aquinas, this cosmic purpose is positively exclusive of the ultimate good of some, and indeed, of the preponderance, of human persons.\textsuperscript{265} This is a dimension of Aquinas' thought that seems, largely, to escape our attention today. We tend either to dismiss it as a tangential, anachronistic appendage of his overall system, or else to ignore it altogether.\textsuperscript{266} But with the advent of the personalistic norm, the

\textsuperscript{262} John Paul II clearly references the personalistic norm in his statement about the purpose of punishment immediately preceding his judgment concerning the status of capital punishment in industrialized society at \textit{Evangelium Vitae}, § 56. His line of reasoning is based upon the duty of society to restore the offender to the proper exercise of personal freedom.

\textsuperscript{263} \textit{Evangelium Vitae}, § 56.

\textsuperscript{264} \textit{Summa Theologae} I.23.v. ad 3.

\textsuperscript{265} \textit{Summa Theologae} I.23.vii. ad 3.

\textsuperscript{266} Indeed, in my own work, \textit{Judged by the Law of Freedom}, I have rather consciously bracketed this dimension of Aquinas’ thought under the hypothesis that his metaphysical view actually suggests an alternative path that he, for his own part, could not appreciate on account of a certain
question of whether, in the end, Aquinas’ system can stand at all without the “reprobate”, would seem to have been forced upon us. However that question is finally to be answered, the role of reprobation in Aquinas’ system is a lucid manifestation of his tendency toward natural reductionism.

Aquinas is quite clear in his affirmation that rational beings exist as an audience for the manifestation of God’s glory.\(^\text{267}\) This requires the “elect”—those whom God chooses from all eternity to delight in him. In and through these, God displays his mercy and generosity.\(^\text{268}\) But in order to reveal the full scope of that mercy, according to Aquinas, he also requires a counter-example. Thus, from eternity, God providentially intends the reprobation of the masses.\(^\text{269}\) While he does not want to say that God positively wills

poverty of exegesis with respect to the scriptural themes of providence, predestination, perseverance, election, and the Book of Life. I now wonder if the matter really moves the other way—that is, if his exegesis came to be driven by the metaphysical categories to which he had already come to give his assent. No doubt, Aquinas did not perceive himself as subordinating revelation to metaphysics, especially since his exegetical tendencies on these points were widely embraced by his contemporaries, even across metaphysical lines of disputation. But even Wojtyla seems rather critical of Aquinas on this score, even as he expresses his profound admiration. See, Wojtyla, “Ethics in Moral Theology,” in Wojtyla, Person and Community, 101–106. There, he notes that St. Thomas is engaged in an exercise of interpreting, “scripture and tradition in keeping with the magisterium of the Church by means of a particular philosophical system” (101), which, “appears as an intellectual synthesis that goes far beyond the threshold of exegesis. . . [arranging the content of revelation] by means of metaphysical categories” (102–103). Wojtyla cautions that, “The admiration we have for this ‘summa,’ however, does not have to mean—and even should not mean—that we regard it as a work complete and perfect in every respect. The inner bond . . . that exists between speculative theology and philosophy directs us today to look at this remarkable work [i.e., Aquinas’ system of speculative theology] as a ‘fruit of its times,’ that is, to view it not only within the framework of the state of philosophy in St. Thomas’ day but also from the perspective of subsequent development of philosophy” (103). Clearly, for Wojtyla, the inherent limits associated with all attempts, however noble, finally to synthesize the sum of natural knowledge even as we continue to advance in it, must leave us cautious, lest we constrain God’s self-revelation within the bounds of what we already understand.

\(^{267}\text{Cf. Summa Theologiae I.23.v.}\)

\(^{268}\text{Summa Theologiae I.23.v.}\)

\(^{269}\text{Summa Theologiae I.23.vii. \textit{ad} 3.}\)
sin, he does hold quite explicitly, that the reprobate are not reprobate because of their sins, but that they sin because they are reprobate, and reprobates must suffer damnation. On this point, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange writes:

Is reprobation simply the denial of predestination? It implies the divine permission of the sin of final impenitence (negative reprobation), and the divine will to inflict the penalty of damnation for this sin (positive reprobation). If reprobation were simply the denial of predestination, it would not be an act of providence, and the penalty of damnation would not be inflicted by God. St. Thomas says: "As predestination includes the will to confer grace and glory; so also reprobation includes the will to permit a person to fall into sin, and to impose the punishment of damnation on account of that sin."

In the end, Aquinas' view on this question does appear to reduce, not only to an assertion of the eternal security of the elect, but also to a thesis of double-predestination. Accordingly, there exists, for Aquinas, a two-tiered order of human worth. The elect exist for the sake of the manifestation of God's glory in terms of mercy, while the reprobate exist for the sake of the elect; they are things like any other things in the great cosmic collective. Aquinas makes this clear:

[God] preordained the measurements of the of the universe, and what number would befit the essential parts of that universe—that

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270 Summa Theologiae I.23.iii.


272 Aquinas is careful to draw a distinction between predestination, on the one hand, and reprobation, on the other (Summa Theologiae I.23.iii). Yet, in his system, both the number of the reprobate and of the elect are certain, fixed, and pre-assigned by God from eternity. Strictly speaking, the status of a person as reprobate or elect cannot be changed by his or her choices and actions. Rather, in and through our choices and actions, we merely go on to realize, in the course of time, our eternally fixed status. In the case of the predestined or the elect, this comes by virtue of the aid of grace. In the case of the reprobate, this comes, precisely, in the abandonment of the sinner by God, who withholds from him just that grace without which he will fail in the good. In Jamesian terms, this careful semantic distinction, however well it serves Aquinas' system, represents, in the kerigmatic arena, "a difference that makes no difference."
is to say, which have in some way been ordained in perpetuity; how many spheres, how many stars, how many elements, and how many species. Individuals, however, which undergo corruption, are not ordained, as it were, chiefly for the good of the universe, but in a secondary way, inasmuch as the good of the species is preserved in them. Whence, although God knows the total number of individuals, the number of oxen, flies, and such-like, is not preordained by God per se; but divine providence produces just so many as are sufficient for the preservation of the species. Now of all creatures the rational creature is chiefly ordained for the good of the universe, being as such incorruptible; but more especially those who attain to eternal happiness, since they more immediately reach the ultimate end. Whence the number of the predestined is certain to God; not only by way of knowledge, but also by way of principle preordination.

It is not exactly the same in the case of the number of the reprobate, who would seem to be preordained by God for the good of the elect...  

In his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, however, John Paul II insists that the mystery of election includes “each and every individual,” 274 and again, “every man and woman.” 275 The possibility that some may be reprobate, he nowhere ascribes to some fundamental orientation of God’s providence or his overall cosmic plan, nor does he even regard it as a certainty of revelation that any concrete historical person is definitively damned. 276

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275 *Dives in misericordia* § 4.

276 In his private pastoral work, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, John Paul II holds out the theoretical possibility of hell as an inscrutable mystery, but one necessary for the safeguarding, precisely, of human-personal self-determination. He writes, “Can God, who has loved man so much, permit the man who rejects Him to be condemned to eternal torment? And yet, the words of Matthew’s Gospel are unequivocal. In Matthew’s Gospel He speaks clearly to those who will go to eternal punishment (cf. Mt 25:46). Who will these be? The Church has never made any pronouncement in this regard. This is a mystery, truly inscrutable, which embraces the holiness of God and the conscience of man. The silence of the Church is, therefore, the only appropriate position for Christian faith. Even when Jesus says of Judas, the traitor, ‘It would be better for that man if he had never been born’ (Mt 26:24), His words do not allude for certain to eternal damnation.” His Holiness John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*,
Rather, Wojtyla clearly holds that the human person, who, according to Gaudium et Spes, of which, at the Second Vatican Council, he was among the principle authors along with Henri de Lubac, "is the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake." Only the most prejudiced reading of Gaudium et Spes § 24 would allow for the qualification of this claim through an ad hoc appeal to the reprobate. Indeed, it is precisely on the basis of the personalistic norm that such a move becomes immediately recognizable as an absurdity—for to be a person, for Wojtyla, is to be a for-its-own-sake being. If God makes some for the sake of others, to the exclusion of their own ultimate good, it is clear that he makes some who are not persons. In his pre-papal work, Love and Responsibility, Wojtyla is explicit on this point, directly contradicting Aquinas' thesis, based, as it is, upon a naturalistic, cosmological understanding of the human person. He writes:

... we must never treat a person as a means to an end. This principle has a universal validity. Nobody can use a person as a means towards an end, no human being, nor yet God the Creator. On the part of God, indeed, it is totally out of the question, since, by giving man an intelligent and free nature, he has thereby ordained that each man alone will decide for himself the ends of his activity, and not be a blind tool of someone else's ends.

Thus, while we may well affirm precisely that when it comes to "oxen, flies, and such like," even a cursory "pause before the irreducible" forbids us to say this in the case of a member of our own species. The person before us is more than a man; she is more than a woman; she is a person—a unique, unrepeatable, for her own sake being. She is, therefore, irreducible to some natural or cosmological purpose; for she is a child of God, chosen for love. She is made by God for an interpersonal encounter with God himself. John Paul II will later go on to say, on this score, that, "... the One who has created man with this fundamental desire cannot behave differently from what the revealed text indicates; He


277 Gaudium et spes § 24.

cannot but want ‘everyone to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth’.” 279

Of related concern in this discussion, of course, is the precise manner in which Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II understands the relationship between nature and grace in comparison to the classical Thomism of figures such as Domingo Báñez and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange. The latter see a sharp distinction between the two, positing a realm of “pure nature” in which the created order, the human person included, can be understood in a way that is entirely sufficient without reference to grace. We have examined this issue at length, elsewhere, saying:

[F]or the pure nature theorist, human nature, by itself, is possessed of its own proper end: its own, proper, naturally attainable, finality, sufficient for a complete understanding of what the human being actually is within the created order. This is because the principal of finality presupposes the attainability of the end for which the creature is made. For the pure nature theorist, this means that, at least in some cases, under ideal, but naturally realizable conditions, the creature can do what it is meant to do; for if that were not the case, the substantial constitution of the being would be fundamentally irrational. The being would be made inherently unfulfillable; it would be made for the purpose of achieving the unachievable. Such an arrangement, if it only went as far as that, would make God's action itself irrational. Thus, the argument goes, if God had made man, properly, for a naturally unattainable end—namely, union with himself in eternal friendship—then God could only escape the charge of irrationality by providing the means for the attainment of the end as part of his natural design of the universe. He would be forced, again, as the argument goes, at pain of inconsistency, to provide this means; thus, grace would no longer be gratuitous at all, but necessary, such that the very distinction between nature and grace would collapse along with the sovereignty of God, who could no longer grant or withhold his favor at his own good pleasure. 280

Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange had held, as a classical Thomist committed to the pure-nature thesis, that Aquinas’ theory concerning providence and predestination was understandable precisely in these terms. Reprobation, for Lagrange, is no evil against the human person, since the human person is not, by

279 Crossing the Threshold of Hope, 73.

nature, oriented to salvation. Garrigou is radical on this score. Quoting again from our earlier work, we say:

Precisely because the ordination to eternal beatitude is not seen, on this model, as a natural ordination or, that is to say, an ordination proper to the human person according to nature, only those human beings who receive sanctifying grace are ordered to eternal beatitude. When the logic of this model is taken to its final conclusions, moreover, we are left with the assertion that God might actually grant a person grace, ordering that person, thereby, to eternal beatitude, only to withhold the grace of perseverance in the end.

We had argued that this position undermines the kerygmatic value of the gospel, because it leaves us, in the face of God's self-revelation, with no new insight into where we, at a personal level, stand with him. God's providence is good for some but very bad for others, and we have no sure way of knowing whether we

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281 Article's n. 49 (abridged): It is important, at this point, to draw a distinction between what we might call one's ontological fitness for beatitude, which, of course, can only come through grace, and one's fundamental telos which comes through nature. The falsity of the pure nature thesis would seem to depend upon there being no logical contradiction in the claim that human beings have, by nature, a telos that lies beyond their natural capacities (that is, beyond their natural ontological fitness). Against the pure nature thesis, one might argue that there is no logical contradiction here because the condition upon which such a telos can be predicated does, in fact, exist—namely, creation at the hands of a generous and self-emptying God. Drawing a distinction between one's fundamental telos and one's ontological fitness, we can say that we have a natural ordination to eternal beatitude, but not a natural power for attaining it—we are not, by nature, ontologically fit for the end toward which we are ordered. We are made, in the first place, to be lifted beyond ourselves—to submit to the generosity of the self-emptying God, and to allow ourselves to be carried up to him in spousal union. The pure nature theorist, however, would counter by saying that if we are not naturally fit for the attainment of our end, there can be no movement toward it on the part of the subject. To say that we have a natural ordination to an end is merely to say that this end, whatever it happens to be, is where we will end up in our natural movements, provided all natural causes operate unimpeded. But this line of argument must take account of the so-called "natural religions", which seem ill-at-ease about the natural outcomes of our earthly movements.

belong to the "some" or the "others"—to (on this model) the few who are eternally secure in God's grace or the many who are eternally reprobated as the massa damnata. We continue, in our critique of this position, saying:

The idea that God's providential care for me, personally, could result in my damnation—an outcome that might have been avoided if God had simply refrained from governing my life—may seem cruel; but Lagrange has an answer. As a pure nature theorist, he argues that, even should God grant us grace only to withhold perseverance in our final moment of earthly life, leading inexorably to our eternal damnation, he would do no natural violence to the creature. Since neither grace nor the end toward which it orders us are proper to us by nature, withholding final perseverance leaves the creature naturally intact—possessed of everything he or she needs to be fully human.

As we have seen already, while this position can boast a certain logic from within a purely metaphysical framework—a framework oriented to abstractions over the irreducibility of lived experience—it is not the view reflected in the thinking of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II. In fact, he rather explicitly criticizes the approach to human self-determination underlying this view. It must be remembered that the classical Thomistic thesis rests upon

283 Article's n. 51: All orthodox Catholic theologians affirm a grace of perseverance, in some sense. But on Aquinas' model, perseverance is regarded as a special grace at work upon human agency. It is certainly possible to understand the grace of perseverance in other ways, for example, as the sheer fact that God's absolute fidelity, by which he pledges never to abandon his creature, is no contradiction to his equally absolute freedom, by which this pledge is made entirely at his own prerogative—since the divine freedom is really the central point of this mystery. That being said, Aquinas' view of the matter has its difficulties. If perseverance is a grace at work upon human agency preventing the loss of sanctifying grace—which loss would occur only through the commission of mortal sin—then concrete mortal sin is unavoidable without divine intervention. Aquinas' view, therefore, requires either that we see mortal sin as less than fully voluntary, or else that we affirm the doctrine of total depravity—neither of which does Aquinas intend to suggest, nor Catholic teaching permit. See my criticism of this view in, Judged by the Law of Freedom, 89–100, where alternative perspectives are entertained.

the notion of God as the first efficient cause of every event in history, infallibly yielding its results in every detail, such that every particular event unfolds exactly according to God's eternally preordained historical script. Wojtyla's thesis is quite different here. He explains that, "There are those who, without due attention to the experiential nature of choice and decision, and on the grounds of the dependence on the world of objects alone, assert the existence of moral determinism; thus they reject freedom and indirectly also the person, indeed, the whole reality, that we have here defined as 'the acting person.'" While it is true that, in this passage, Wojtyla remarks about materialistic determinism, he does not limit himself to that thesis, but here addresses any thesis that would, in the end, pre-ordain the human will to an outcome determined first of all by another. Laying out the classical Thomistic thesis of physical pre-motion, he writes:

Besides the materialistic form of determinism there is also the view that associates determinism, which denies the freedom of the person, with what we have here accepted as the foundation of freedom or, to put it more concretely, as the condition of the decision present in every authentic "I will." Thus, there is the line of thought that sees the irrevocable source of determinism in motivation, that is to say, in the presentation of the objects of will. According to this conception the will is restricted not by the object itself but by its presentation; inasmuch as man cannot desire an object without it being presented to him, his so-called choice in fact complies with the presentation; he chooses what is presented to him and how it is presented to him. For instance, if, as often happens, he chooses a lesser and passes by a greater good, this cannot be taken as evidence of free will, that is to say, an independence on objects, because interposed between the object and the will there is the presentation or motivation that definitively determines the direction of willing. Thus, when as in our example, man chooses a "lesser" good, he does so because hic et nunc it is presented to him as the "greater."

Wojtyla's criticism comes, once again, with the exhortation to seek a remedy in a careful application of the phenomenological method. Suggesting that this hidden determinism "reduces the experience of the person to the point where the essentials are

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286 Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 3.6 (133).
omitted or even sacrificed to a schematic pattern on thinking," he argues that:

[t]he dynamic specificity appertaining to decision—whether in simple willing or in the more complex choosing—is essential in the will and is of the kind that makes impossible any determination. All determinism, not only by intentional objects (values) but also by the presentation of objects, is contrary to the original dynamism of decision. This is so because decision involves and reveals that relation to intentional objects as values which is proper solely to the will. The relation is to the object itself while presentation only establishes it and thereby enables and conditions decision. The deterministic thesis, that this relation is wholly constituted by presentation alone, fails to draw the distinction between the actual cause and a condition. 288

Wojtyla clearly holds, here, for a Scotistic rather than Thomistic view of human self-determination, according to which God has created the human person with the power to determine its own acts. As "First Cause," God causes this power, but he does not determine the direction of its operation. Returning, then to problem of providence and predestination, it is clear that Wojtyla cannot accept the classical Thomistic view. We have argued that:

[i]f . . . we take the classically Thomistic line on these themes, we are forced to affirm a radically Predestinarian view of the universe. For the number of the elect, from a Thomistic frame of reference, is a fixed and limited quantity. 289 If we number among them, we will infallibly reach heaven; but if we do not, we are doomed to failure, the price of which, for the vast majority, is hell—and all that to the service of his eternal plan. 290 This view

287 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 3.6 (133).
288 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 3.6 (134).
289 Article's n. 65: Summa Theologiae I.22–24, I-II.
290 Article's n. 66: For Aquinas, the reprobate are used, by God, as an opportunity to manifest the fullness of his glory, by providing someone for him to punish with vengeance. Ratzinger sees this view as fundamentally unchristian—it is a failure to accept fully the precise nature of the chasm between the God of Christianity and any pagan conception of the divine, even that attributable to the great monotheistic philosophers of ancient Greece. Cf. Summa Theologiae I.23.v, Garrigou-Lagarde's treatment of the divine motive for reprobation in his Predestination (106–212), and Ratzinger's explicit condemnation of this view in his essay, "God's Yes and His Love are Maintained Even in Death," in, Joseph Cardinal
has its obvious shortcomings. For example, one finds it difficult, from this perspective, to make sense of the Tradition in which Christ is seen as the very manifestation of God's infinite mercy\(^{291}\) and sinners are exhorted to be responsible to the truth and convert to the Way that is Christ himself.\(^{292}\) Since, according to this view, God's mercy really is limited from within—it does not extend to all, because, from eternity, God has determined to save only a fixed and limited number. From this point of view, the dialogue of prophetic exhortation, evangelization, and repentance seems reduced to little more than a matter of self-serving theatrics; for unless, in the final analysis, I am really enabled by God to alter my destiny, I am only acting out a play scripted for me entirely by the divine hand.\(^{293}\)

We can put the matter in clearer perspective, perhaps, by pointing to the remarks of Joseph Ratzinger, when he was asked an interview with Peter Sewald, "Is everything already written?" Sewald prompted Ratzinger to comment on the suggestion that, "[p]erhaps everything has already been written down, the whole history of the world, the story of my birth and my death."\(^{294}\) Although this question was placed in the context of a meditation on a central tenet of Islam, there is no question that it matches precisely the classical Thomistic thesis. Ratzinger replies:

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\(^{291}\) Article's n. 67: This, it seems, is the fundamental point of John Paul II's encyclical letter, *Dives in misericordia* (November 30, 1980), but it is also the central message of the themes of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Divine Mercy, which the Church has accepted as an authentic penetration into God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ.

\(^{292}\) Article's n. 68: John 14:1–7.

\(^{293}\) Richard H. Bulzacchelli, "*Dives in Misericordia*: The Pivotal Significance of a Forgotten Encyclical," 134. Article's n. 69: Macbeth's mournful anxiety rests precisely upon this sort of sentiment, where he discourses, "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, / Creeps in this petty pace from day to day / To the last syllable of recorded time, / And all our yesterdays have lighted fools / The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! / Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player, / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage, / And then is heard no more: it is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing" (Act 5, Scene 5).

I believe—though I am no specialist in Islam—that in this matter there is an opposition, or at least a clear distinction, between Islam and the Christian faith. Islam seems to proceed from a strict notion of predestination; everything is predestined, and I live in a ready-woven web. As against that, Christianity always reckons with the freedom factor. That is to say, on one hand, God embraces everything. He knows everything. He guides the course of history. Nonetheless, he has so arranged it that freedom has its place. That I can deviate, so to speak, from what he had planned for me.295

Ratzinger does not stop, however, with a critique of the position as a thesis for Islam. He also criticizes precisely the thesis held by classical Thomism. He says:

In Christianity, too, the so-called teaching on predestination was developed. According to this teaching, it is already settled that those for whom it is planned will go to hell, and the others to heaven; it has been decided from all eternity. The faith of the Church has always rejected this. For the idea that as an individual I can do nothing one way or the other—that if I am bound for hell, then I just am, and if I am going to heaven, then that's the way it is—is certainly not consistent with the faith.

God has created true freedom and allows his own plans to be confounded (even if he does so in such a way that he can then make something new out of them).296

Ratzinger, in his remarks, articulates in rather plain language precisely the insight about human freedom embraced by Wojtyla—that freedom, if it is a genuine reality for human persons, and not just an illusion, must really exist in an arena in which at least some of the salient details of the future of my own life are determined not by God’s eternal decree, but by myself, through the exercise of my own will. God does not decide in advance whether I will love or not love, but calls me to love and empowers me to choose for myself whether or not I will accept his invitation. It is for this reason that John Paul II is comfortable describing human freedom as a “mystery,”297 where classical Thomism treats it as a possible

296 Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, God and the World, 58.
297 We invite the reader to consider John Paul II’s assertion that, “The full truth about human freedom is indelibly inscribed on the mystery of the Redemption,” (Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, Redemptor Hominis [4 March 1979], § 21). He explicitly describes freedom as a mystery when
object of a complete epistemic account inasmuch as the human intellect is equal to the human object. Wojtyla/John Paul II, does not see this possibility because, as fundamentally irreducible, the human person is, also, by definition, a mystery.\textsuperscript{298}

John Paul II rejects the thesis of “pure nature,” and opts for a thesis of universal election—that is to say, that God has chosen humanity, not merely in the abstract, as a species, but at the personal level. In his encyclical \textit{Dives in Misericordia}, he declares:

> Connected with the mystery of creation is the mystery of the election, which in a special way shaped the history of the people whose spiritual father is Abraham by virtue of his faith. Nevertheless, through this people which journeys forward through the history both of the Old Covenant and of the New, that mystery of election refers to every man and woman, to the whole great human family.\textsuperscript{299}

He goes on to say that:

> It is precisely beside the path of man's eternal election to the dignity of being an adopted child of God that there stands in history the cross of Christ, the only - begotten Son, who, as "light from light, true God from true God,"\textsuperscript{300} came to give the final witness to the wonderful covenant of God with humanity, of God with man - every human being This covenant, as old as man - it goes back to the very mystery of creation - and afterwards many times renewed with one single chosen people, is equally the new and definitive covenant, which was established there on Calvary, and is not limited to a single people, to Israel, but is open to each and every individual.\textsuperscript{301}
This election involves, for John Paul II, the unyielding promise of mercy and restoration to righteousness and life in God. Again, this promise is no mere abstraction for "humanity" or "elect" understood as a class of the predestined. It is not a matter of any "antecedent" will that we be saved but for the "consequent" necessity that some be damned. For John Paul II, it is a matter of revelation—the very substance of revelation, and, therefore, a fundamental dogma of the faith, that mercy is really extended to every human being, such that life in God always remains a concrete, historically realizable possibility for us as long as we have a future before us. In explicit contradiction to the classical Thomistic thesis in which God wills that some will lack the "actual grace" to do the good required and would fall into sin, but would, then, lack the "actual grace" to repent, Wojtyla writes, "It is in this central revelation that the chosen people, and each of its members [that is to say, as we see from our other quotations, each and every human person], will find, every time that they have sinned, the strength and the motive for turning to the Lord to remind Him of what He had exactly revealed about Himself and to beseech His forgiveness."  

Again, the central issue in all this is that God creates the human person with a genuine power of self-determination. For Wojtyla, we would not be persons without this power, so any qualification of this power is to be rejected. We must insist that the experience of self-possession and self-determination whereby we experience ourselves as responsible for our acts, and for the very fact that we act or not. Whatever the metaphysical problems associated with this stance, Wojtyla is prepared to accept them, because a "pause before the irreducible" makes it an undeniable phenomenological given that God makes us genuinely self-determining beings.

Continuing in this line of argumentation, Wojtyla goes on to credit Immanuel Kant with this basic insight about the constitution of the person as person, but insists that Kant, in his own formulation, did not take his initial insight far enough. Wojtyla writes:

This elementary truth—that a person, unlike all other objects of action, which are not persons may not be an instrument of action, is therefore an inherent component of the natural moral order.

302 Document's n. 46: Cf. Nm. 14:18; 2 Chr. 30:9; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86(85); Wis. 15:1; Sir. 2:11; Jl. 2:13.

Thanks to this, the natural order acquires personalistic attributes: the order of nature, since its framework accommodates personal entities as well as others, must possess such attributes. It may not be irrelevant to mention here that Immanuel Kant, at the end of the eighteenth century, formulated this elementary principle of the moral order in the following imperative: act always in such a way that the other person is the end and not merely the instrument of your action. In the light of the proceeding argument this principle should be restated in a form rather different from that which Kant gave it, as follows: whenever a person is the object of your activity, remember that you may not treat that person as only the means to an end, as an instrument, but must allow for the fact that he or she, too, has, or at least should have, distinct personal ends. This principle, thus formulated, lies at the basis of all human freedoms, properly understood, and especially freedom of conscience.304

Indeed, this issue represents, perhaps, the most profound point of departure in Wojtyla/John Paul II from the thinking of Aquinas, discernable in The Acting Person. For Aquinas, contingency refers, first and foremost, to the fact of ontological dependency upon another.305 As important as Aquinas' treatment of the human act is for Wojtyla, and indeed, for philosophy as a whole, Aquinas cannot, in the end, escape certain mechanistic conclusions on the basis of this limited understanding of what the category of contingency could actually mean. For him, the fact of our contingency ultimately means that the exercise of human willing itself is a secondary agency, completely subordinated in its ends to those of the primary Agent, who is God. The human person wills as he or she does in order to bring about the end that God has eternally foreordained.306 While it may be possible, as we have attempted to show elsewhere, to construct, on the basis of a Thomistic apparatus, a model of human willing that allows for real freedom, Aquinas himself ends in rather predestinarian terms.307 God not only knows who will and will not freely embrace his self-offering of love, but works all things in creation to the exact end he

305 This point becomes abundantly clear in Aquinas' treatment of the question of providence (Summa Theologiae I.22).
306 Summa Theologiae, I.23.
307 See my book, Richard H. Bulzacchelli, Judged by the Law of Freedom, which treats this issue as its central concern.
desires, which can in no way yield a different result than in fact will come about.

Wojtyla does not appear to accept this view. Rather, he sees self-determinability, or autodeterminism as so fundamental to the structure of the person, that any suggestion of an already-determined outcome of our moral becoming would destroy personhood altogether. Again, he says, "Nobody can use a person as a means towards an end, no human being, nor yet God the Creator. On the part of God, indeed, it is totally out of the question..."\(^{308}\) He says, quite explicitly, in fact, that using is a contradiction to loving, and thus constitutes a denial of the personal subject:

Our whole discussion of the first meaning of the word "to use", has so far given us only a negative solution to the problem of the correct attitude to a person; a human being cannot be solely or mainly an object to be used, for this reason, that the role of a blind tool or the means to an end determined by a different subject is contrary to the nature of a person.\(^{309}\)

The practical consequence of this perspective, in the thinking of Wojtyla/John Paul II, will be that God really makes the human being able to determine the outcome of his or her own ontic movement in a way that God, whatever we may say that he "knows," does not himself determine or predestine. That, for Wojtyla, is what we mean by contingency; it is a prerequisite for truly moral action, and it is clearly what our most basic intuition about the human condition suggests to us—the future is not already written, but is being written now, in and through our concrete human acts.\(^{310}\)

This emphasis upon the efficacious act is of particular importance, for it allows Wojtyla to develop a sense of participation that goes beyond the conception of participation as articulated in the Greek and Latin philosophical traditions. Wojtyla's understanding of participation, which rests upon the efficacious act, undertaken in the conscious and voluntary affirmation of a public value as one's own good,\(^{311}\) is better suited,


\(^{310}\) It is in this context, finally, that the Marian question will have to be framed when we come to Chapter 4 of the present study.

as a philosophical category, to aid in the articulation of the content of the Faith than is the classical understanding of participation, which is merely ontological rather than agent. Ideas such as “full and actual participation” of the laity in the liturgy,312 meritorious action in grace, intercessory prayer, the intercession and communion of saints, and the unique intercession of Mary in the order of salvation are all given a rich philosophical language in which to be more clearly expressed. Even the fact that our salvation occurs through the Incarnation event, through the merits of Christ, who acts as a man, depends upon a rich understanding of participation, in which what the human being does yields an effect, not merely instrumentally, but efficiently.

Indeed, for Wojtyla, participation is both communal and individual. It is communal in the sense that it involves a value originating in a sphere outside ourselves. What may not have been a value for us, at first, becomes a value for us on account of the good we see for the community, which we value. It is individual in that we choose this value, not simply in the abstract, but for our own. In genuine participation, I come to will and to work for the realization of this good in concrete actual fact, as a good for me. In the end, the notion of solidarity, so central to his thought and work, is an expression of this very reality. In participation, and in solidarity, the human person transcends himself, both horizontally and vertically, by becoming a person for others—a person whose ultimate value is persons, and thus, a person who participates in God’s own loving creativity.

1.8: Summary Assessment of Wojtyla’s Synthesis of Aquinas and Scheler and their Influence on The Acting Person:

In the next chapter, we will examine Wojtyla’s work in The Acting Person. At this point, then, we should make clear in summary what we have learned in the present chapter that will come to bear upon that work. In the present chapter, we have

already treated Wojtyla’s assimilations of Aquinas and Scheler, as well as his departures from each. Still, it would be helpful to recast our final observations in summary form. These elements will come to bear upon his thought as developed in *The Acting Person*.

From St. Thomas Aquinas, Wojtyla adopts a perfectionistic ethical perspective, according to which the human person is oriented to a specific sort of becoming, such that, coming to be as we ought is coming to be good. This position is not limited to the merely biological sphere, but includes the totality of human personhood, such that the spiritual and moral dimension of human existence itself must reach a perfection. Wojtyla locates this view in St. Thomas, primarily. He sees Scheler, in his focus on a philosophy of consciousness to the seeming exclusion of a philosophy of being, as having failed to provide a sufficiently clear account of the person’s substantiality to ground a perfectionistic ethic. Since Wojtyla sees perfectionism in ethics to belong to the essential character of the Judeo-Christian ethical tradition, Wojtyla find this shortcoming in Scheler, as he reads him, to be a serious one. Aquinas does provide an account of the substantiality of the person, however, because his is a philosophy of being. It is this element that ensures Aquinas a basically realist metaphysic, and a way of addressing the moral sense that, for all our moral options, there is always, somewhere, a true good. Choosing that good requires a will that stands as an actual power of operation for the person, whereby a person, in performing a human act, yields in that act both a “transitive” and “intransitive” effect—an effect for the world outside himself and an effect upon himself as agent and subject of action.

From Scheler, Wojtyla takes the concept of the person precisely as subject, however. While Aquinas is able to ground the subjectivity of the person, Wojtyla does not see him as having developed subjectivity as a serious dimension of his ethical or anthropological account. For Scheler, however, the person is properly understood precisely as a subject—personhood consists in subjectivity, for Scheler. Thus, from Scheler, Wojtyla adopts a view of the person as fundamentally irreducible to any function or to any property. Though oriented to others and related to others, the person is not reducible to the status of a mere part of a greater and more worthy whole. The person as person is not primarily a *something*, but a *someone*. Thus, the proper mode of encounter with a person is always that of reciprocal self-disclosure rather than objective observation, which always remains only on the outside looking in, and can never penetrate to the level of
subjectivity. This means that, for Wojtyla, love will have epistemic import. Although Wojtyla does not appear to go as far as Scheler does on this point, he sees love as opening a window into the subjectivity of the other, and thus, as paving the way for knowledge of the person. All of this is related, of course, to Wojtyla's reception, from Scheler, of the phenomenological method, which he sees as an indispensible preambles to a responsible metaphysic in the contemporary context. Wojtyla insists that the phenomenological "given" is the real starting point of our certainty about the world, and that what is "given" in "lived-experience" is the real measure against which metaphysical assertions are ultimately to be judged. Finally, Wojtyla takes from Scheler his notion of "participation", which, he will develop at some length in The Acting Person.

Having summarized, briefly, what Wojtyla has received from Aquinas and Scheler, respectively, it becomes rather easy to see, again, in summary here, what Wojtyla has left behind in both thinkers. He has abandoned Aquinas' cosmological and naturalistic understanding of the human person, who appears in Aquinas' system as a thing, like any other thing in the cosmos, and, thus, reducible to a function and to the status of a part to be valued only insofar as it serves the perfection of the whole. Along with this view of the human person in Aquinas' thought, Wojtyla also places an emphasis upon personal self-determination that appears to transcend the position Aquinas himself was able to accept, and, thus, to transcend the limits set by Aquinas position on predestination and reprobation, whereby the human person, once again, the human person exists for the sake of an end that may or may not correspond to his own personal fulfillment, and cannot, therefore, be understood as a for-its-own sake being. Finally, Wojtyla departs from classical Thomism on the question of the so-called "pure nature", seeing the irreducible human person as called into grace by God in the fact of his being created by God precisely as a person—as a someone rather than a something.

Still, Wojtyla will depart from Scheler where Scheler appears as a sentimentalist, insisting, instead, that the human person is able to elicit an act, not only in response to values, but for or against them—that we can choose the values by which we will be moved to act. In the course of time, ratifying the same values again and again means forming virtues and vices, changing the interior moral structure of the person. This view is directly related to the perfectionistic view of ethics that he carries over from St. Thomas. Finally, Wojtyla departs from Scheler on the question of the place
of "duty" in morality. He agrees with Scheler that Kant is wrong to reduce morality to the execution of duty, but he sees Scheler as having turned to sharply in the opposite direction. Again, from St. Thomas, Wojtyla sees the concept of morality as presupposing a "truth about the good," which, of its very nature implies a moral "ought"—indeed a "must". This moral "must" is synonymous with "duty", and, without it, morality itself becomes an empty label for, once again, "sentiment".
In the previous chapter, we considered the intellectual background out of which Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II came to develop his own synthesis, in which he attempted to address the real insights of contemporary philosophy while avoiding the errors to which contemporary philosophers are especially prone. This project involved, for Wojtyla, both correcting for deficiencies in the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic approach which has played so profound a role in the development of Catholic thought, especially since the late nineteenth century, while, at the same time, embracing whatever in this approach is genuinely correct, and which, for that reason, no acceptance of contemporary insight can authorize us to abandon.

In the present chapter, we will continue this discussion in the more particular context of Wojtyla’s attempted synthesis on the most pivotal issue of his concern, which he puts forth in series of lectures published collectively under the title, *The Acting Person.* Accordingly, we will first attempt to contextualize the work with an explicit discussion of its general approach and its central themes. From this point, it will be possible for us to explore in some greater detail, the most important conceptual insights of Wojtyla’s work in *The Acting Person.* Insofar as it will be possible, we will refrain from entering into direct application of these insights in his magisterial writings, but we will, or course, have recourse to whatever in his subsequent work can provide any insight into a proper interpretation of *The Acting Person.* He

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revisited these themes frequently in his academic work, frequently offering much clearer articulations of his main points than those we encounter in the original publication.

2.1: *The Structure of The Acting Person and Its Central Themes:*

Karol Wojtyla's *The Acting Person* divided into four parts: 1) Consciousness and Efficacy, 2) The Transcendence of the person in the action, 3) The Integration of the person in the action, and 4) Participation. These divisions reflect Wojtyla's purpose, in this study, to forge a philosophical synthesis capable of doing some justice to the reality of the human person, for the sake of meeting our perennial need to understand ourselves, not only as objects, but as subjects. The key, for Wojtyla, is to bring together both the "objectivistic" understanding of the human being, wherein the human being is understood in relation to a world of objects of which he or she is a part, and the "subjectivistic" understanding of the human being, wherein the human being is understood with reference to his interior experience of himself. Only on the basis of this synthesis is the person as *person* fully discernable as a subject of philosophical analysis.

That said, in the preface to *The Acting Person*, Karol Wojtyla credits Max Scheler with his "overall conception of the person." Yet as Wojtyla unpacks what it means for a *person* (understood in this Schelerian sense) to *act*, he must turn to the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. As our survey from the previous chapter

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makes clear, the result is, for Wojtyla, a more perfect Thomism than that offered by Aquinas himself, who, at times, falls prey, in the absence of the phenomenological method, to a causal reductionism, which destroys the very human act he so carefully sought to elucidate. But the result is also, for Wojtyla, a more perfect Schelerianism than that offered by Scheler himself, as, according to Wojtyla, Scheler falls prey, in the absence of a sound metaphysical foundation, to a different sort of causal reductionism in the form of a sentimentalism that also destroys the human act, and with it, the precise phenomenological moment at which we discover the person Scheler sought so carefully to describe. It would be wrong to suggest that The Acting Person is offered as a polemic against either of the two figures who had, most of all, influenced Wojtyla. Rather, his purpose is to take from each author what positive contributions they have to make to the project of understanding the human person, and to bring those contributions to bear upon the contemporary moment of philosophico-anthropological discussion. While it is clear, as we saw already in the previous chapter, that Wojtyla takes issue, in The Acting Person, with theses distinctly associated with the classical Thomism espoused by Domingo Báñez and his own dissertation director from the Angelicum, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, he does not set out to confront them, directly and systematically, in this text.

Wojtyla's own synthesis, then, is focused upon the dignity of the person as a free and self-determining agent of responsibility, who, as such, is, in this essential respect, unique, unrepeatable, and possessed of an incommensurable value. Wojtyla's adoption and refinement of the phenomenological method he discovered in Scheler, serves him in the discovery of the irreducibility of the human person, and of human experience, enabling him to "pause before the irreducible," and to "allow the irreducible to have the upper hand over metaphysics," correcting our tendency to place abstraction over lived experience to the detriment of what is simply "given" in the world. For Wojtyla, an understanding of the person

316 Our concern, here, is not whether Wojtyla has read Scheler correctly on this point, but only the fact that this is how Wojtyla has read him. Any discussion of this question is beyond the scope of the present study.


as a true agent, capable of efficacious acts, and capable of what Wojtyla calls, autodeterminism is given in our root experience. He says, "The element of the will comes to the fore in the so-called actual moment (das aktuelle Moment) of lived experience, which usually takes the form 'I do in fact will,' although it can also assume a somewhat different form, e.g., 'I can,' 'I must,' 'I ought.' The term moment here is used in the sense given it by Husserl and means a 'non-independent part of a certain whole.'"

If this datum is given in root experience, however, it cannot simply be qualified away, but must, itself, form the foundational truth around which any further theories of human activity must be constructed. For Wojtyla, the threat of reductionistic thinking is always present to philosophy, and must be avoided, especially in the case of the irreducible person. When it comes to the question of that element of agency whereby the person becomes aware of his or her own personal structure, of course, the problem of reductionistic thinking manifests itself in the tendency to explain away the experience of autodeterminism or self-determination in favor of some sort of reductive causal account in which the paradox of freedom is not so much explained as explained-away. On this score, a brief passage in The Acting Person illustrates Wojtyla's assessment of this problem as a recurrent theme in contemporary thinking, though he certainly does not restrict the problem only to the contemporary mind. He says:

As we know, Hume had already challenged the causal-efficient character of the will in psychology prior to Kant. In late 19th- and early 20th-century psychology there were those who regarded the will as a separate element of psychic life. Others attempted to reduce the will to associations of images (Spencer), to sensations of muscular tension (Münsterberger), to emotionally laden representations of goals (Ebbinghaus), and finally to feelings themselves (Wundt). All of these resolutions of the problem of the will have the character of allogeneic conceptions. Against this background, the earlier mentioned position of Narziss Ach and the whole school of psychologists of the will that adopted his experimental method of investigating the will is distinguished by

320 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 1.1 (5–6).
321 Wojtyla's n. 6: Johannes Lindworsky, Der Wille: Seine Erscheinung und seine Beherrschung (Leipzig: Barth, 1923) 1–4.
its insistence on the strictly idiogeneic character of both the lived experience of the will and the process of the will in general. For these psychologists, the will is an entirely distinct element in human psychic life and cannot be reduced to any other element of that life.322

Wojtyla understands that there exists a close connection between the experience of agency and the experience of morality. The experience of agency, in other words, is really the experience of moral agency, because it is the experience of our being responsible for what we do, and, therefore, of our being the subject of praise or blame—of moral goodness or badness.323 But the experience of morality is also bound up with an intuition of our responsibility toward others—that is to say, our awareness that what we do or do not do has implications both in the interior and exterior dimension of our lives—both within us and beyond us, or, as Wojtyla will say, in the intransitive and transitive dimensions.

Embedded in Wojtyla’s concern, here, is the idea of transcendence, which he sees as “a property of the person.”324 Wojtyla uses the term “transcendence” in different respects, of course, but his study in The Acting Person focuses specifically upon two dimensions of this term, one of which is distinct to the person in the person’s highest degree of self-actualization. Starting with what he calls “horizontal transcendence,” Wojtyla explains that the human person is able to reach beyond his own subjectivity to an engagement with the realm of objects. He seems to suggest that, in the human act, human beings perceive the intentional object in a way that beasts do not—that is to say, as realities in their own right, rather than merely as “being for me.” He says that this, “meaning of ‘transcendence’ is primarily connected with epistemology, or more broadly speaking, with the so-called philosophy of consciousness. In this sense ‘transcendence’ means reaching out and beyond the subject, which is characteristic of certain human acts, or the directing of these acts out of the cognizing subject beyond the objectifiable realm.”325

322 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 1.1 (5).
323 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 1.2 (9).
324 Wojtyla asserts, in fact, much more emphatically that, “transcendence is as if another name for the person.” (Wojtyla, “The Person: Subject and Community”, 233. Cf., also, 230).
325 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 4.7 (179).
Beyond mere "horizontal transcendence", however, Wojtyla is concerned with what he calls "vertical transcendence". By the term, "vertical transcendence," Wojtyla means to indicate the spiritual dimension of the human person as person. He means, in other words, that the human person has the ability to perceive a reality higher than himself, and against which his or her values, choices, and actions can be measured. The acknowledgment of this criterion, which we call, "truth", invites us to make a response. This invitation is addressed to the human individual as a self-possessed and self-governing entity, and constitutes the very fact of his or her being a "someone," and not merely a "something." Truth calls the organism human being into personhood, because it calls each one of us as if by name.

Our personhood consists, in other words, in the dynamic structure of our ontological relatedness, as human beings, to "truth." This structure is characterized not merely in our ability to recognize the facts about the world of objects (as in horizontal transcendence), but in the fact that, from within that recognition emerges a concrete and radically particular, "incommunicable" (or, we may say, "non-transferrable") invitation to response. As a self-possessed, self-determining agent, the question about the "truth" is put to me, personally, such that, as I approach maturity, only I can give my assent on my own behalf. The presence of this invitation, as it stands constantly before us, creates the fact of "vertical transcendence". No matter our response, even if it is a Scotistic "non velle nec nolle", the human person perceives the truth and assumes a posture in its regard. Thus, for Wojtyla, this "vertical transcendence"—this spiritual dimension of the human being—constitutes the very essence of our personhood. Wojtyla writes:

This shape, the shape of transcendence, is in concrete that of human existence: it is the shape of human life itself. Man as the person both lives and fulfills himself within the perspective of his transcendence. Is it not freedom, obligation, and responsibility which allows [sic] us to see that not only truthfulness but also the person's surrender to truth in judging as well as in acting constitute the real and concrete fabric of the personal life of man? Indeed, it is on them that, as we have more than once endeavored to bring to light in our analysis, the entire phenomenological structure of self-governance and self-possession is based.\footnote{Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 4.7 (181).}
For Wojtyla, then, the person finds integration in the performance of his own fully human acts—acts, again, in which he experiences himself both as subject and agent of responsibility. But what, for Wojtyla, is the real structure of this integration? Among his central concerns in *The Acting Person*, is articulating a normative ethics that transcends the limits of a merely nature-based natural law theory that moralizes upon the following of our natural inclinations, simply inasmuch as they are natural. Wojtyla, of course, does not reject natural law theory, as such. Rather, he wants to provide a firmer and more precisely-articulated foundation for it. He sees the human act, understood as a manifestation of our vertical transcendence, as the key to providing this foundation. It is not merely the fact that the human being as a material organism is inclined to such-and-such a behavior that makes that behavior morally good, and "worthy of the person." Nor is it merely the human person's recognition, at a conscious level that he or she possesses such an inclination as a fact about human nature. Instead, the really significant moral event occurs when the human person recognizes the truth about the relationship between the object of desire and the goodness or badness of that object for him or her as a human being, and then assumes a posture in its regard, through eliciting an intentional act. In this moment, the human organism is "integrated" in both the spiritual and material dimensions of his or her being, or, if the act is "opposed to nature" and, therefore, evil, the human person "dis-integrates" the spiritual and material dimensions of his or her being. Wojtyla writes:

The crucial fact in the total experience of man is that it is in action that the whole psychosomatic complexity develops into the specific person-action unity. This unity has precedence relatively to both that complexity and the psycho-physical unity, if the psychosomatic unity is understood as a kind of sum total of the somatic and the psychical as well as of their appropriate natural dynamisms. Action comprises the multiplicity and diversity of the dynamisms that belong to the soma and to the psyche. In relation to them, action constitutes that superior dynamic unity. This is, in fact, what the integration of the person in the action—as the complementary aspect of transcendence—consists in; for the human action is more than a sum of those other dynamisms; it is a *new and superior type of dynamism*, from which the others receive a new meaning and a new quality that is properly *personal*. They do not possess this meaning and this quality on their own account.
and, insofar as they are but the natural dynamisms of the psyche and the soma, they attain these only in the action of the person.\textsuperscript{327}

The point Wojtyla is making here is a subtle one, but it makes an important difference in the way we think about the natural law’s moral force and significance. It is one thing simply to acknowledge that human beings are inclined to this or that sort of activity. But it is given in our experience that moral goodness or badness stems from something more than one’s mere following of natural inclinations. It has to do with the choice to affirm the truth about the good in action—to choose in a way that manifests in our concrete acts our personal response in love to truth as a personal being. If we recall from our discussion concerning transcendence that truth calls the person as if by name, truth reveals itself in relationship to a person—i.e. God—who summons us beyond ourselves in love. Thus, the human act is an act characterized not merely by knowledge but also by love; it represents for us our lived-values, and reveals our inner moral character. The human act, therefore, always answers the question of my response to the other—of my relatedness to others or my enclosure within the Self.

This insight brings to the fore the concept of participation as Wojtyla goes on to develop it. By “participation”, Wojtyla means the joining of one’s own agency, and one’s own intention, with the agency of others in such a way as to intend what is good for the community, because it is good for the community, as one’s own personal good. He holds that this mode of acting “corresponds to the person’s transcendence and integration in the action because... it allows man, when he acts together with other men, to realize thereby and at once the authentically personalistic value—the performance of the action and the fulfillment of himself in the action.”\textsuperscript{328} Participation, then, “corresponds to the person’s transcendence and integration in the action...”\textsuperscript{329} Although Wojtyla does not see his contribution on this point to be complete, the concept of participation is, nonetheless, the culminating insight of his work in The Acting Person, comporting the full import of the philosophical mandate to rethink what it means to speak of the acting person. He writes:

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[327] Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, 3.3 (197).
\item[328] Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, 7.3 (270).
\item[329] Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, 7.3 (270).
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The present author is well aware that this attempt is incomplete, that it remains but a "sketch" and not a well developed conception. Nevertheless, he thought it necessary to incorporate such a "sketch," if only to draw attention to the need of including the experience of man who acts together with others in the general conception of the acting person. This attempt, however, shows in turn that the whole conception of the acting person awaits rethinking along new lines. Whether such an inquiry would still deal solely with person and action or would shift to the community, intersubjectivity, or to personal interrelations, is which the acting person would reveal himself and confirm or correct our already obtained insights in some other new dimension, is another matter.330

It is easy to see, then, on the basis of Wojtyla's own postscript in the last paragraphs of his study, that the concept of participation as he develops it in The Acting Person, will factor prominently in our treatment of the Mariological question in the final chapter of the present study. Indeed, it is obvious that he has left the door open, consciously, to just such a development.

We have not, however, arrived at that discussion yet, but must remain, for the time being, with Wojtyla's initial philosophical contribution in The Acting Person. With the concept of participation as he develops it here, Wojtyla is able to develop the social dimension of the human person, not merely as a fact that we have in common with dogs and many other animals, but also as a moral arena for human agency and self-determination. Wojtyla is rather insistent upon this point, for he distinguishes the concept of "participation" as he develops it in his own work from the concept of "participation" as it had been used in traditional philosophy, including the Church's own scholastic tradition, which would include the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. For these thinkers, "participation" meant existing or acting through the existence or action of another. It meant, in other words, coming to share in the power of something greater—some "superior cause". Creatures, as creatures, "participate" in the existence of God, who exists in himself and of himself, and from whom our own existence is derivative. Creatures exercise agency also by "participation," insofar as our power of action is a power belonging to us precisely as "participated" beings. Wojtyla does not deny that this is so, but it is not what he means by "participation". He writes:

Our task is thus to reach to the foundations inherent in the person. (This will be perhaps the main difference between the notion of participation as conceived of here and the traditional philosophical meaning of the term, which seems to have been more connected with nature.) As conceived of here, participation corresponds to what the person’s transcendence in the action consists of when the action is being performed “together with others,” when it is performed in different social or interhuman relations. . . . The trait of participation thus indicates that man, when he acts together with other men, retains in this acting the personalistic value of his own action and at the same time shares in the realization and the results of communal acting. Reversing this sequence we may say that owing to this share man, when he acts together with others, retains everything that results from the communal acting and simultaneously realizes—in this very manner—the personalistic value of his own action.331

What is at stake for Wojtyla in the concept of participation, is that the human person remains a person in the fullest possible sense of the term, no matter the context within which he or she is considered. The centrality of self-determination and vertical transcendence pertains to the human person both at the level of individuals and at the level of community. Incorporation into the whole not only preserves, but requires personal self-determination and vertical transcendence. Thus, when Wojtyla speaks of “participation” in *The Acting Person*, he means to indicate that moment in which the person integrates himself in his act in the social dimension of his or her being. He writes:

Nobody seems to doubt either that the nature of man is “rational” or that he also has a “social nature.” We have to ask, however, what does this mean? Our questions thus refer to the meaning of these assertions from the point of view of acting, that is, of the dynamic correlation of the action with the person.

Our aim is to explicate more fully the social nature of man for the sake of gaining more insights into the human person. With this in mind we must return to the starting point. At the origin of the assertion concerning the social nature of man there can be nothing more fundamental than the experience that man exists, lives, and acts together with other men—an experience that we also have to account for in this study. The expression “social nature” seems to signify primarily that reality of existing and acting “together with others” which is attributed to every human being in, as it were, a

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consequential way; obviously this attribute is the consequence of human reality itself and not inversely.\textsuperscript{332}

The themes we have addressed in summary in this section of the present chapter of this study are the central themes Wojtyla sought to address in his work, \textit{The Acting Person}. These themes, likewise, will be pivotal for our further understanding of the mariological dimension of Wojtyla's thought, which we will address in Chapter 4 of the present study. There, we will see that Wojtyla's conception of the acting person figures as the essential element in his understanding and explication of what it is about the figure of Mary that makes her so profoundly relevant, dogmatically, not merely as a fact or datum, but as a person in the order of salvation.

\textbf{2.2: The Aristotelian-Thomistic Metaphysical Presuppositions of The Acting Person:}

In our earlier work, \textit{Judged by the Law of Freedom}\textsuperscript{333}, we examined, at length, the degree to which Aquinas provides a firm metaphysical foundation for further discourse on the question of human agency, even given radical dependency upon God as First Cause. Wojtyla does not contradict our assertion that Aquinas provides an apparatus that makes a fruitful articulation of this paradox possible. Indeed, it is precisely in the thought of St. Thomas that Wojtyla locates, in his own philosophical anthropology, the fundamental distinction between \textit{activity}, on the one hand, and \textit{action} on the other.\textsuperscript{334} Wojtyla asks, however, whether, "the term 'act' adequately denotes the dynamic content of both structures: 'man-acts' and 'something-happens-in-man.'"\textsuperscript{335}

\textsuperscript{332} Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, 7.3 (268).


\textsuperscript{334} E.g., Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}. 1.1. The whole section deals with this issue.

\textsuperscript{335} Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, 2.1 (65).
Precision and distinction are necessary here, because, as he points out:

The question remains whether it [i.e., the term “act”] is equally adequate to show the specific nature of action. To put the problem precisely we have to ask whether the word “act,” while designating the dynamism of all being, as well as every human dynamism—activeness as well as passiveness—has also the capability of revealing the whole specific nature of action. 336

Wojtyla is very clear on this point in *The Acting Person*. The only really philosophically precise meaning of the word “action” is *human self-determination* or that efficacy whereby the person enters directly as a *subject* in the dynamism of his own becoming. He writes:

Being the agent, man is definitely the subject in his acting. When something happens, it is not man but the “something” that stands out as the agent while man remains as the passive subject. He experiences passively his own dynamism. What takes place in him cannot be, on the evidence of experience, defined as acting, even though it is still some sort of actualization of his own potentiality. The term “act” is not as strictly exfoliated phenomenologically as is *acting* or even *action*. Its reference [i.e., that of *acting* or *action*] is not to any actualization, to any dynamization of the subject that is man, but only to that actualization or dynamism in which man is active as the ego: the man who is the ego has the experience of himself, as the agent. According to the evidence of the integral experience it is then, and only then, that man performs an action. 337

The distinction here, between *activity* and *action* or between “man-acts” and “something-happens-in-man”, provides, already, a rich linguistic device for describing the phenomenological givens of the human experience as both an *effective* and *affective* being. Wojtyla


337 Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 2.2 (68–69). My [insertion]. The grammar in the text exhibits a faulty pronoun reference in which “it” appears to reference the term “act.” At the conclusion of the passage, however, it is clear that the intended referent is “action”, which Wojtyla intends, here, to distinguish from mere “act”. A mere “act” could be a passive actualization of the person of a sort possible for any composite substance. While the term “action” refers to that sort of actualization that emerges from within the subject as an agent, exercising efficient causation of his or her own becoming.
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relies, here, upon the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, and its basic insight into the ontic dynamism in so-called "composite substances," between "potency" or "potential" and "actuality" or "actualiter".

For Aquinas, actualiter refers to the realization of a certain degree of being—the actualization of some potentiality for being. When this realization occurs within the context of a substantial movement—i.e. the movement-toward becoming some specific kind of thing (in Aristotelian terms, κίνησις [kineisis]), actualization understood as a condition (rather than as a process) refers to the ultimate fulfillment, by the thing, of some final cause. Aristotle refers to this condition by the term, ἐντελεχεία (entelecheia). Considered as a process, however, actualization or τελευταίον (teleutaion) is the kinetic movement whereby the final cause is successfully realized in the formal cause—the what-it-is and the what-it-is-intended-for (τέλος = telos) of the thing come together in a single, integral act-of-being. What might be, in other words, is brought into being actually; it is made real. The distinctions we draw here are critical because, as we will discuss in greater detail as we go on, not every movement-toward of an organism is successful. This will be true at the natural level, wherein not every acorn becomes an oak, and also at the personal level, inasmuch as not all our intentions are properly oriented to a fulfilling object. For human beings, who are psychosas, our personal movement-toward is bound-up with our natural movement-toward. Thus, even while our somatic unity may subsist in our kinetic movement, our willing faculty makes it possible for us to influence the process of that very unfolding in ways that will either facilitate or impede our coming-to-be-what-we-ought.

Wojtyla writes:

This form of the human becoming thus presupposes the efficacy or causation proper to man. It is morality that is the fruit, the homogenetic effect of the causation of the personal ego, but morality conceived not in the abstract but as a strictly existential reality pertaining to the person who is its own proper subject. It is man's actions, the way he consciously acts, that make of him a good or bad man—good or bad in the moral sense. To be "morally good" means to be good as a man. To be "morally bad" means to be bad as a man. Whether a man, because of his actions, becomes morally better or worse depends on the nature and modalities of actions. The qualitative moments and virtualities of actions, inasmuch as they refer to the moral norm and ultimately to the
dictates of the conscience, are imprinted upon man by his performing the action. 338

Wojtyla goes on to explain, concisely, that, “By being interwoven with efficacy, freedom and efficacy together determine not only acting or action itself, which are performed by the personal ego, but their moral goodness or badness, that is to say, the becoming of man morally good or bad as man.” 339

That being said, we must note that all degrees of ontic reality admit of some degree of actuality, for the plain reason that the total negation of actuality means the total lack of being. If, in other words, we speak of a thing that lacks activity in toto, we really speak of nothing at all. In the end, however, if we are to speak meaningfully of a free will, we must speak of an entity in which the process of unfolding-being is, to some degree or another, under the being’s own power, such that we must distinguish between the activity of the being’s unfolding, and the act whereby the entity knowingly and intentionally influences its own further unfolding.

Thus, we contrast activity (actuality or actualiter) with action, or agere. The term agere, we must note, refers properly to the exercise of agency. For Aquinas, the term agere is an important one; for it signifies the power of operation belonging to a thing by virtue of its essential character. A piece of iron, for example, can transfer heat as an instrumental cause, but it cannot become a true agent of heat, producing heat from within itself. Fire, however, or we might say, burning-ember, does, in fact, possess the power to produce heat. 340 Indeed, it produces heat from within itself by its

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339 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 2.8 (99).

340 Today we would speak of “chemical reactions” to describe, in scientifically precise but metaphysically superficial terminology, what, in hylomorphic terms would have been described by the phrase substantial change. The iron rod, for example, does not change its basic, chemical makeup through the heating process, while the burning ember is itself a chemical reaction between wood or coal and oxygen under the catalyst of heat. It is a process, at the end of which there will be no wood or coal at all: only ash, water vapor, and other off-gasses. It is a process of becoming; though one might object that it is not properly kinetic, and therefore, not really a substantial reality, because it is not really unfolding what it is, but becoming something else altogether. It is not, properly speaking, kinetic but more generally (and quite literally) genetic, i.e., a coming-to-be, but not of one specific thing.
very nature. An iron rod can realize its potentiality with respect to hotness by encountering burning-ember. It can even realize a degree of actuality, in this respect, sufficient to transfer burning-ember's heat, instrumentally, to other objects that may, through that remote encounter, ignite, and thereby change, in a sense substantially, into things that, themselves, possess the essential power to produce heat. Regardless of this fact, the power to produce heat from within itself does not belong to the iron rod. The iron rod does not, in this respect, exercise true agency; it exercises only instrumentality. It is purely passive, even in the ignition of other objects. If we attribute agency to the iron rod at all, it is only in a secondary, non-participatory (or at best quasi-participatory), analogous sense; for we say, more precisely, that burning-ember exercises agency, remotely, through the instrumentality of the iron, made actually hot, but not an agent of heat, by burning ember. Aquinas writes:

... [T]he secondary instrumental cause does not participate in the action of the superior cause, except inasmuch as by something proper to itself it acts dispositively to the effect of the principal agent. If, therefore, it effects nothing, according to what is proper to itself, it is used to no purpose; nor would there be any need for certain instruments for certain actions. Thus we see that a saw, in cutting wood, which it does by the property of its own form, produces the form of a bench, which is the proper effect of the principal agent. \textsuperscript{341}

The iron rod possesses the capacity to retain and transfer heat—characteristics known to modern chemists as heat capacity and conductivity. The iron rod, however, does not actually produce this heat. Rather, the power of production belongs solely, in this example, to the burning-ember, which produces heat as a byproduct of the exothermic reaction that constitutes its very essence.

This issue is important, for it points to the primacy of being in Aquinas' metaphysical system. A thing is inasmuch as it is in act (in agitur sequitur esse); and, by conversion, a thing is in act inasmuch as it is. As Aquinas makes clear, however, throughout his arguments in favor of the existence of God, ultimate actuality subsists in the exercise of agency. The reason for this is clear. Simple actuality, without agency, is the condition of having-been-realized. It is, as far as that goes, a passive reality—the recipient of

\textsuperscript{341} Summa Theologiae I.45.v. My emphasis.
being as it originates in some external source. Since, logically, this chain of dependency cannot continue \textit{ad infinitum}, we must suppose some \textit{actual-being} that does not receive its actuality from anything else, but is \textit{self-actual}, and \textit{productive of actuality} in others—i.e., possesses, in its very essence, the power of \textit{agency}. If this is the case, however, the fourth argument, in which Aquinas speaks of the \textit{gradation of being}, would seem to suggest a rather interesting ontological taxonomy. As we look higher up this gradation of being, we find an increase in the power to exercise agency, and a corresponding or correlative decrease in the degree of a being’s passive instrumentality.\footnote{We discuss this thesis in some detail in our book, \textit{Judged by the Law of Freedom}.} At some point—though he is not, in our estimation, entirely consistent here—Aquinas seems to recognize, that a qualitative threshold is crossed, beyond which we must speak of a thing possessed of the power to exercise agency, as we have said, even with respect to its own inner character: a thing that can cooperate in the process of its own \textit{movement-toward} its final cause in such a way that the whole dynamism of causality is integrated within the moving subject/agent. The attainment of the thing’s final cause—i.e., the actualization of its \textit{potentiality-for this specific activity}—is contingent, not simply upon the integrity of its \textit{material cause}, but also upon an \textit{efficient cause} elicited through an interior power founded in the being’s \textit{formal cause}—that is, belonging to it by virtue of what it is. That threshold, contends Aquinas, is crossed by the human being.

This is the foundation upon which Wojtyla’s particular version of personalism rests; for this is the moment at which we speak, not simply of a \textit{substance}, but of a \textit{person}. There are, at the merely organismic level, Wojtyla explains, two kinds of becoming, “one connected with the vegetative potentiality and dynamism of the organism, and the other with the psychoemotive potentiality and its corresponding dynamism—[both of which] depend on a certain passiveness in man.”\footnote{Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, 2.8 (98). My [insertion].} He goes on to explain that this, “is the kind of passiveness pertaining only to that which happens in man and to that which we see in the causation of nature itself and not to that conscious efficacy which involves the causation of the person.”\footnote{Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, 2.8 (98).} By this dimension of human acting, Wojtyla means the specifically
moral sphere. Here, the human person, as person, becomes, through his own agency, a good or bad person. He writes:

The becoming of man in his moral aspect that is strictly connected with the person is the decisive factor in determining the concrete realistic character of goodness and badness, of the moral values themselves as concretized in human acting. Without in any way constituting the content of consciousness itself they belong integrally to the personal, human becoming. Man not only concretizes them in action and experiences them but because of them he himself, as a being, actually becomes good or bad. Moral conduct partakes of the reality of human actions as expressing a specific type and line of becoming of the man-subject, the type of becoming that is most intrinsically related to his nature, that is, his humanness, and to the fact of his being a person.345

Wojtyla concerns himself, however, not principally with the metaphysical analysis of the person—however much he insists upon the necessity of such an endeavor346—but, as we have said, with the phenomenological analysis of the experience of the activity of being-human. This activity of the person must be analyzed—that is to say, can only be analyzed—if we begin with the following given: that fundamental to the activity of the person is the fact that this person acts with the power of real, self-determining agency.347 That is to say, the interwovenness of freedom and efficacy is the central distinguishing element in the action of the person.

Here, although he does not address the issue himself, and considers his position be based, primarily, upon a Thomistic foundation, Wojtyla understands freedom to be essentially linked to autodeterminism in a way that seems more consistent with Scotus than with St. Thomas. We have already considered this question in a different context, in Chapter 2 of the present study, but it bears some attention here, as well. Wojtyla writes:

345 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 2.8 (99).


347 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 2.8 (100).
This freedom is best visualized by the human being in the experience aptly epitomized in the phrase, "I may but I need not." It is not so much a matter of the content of consciousness alone as of a manifestation and actualization of the dynamism proper to man. This dynamism is in the line of acting, and it is along this line that it becomes part of the efficacy of the personal ego but remains distinct from all that only happens in man. The manifestation and actualization of the dynamism proper to man must have its correlate in the potentiality of the man-subject. We call the correlate the will. Between the "I man" on the one hand and, on the other the "I need not," the human "I want" is formed, and it constitutes the dynamism proper to the will. The will is what in man allows him to want.

Wojtyla is clear, on this point, that this wanting in the human person is met with a response on our own part for which we, ourselves, are the efficient cause. "I will but I need not," or "I need not will, what I want, and, in fact, do not will it, even though I want it," means that the human person is not metaphysically compelled by the fact goodness or badness presented to him in the object before us. We can, as Scotus says, look upon the object as good, and still not will it. We can want the object without willing it; and this is a fact borne out in our lived experience. Wojtyla is quite explicit. He writes:

The expression "free" will does not mean some kind of independence of will from the person. If we agree that the freedom of will manifests itself in experiencing that "I may but I need not," then it expresses the person who may but need not use his freedom as a power. This is precisely the reason why the first stage in the crystallization of the free will within the personal functioning is the primary and elementary fact that flows from the person, or from the person's power of self-determination. Thereby the elementary manifestation of free will simultaneously brings to light the person's exclusive power to control the will. Independence appears there as reliance of man upon external conditions constituted and formed through his immanent structure of self-reliance and the indeterministic feature of will through man's intrinsic structure of his autodeterminism. It is because of the person's exclusive power over the will that will is the person's power to be free.

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348 Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 2.8 (100).

If we speak meaningfully of the human person at all, therefore, (in contrast to considering the human being under some genuinely specific, but non-essential aspect, such as, the human genome), we speak of the acting person, insofar as the full actualization of the human person is realized only when that human person functions according to his or her highest power, which, again, is the power to exercise real, self-determining agency. Aquinas treats the issue of agency and its effect upon the inner person in his Summa Theologiae when he considers the nature of the human act [actus humanus] and the voluntary act [actus voluntarius]. As we

350 The distinction at hand, which we articulate, here, in our own words, is that between what is unique to the human species, but does not cut to the very heart of what-it-means-to-be-human on the one hand, and on the other, what captures the inner character that constitutes the human person precisely as human. In the example we supply above, the human genome belongs uniquely to human beings; whatever similarities it bears to the genome of chimpanzees, for instance, it nonetheless diverges from the chimpanzee genome in ways that scientists can indicate with precision as characteristic of all human beings, and only human beings. Still, the genome, as such, is not our humanness, but a specific accident of our humanness, or, perhaps, a material cause of the human person considered as an organism. Human DNA can tell scientists a great deal about the biological processes the individual human being undergoes—it can tell us, in other words, what happens-in the human organism physiologically; but it cannot tell us about the action-taken-by the human individual. Christian psychologists, we wish to stress, must be careful, here, not to place too heavy an emphasis upon the role of physiology and genetics in their study of the human individual’s inner life. While, to be sure, there is a psychosomatic influence, as Wojtyla insists as a sound Thomist of whatever sort, this influence can never be viewed reductionistically, since at the level of essence, the human being is fundamentally transcendent of the very bodily existence proper to his or her organism. (Cf. Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 5–6, especially 5.5 [205–206], where Wojtyla explains that the human person uses his or her body as the means of externalizing the Self, thus employing the body as a “compliant tool to express self-determination” [206].) If we take the psychosomatic influence to capture the very essence of human-being, therefore, we miss our real object altogether.


352 Summa Theologiae I-II.6–21. We should note, however, that Aquinas remains very much an intellectualist here, associating freedom with understanding such that the human being’s highest act is really contemplation, not love. For Wojtyla, who seems to follow Scheler on this point, the highest act is really love, which requires freedom and intelligence. Wojtyla would not deny the centrality of the beatific vision,
have said before, it is this human act or voluntary act which, for Wojtyla, constitutes the only truly proper sense of the term act, or more precisely, action, philosophically speaking. He writes:

The specific mode of man’s acting is precisely the reason why in Scholastic philosophy the action is defined as actus humanus or, more precisely, as actus voluntarius. Such action is the concretion of the dynamism proper to man, insofar as its performance is conformable with the free will. The feature indicated by the attributive voluntarius, is the decisive factor in the inherent essence of action as well as for its separateness from the acting of any other subject that is not a person. In the light of the Aristotelian conception as interpreted by the Scholastics, the peculiar aspect of the term actus is its close link with a corresponding potentia. This points to the potential substratum of actualization; it explains why actus humanus considers man as the subject who acts; less directly, it accounts for his potentiality as the source of acting. The same is accomplished with still greater precision by the expression actus voluntarius, which points directly to the power that serves as the dynamic basis in conscious acting, the basis of action. The power in question is the free will. The attribute voluntarius also tells us how the action is accomplished, namely, that it is "voluntary"—which means there is nothing to interfere with the actualization of the free will.³⁵³

As Aquinas is integrated into Wojtyla’s presentation of the problem of human action in The Acting Person, then, the human act is characterized by the dynamic relationship between intellect and will, understood, not as mere abstractions, but as powers of the person. If mere beasts can be said to possess will in any respect, such a will must be spoken of solely as a passive-volition, and not as a true power. The animal does not set before itself a vertically transcendent object of choice-for-becoming,³⁵⁴ and then engage that object actively. The animal is restricted in its activity (as opposed to agency) of will to purely material objects—i.e., to do this particular thing, without reference to the objective meaning of the thing-done.³⁵⁵ Without this objective, transcendent meaning, ratio, or λόγος, true consent is not possible; for "consent" implies

³⁵⁴ Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 3.6 (see, especially, 131).
that one "goes-up-with" the transcendent object willed—i.e., that one rises up to the willful embrace of the principle by which one's action is governed. Because the brute beast cannot, in other words, intend any true moral object of choice, it cannot perform a free, participatory act of "going-up-with" the object willed; and thus, while the beast can acquiesce (that is to say, literally, come to rest, or cease to resist), it cannot, properly speaking, consent. The beast's willing can never attain the fullness of substantiality, in that it lacks an ultimate final cause—a unifying ratio recognizable to the consciousness of the being as a viable intentional basis for all its willing, over time.

This is an important issue; for it rests upon an essential point of distinction—one that contemporary ethicists frequently fail to see altogether. In the traditional model of moral deliberation, the inner architecture of the choice we make constitutes the very form of the moral choice. By it, we reveal what precise action we intend to realize here and now. For Aquinas, it is, first and foremost the action itself, rather than the result or consequence of the action, constitutes the proper object of moral choice; for the action rests in the end (i.e., the final cause, according to which the formal cause is

356 Cf. Pope John Paul II, encyclical letter, Veritatis splendor (6 August 1993), §§ 74–75. Here, John Paul II points to this distinction in his critique of consequentialism, proportionalism, and utilitarianism, which allow no room for true transcendent intentionality at all. In these theses, the act is measured, not on the basis of its inner character (its ratio or λόγος), but on the basis, solely, of its external, quantifiable results. Accordingly, ethicists find themselves able to excuse, or even to encourage choices wholly inconsistent with the fundamental character of the human agent, by pointing to a purely quantitative measure of realized good. Asking only, "what was the end result, or consequence of the action," these ethicists apply the formula, "the greatest good for the greatest number." This thesis, however, depends upon premises which traditional scholastic philosophy and the Christian tradition as a whole, reject. The most essential to our consideration here is the presumption that there simply is no inner architecture to an action conceived as relating the agency of will to a transcendent realization in the will's kinetic movement of becoming-thus, such that there is, for these theorists, no risk that a particular action will undermine the agent's fundamental moral character as a human being. In this way, acts are always external—they redound upon others, and upon the self, only indirectly through the consequences they effect in the agent's world of experience. The will itself, or, more precisely, the agent himself or herself, can never be understood as qualitatively "good" or "bad". Only circumstances are "better" or "worse", such that goodness and badness remain accidents of the activity, never of the person.
understood), and the most immediate end of our acting is what, concretely, we mean to do, here and now, in our acting.\(^{357}\) In this way, the human being is able to set the parameters within which the essential character of the thing-done is measured. The action, in other words, itself becomes an object of sorts that the human agent chooses to make real through the will’s power to forge the materially-given world according to our own preconceived design.\(^{358}\) Aquinas writes:

Now the thing willed is not only the end, but also the means. And the last act that belongs to the first relation of the will to the means is choice; for the will becomes fully proportionate [to the object], by willing the means fully. Use, on the other hand, belongs to the second relation of the will, in respect of which it tends to the realization of the thing willed.\(^{359}\)

Aquinas’ language, in this passage, is thoroughly teleological: not just in the sense of some external set of relations, but in the sense of the internal character of the willing agent, who defines himself or herself in relation to external objects of intention—objects contextualized by transcendent objective meaning. The will ordains itself to the objects of volition, which it then seeks to possess in reality. On the other hand, the reality of the external

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\(^{357}\) Here, we must consider *Summa Theologiae* I-II.18, especially articles ii, iv–vii. It is important to distinguish between an end and a consequence. The consequence of the act is a circumstance of the act—that is to say, a surrounding condition or environment within which the act, as a movement, is contextualized. But as such, it can only impact the act; it cannot define the act; for it is an accidental characteristic of the act, and thus, finds its full meaning only relatively to the act. The converse—that the act only finds its true meaning relative to its circumstances—is nonsensical from a Thomistic perspective; it is bad metaphysics.

\(^{358}\) Note, here, that our language is not, properly speaking, creative, but procreative. The human beings does not make something ex nihilo—which power belongs solely to God (*Summa Theologiae* I.45.v)—but does impose intentionality upon the already-given universe, thereby exerting some influence upon reality, however finite that influence, and however contingent the power of operation out of which it is wielded. By contrast, while animals, no doubt, possess some power of activity or of activation, they lack the power of action in the proper philosophical sense (see Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, I.1), in part because they lack the power of intention.

\(^{359}\) *Summa Theologiae* I-II.16.iv. My emphasis.
object, once it is brought into actuality, finds its definition, at least in part, in the inner architecture of the choice made by the acting person, through the agency of whom the external object came to be realized. In this way, the character of the person is itself an object of intention, at least unconsciously—that is to say, that inasmuch as a person wills that such and such be so, that person transforms an inner disposition into a positive act of will, thereby manifesting it as a truth concerning the person’s real moral character, and indeed, concerning the person who acts. Wojtyla writes:

Self-determination does not mean merely proceeding from the ego, as the source and initial point of willing and choice; it means also the specific returning to that same ego which is its primary and basic object and with regard to which all intentional objects—everything and anything one wills or wants—are in a way more remote, transitory and just as external. The most direct and innermost is the objectiveness of the ego, that is, of the ego’s own subject. This subject is formed by man in one way or another when he desires an object, a value of some kind. At this point we touch upon the innermost personal reality of the action: by forming his ego on one way or another man becomes someone or some else. 360

Wojtyla explains that we are speaking, here, of a kind of “objectification” of the subject in action. He refers to, “the objectiveness of self-determination: the objectiveness of the ego in self-determination.” 361 He means, here, to suggest that the subject becomes visible to himself or herself as an object. This is the fact to which he alludes, when he said, rather provocatively, that he saw, in his, “discovery of the person through his actions... a turn toward the most interesting ‘thing itself’ (zurück zum Gegenstand) which is precisely the human being as a subject.” 362 He was able, in other words, to look upon the subject with philosophical precision, grasping him in the order of objective being, without, thereby, obscuring the person’s essential subjectivity, but, instead, bringing it more clearly into view.

The idea of “objectiveness”, however, implies a deeper point which should not be allowed to escape our attention. To appreciate it, we should consider the meaning of the term object in a properly philosophical sense. We take this from the Latin, ob (meaning

361 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 3.2 (110).
over-against) and iectum (meaning thrown). Properly speaking, the term object implies agency by its very definition. If an object is thrown over-against something, it must be thrown-by something; this something-throwing must itself be an agent—that is, a someone—who not only propels the thing, but intends it to stand in relation to another (in this case, over-against the other). We can speak of objects, properly so-called, even without initial reference to human agency, because we can speak of the agency of God who as the Eternal Law, intends the proper order of the universe. Nonetheless, the fact that human beings are capable of recognizing that order—that is to say, we are subject to the Natural Law, according to which we are capable of discerning the proper order of things as intended by God, and thus obliged to conduct ourselves within those parameters—we discover ourselves as the primary referent against which God objectifies other creatures. He throws them, that is to say, over-against human beings. Further, the very ability to recognize the divine act of objectification reveals in us the capacity to share in that activity, at least in some analogous, participatory respect—for the thing known is known according to the mode of knowledge of the knower. That is to say that if we wholly lacked some share in the reality of agency, we would also lack any capacity to recognize its exercise by another. This is a logical necessity, for the reality of agency would stand completely beyond the reach of our cognitive grasp; it would be unthinkable by us—intellectually invisible. Wojtyla writes:

If choice and decision were to be without their inherent moment of truth, if they were to be performed apart from that specific reference to truth, moral conduct most characteristic for the man-

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363 See, Summa Theologiae I-II.93, where Aquinas discusses the Eternal Law, and I.2.iii, where he offers his fifth argument in favor of God’s existence.

364 Summa Theologiae I-II.94.ii.

365 Indeed, for Christians, this is certain. As a point of faith, the cosmos is made for the human person. This image is illustrated clearly in the creation accounts in Genesis 1–2. Not only are human beings made on the culminating day of creation, and given dominion over all of creation, but creation itself is only finalized in the religious act of worship implied by the seventh day’s Sabbath rest. What is more, God explicitly creates the beasts for the Man’s sake, and brings them to the man to receive their names—i.e., to be conformed to his will, to be commanded, and to receive their work-appointments in the order of creation.
person would become incomprehensible. For it refers essentially to
the opposition between what is morally good to what is morally
bad. This opposition not only presupposes the will's specific
relation to truth—insofar as will's \[sic\] intentionality is
concerned—but also raises this relation to the role of the principle
of decision, choice, and action. Briefly speaking, in the opposition
between the good and the bad which direct moral conduct there is
presupposed that in human acting the willing of any object
according to the principle of the truth about the good represented
by these objects.\footnote{Wojtyla, The Acting Person 3.7 (139).}

Now, Wojtyla explains the process whereby we come to an
awareness of agency through the experience of self-determination.
He writes:

\[M\]an has the experience of each of his willings, of every act of
self-determination, and this makes of it a thoroughly subjective
fact. We then see the subject as if it were ceaselessly disclosed in
its innermost objectiveness; we witness the disclosing, so to speak,
of the objective constructing of the ego's own subject. When
consciousness brings all this into the orbit of experience, then the
inner objectiveness of the action, the objectiveness proper to self-
determination, stands out sharply in the profile of the full
subjectiveness of the person who experiences himself as the acting
ego. Then the person, the acting ego, also experiences the
awareness that he is the one who is determined by himself and that
his decisions make him become somebody, who may be good or
bad—which includes at its basis the awareness of the very fact of
being somebody.\footnote{Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 3.2 (113).}

At this point, then it becomes clear that the concept of agency
implies a kind of power to cause relation—that is, to ordain one-
to-another; and human beings participate contingently in the power
to do this. In our case, we cannot exercise such a power absolutely
but only with reference to some already-given "material." We
cannot, properly speaking, cause relation \emph{per se}, but between
things; we can \emph{bind things in relation}, consciously and willfully
ordaining things to one another, however perfectly or imperfectly,
properly or improperly. Nonetheless, we do this, and we do it
efficaciously. When we do this, furthermore, it is called \emph{action}, in
the proper philosophical sense; and the \emph{goodness} or \emph{evil} of that
action is measured against the propriety of the relation we forge

\[366\] Wojtyla, The Acting Person 3.7 (139).
\[367\] Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 3.2 (113).
between things, and the perfection with which that relation is realized. Thus, Aquinas can speak of the sources of a human action's goodness in a fourfold manner, as follows:

First, that which, as an action, it derives from its genus; because as much as it has of action and being so much has it of goodness, as stated above (A. 1). Secondly, it has goodness according to its species; which is derived from its suitable object. Thirdly, it has goodness from its circumstances, in respect, as it were, of its accidents. Fourthly, it has goodness from its end, to which it is compared as to the cause of its goodness. 368

There can be no doubt that, for Wojtyla/John Paul II, this overall conception of the human act is foundational; for, as we saw in the previous chapter, he returns to it again and again in his Lublin writings as the missing ingredient in the phenomenological analysis. Without this metaphysical analysis of what an act really is, as a movement from potentiality to actuality, originating in the person through the power of will, we can never adequately appreciate the true depth of personhood which an equally essential phenomenological analysis recommends to us.

2.3: Divergences from Classical Thomism in Wojtyla's Account of the Acting Person:

We have already said that, in the absence of a metaphysical analysis of the human act, we will never be able fully to appreciate the true depth of personhood that a careful application of the phenomenological method is capable of bringing to light. Phenomenological analysis is an indispensable stage in the philosophic process, but it is not all-sufficient; it requires a further stage in the development of a metaphysical assessment of the evidence. But, without the phenomenological method, metaphysical analysis can easily go astray. Our phenomenological analysis, in other words, can and must influence our metaphysical analysis, calling it back from mere abstraction where it can lose its way, unmoored from its original reference point in lived

368 Summa Theologiae I-II.18.iv.
experience. Honesty and clarity in the face of what a careful, phenomenological analysis recommends to us as the reality which the metaphysician must go on to explain systematically, in other words, is necessary if the metaphysician can finally hope for his system's adequacy. Wojtyla writes:

[A] phenomenology of the will alone does not suffice for interpreting ethical experience, even if this phenomenology happens to be as much in harmony with experience as that upon which Ach and his whole experimental school are based.369 Phenomenology can indirectly assist us in overcoming certain errors in views of the will that arise from an improper relation to the empirical facts, but it cannot serve as a tool for the sort of interpretation of ethical experience upon which ethics as a normative science is based.370

369 Footnote mine: Narziß Kaspar Ach (1871–1946) pioneered the experimental study of the function of will power, publishing his findings in, Über die Willenstätigkeit und das Denken (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rubrecht) 1905, Über den Willen (Leipzig: Verlag von Quelle & Meyer) 1910; Über den Willensakt und das Temperament (Leipzig: Verlag von Quelle & Meyer) 1910. Über den Willen has been translated into English as, On Volition, T. Herz, trans., University of Konstanz Cognitive Psychology Web site: www.uni-konstanz.de/kogpsych/ach.htm. This essay is sufficient as a summary presentation of his overall contribution. He claims to have established through experimental study, the auto-determination of the will, even while accounting for the influence of habituation. His thesis and the evidence he presents in support of it seem to accord some validity to the Bâñezian thesis of so-called “physical promotion,” except that, in the end, Ach finds himself compelled by the evidence to affirm that human beings are able to choose their intellectual orientation, and thus, their motivating rational object, allowing for what he assesses to be “absolute freedom”. The human being is never determined to will X, because the human being is never determined to think X, but can willfully consider other objects which might then, in turn, present themselves to the will as objects of choice. By contrast, the thesis of “physical promotion” as proposed by Bâñez and Garrigou-Lagrange entails the conviction that the human being navigates his course of predestination or reprobation by freely choosing those objects providentially presented to the intellect, and through the intellect, to the will, under the aspect of goodness. The human being's course is “written”, as it were, because God eternally wills the manner in which he will present us with our possible objects of choice, such that a natural inclination to will the good becomes a form of determinism.

With this strong statement, Wojtyla does two things. First, he establishes the role of metaphysics as explanatory and interpretive, and thus, as indispensable moments in the philosophic process. In this respect, he again reveals his firm allegiance to the philosophical patrimony he receives, principally, through St. Thomas. He insists, as we have said, that Phenomenology is not, of itself, a substitute for metaphysics. However, Wojtyla certainly does not intend to discredit the phenomenological contribution in saying this. Indeed, his last statement here, that, "[p]henomenology can indirectly assist us in overcoming certain errors in views of the will that arise from an improper relation to the empirical facts," will be of pivotal significance in the development of his own position, even from its Thomistic foundation; and it will require him to depart from Thomas and his interpreters on several points of significance, some of which bear directly upon the present study. Thus, the second point Wojtyla makes is that phenomenology, too, for its own part, is an essential moment in the philosophic process, without which metaphysics can easily wander astray.

His insistence upon the experience of self-determination, therefore, requires a metaphysical foundation, but the foundation offered by Báñez, and later, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, for example, with its mechanistic distinction between sufficient and efficacious grace, would seem incompatible with the view espoused by Wojtyla. The position of Báñez and Lagrange would seem effectively to reduce the human act to the status of an activation that merely happens-in the human being. In his article, "Thomist Premotion and Contemporary Philosophy of Religion," Thomas M. Osborne explains that:

A rational agent chooses between different acts. Although Peter does not choose to beget a human being rather than a monster, he can choose whether to beget or read. This later possibility is an example of a free act that is necessary secundum quid, that is only with respect to God's eternal decree. John of St. Thomas emphasizes that Calvin does not properly distinguish between the necessity of supposition and absolute necessity. If God moves the will then it is impossible that the will should not be so moved. Nevertheless, the necessity is not simpliciter but secundum quid.
The Thomist view requires that no contingent event is determined by its secondary causes. 371

Osborne is attempting to describe precisely the position of Classical Thomism; and his explanation is consistent with the explanations of other's who ascribe to this view. According to this view, though Classical Thomists would not want to phrase it this way, Thomas avoids the charge of determinism by excepting God from the general principle that if the movement of B is determined by the causative influence of A, then B is not free to determine its own movement. God does determine the movement of B—that is to say, of the human person in the human person’s choosing—but not as a secondary cause; he determines it as the First Cause, by his eternal decree. This is not determinism, according to Classical Thomism, because Classical Thomists insist that “determinism” refers only to the arena of secondary causes and effects. Osborne writes:

Thomists connect contingency with secondary causation. A contingent event is one that cannot be known from the secondary causes alone. The contingent event does not preexist determinately in the secondary causes but by the agent’s power of free choice, which is an ability to choose otherwise. If an agent has this ability, then his action is not determined by other secondary causes. Consequently, although Thomists think that free action is incompatible with this kind of determination, they also think that every event is predetermined by God. This position does not simply rest on the fact that God’s causation is mysterious, but rather on the belief that God’s motion is infallible and that he is the source of contingency. Consequently, he infallibly moves even contingent events without making the events necessary. 372

It is important to note that Osborne is not describing the sort of facilitative causation that we attempted to derive from a Thomistic foundation in our previous study, Judged by the Law of Freedom, but, instead, an actual orchestration of the unfolding of each and every movement of history, inclusive of the movement of human choosing, down to its finest detail. Osborne explains:


Our ability to choose presupposes that God has created us with free choice. We do not freely choose whether to be created, even though once created we can choose between alternatives. We have no choice over whether we have free choice, although once we have free choice we can exercise it. Every free decision presupposes creation, but it also presupposes an additional movement toward one good rather than another. This additional movement must ultimately come from God. Although the agent moves himself to the good, the agent is not the first mover.\(^{373}\)

For the Classical Thomist, the fact that God is the first mover means that all subsequent movement is reducible entirely to him. Osborne explains that, "It is important to recognize that there is no intermediate between God's causal activity and the will."\(^{374}\) God, in other words, preserves human freedom by causing its movement directly, rather than through an intermediary agent. Yet, in the end, there can be no question that, for the Classical Thomist, "God causes not only a potency to opposites but he also moves them to one of them."\(^{375}\) In this way, the Classical Thomists hold that, "an act can be freely chosen even though it is necessary when considered in conjunction with God's eternal decree that the act occur."\(^{376}\)

According to their thesis, then, any concretely good human act, even the act of resignation, is something activated in the human being through a direct and infallibly efficacious act on God's part. In the salvific movement of the person, the term "actual grace" now comes to mean, *the grace whereby a potential good is rendered actual in the soteriological context*: Of course these thinkers will assert that God does this in such a way that we are included as "secondary efficient causes" of our own acts, but it is quite difficult to see how, given their own formulation of the dynamic in question, this claim can be demonstrated to possess any real metaphysical content with any clarity at all. For these thinkers, one can only "freely resign" if God wills that free resignation *simpliciter*, while God makes some "able" to resign without providing the actual grace whereby they *do* resign, such that, in fact, they will *not* and cannot resign. At the same time, according

\(^{373}\) Osborne, "Thomist Premotion," 626.

\(^{375}\) Osborne, "Thomist Premotion," 626.

\(^{376}\) Osborne, "Thomist Premotion," 628.
to these thinkers, God makes others “able” to resign while also providing the grace whereby they infallibly do resign, such that they cannot fail to resign. Steven A. Long explains the position, saying:

God bestows sufficient aid to the creature, which is a determinate positive effect constituting a potential for a further good (the salutary act in question). When free defect on the part of the creature—proceeding from its own will—is permitted (and in no way caused) by God, this defect will condition the act of the creature such that it falls away of itself from the potential for good constituted by the prior sufficient motion, which the creature this is said to resist. If God does not permit such antecedent voluntary defect it will not be, whereas if God does permit it—if he does not preserve the creature from this defect—it will be. This defect is the creature’s own, for of itself it is deficient with respect either to actuating itself toward, or sustaining itself in, the good proper to its nature.377

Long espouses this Classical Thomistic approach,378 and we should make no mistake about what, exactly, he is representing here in this position. “The creature of itself,” he insists, “is operationally deficient as its operative power is proportioned to its ontological finitude.”379 He goes on to explain that, “without divine activation toward and conservation in the good proper to its nature, the rational creature freely falls inward upon itself and fails of its good, revealing its volatized moral nothingness in second act. This is St. Thomas’s authentic teaching.”380 This “authentic teaching” of St. Thomas reduces the creature to a mere character in a novel written, from eternity, by God, and scripted according to a logic known only to himself. Long writes:


378 Long’s n. 14 (“Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law,” 569): I take this account to be that reading of the texts of St. Thomas clear in the works of Baez, John of St. Thomas, and Cajetan—authors who, despite differences, upheld the same general line of account—and which Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, and Jean Hervé Nicolas, have defended in the twentieth century. It is, frankly, the simple force of the texts of St. Thomas themselves.

379 Long, “Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law,” 596.

380 Long, “Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law,” 599.
... while God permits evil for the sake of a higher good, he is in no way a per se or direct cause of evil. In the end, the divine permission of evil, like an author's permission of defect within the context of a story, must be justified in relation to the nature and purpose of the whole work of creation. And since this work of creation is for the sake of the manifestation of the divine truth, goodness, justice, and mercy, it is in relation to these purposes that the permission of evil must be understood. Yet, the adequate knowledge of the relation of any evil to these goods is not fully knowable apart from beatitude.\footnote{381}

Lest we imagine that Long is not serious when he says that, "the divine permission of evil, like an author's permission of defect within the context of a story," we should note that he repeats this phrase, verbatim, later in the same article.\footnote{382} As noted in the previous chapter of the present study, we addressed this issue in our own article, "Dives in Misericordia: The Pivotal Significance of a Forgotten Encyclical," noting that, "Macbeth's mournful anxiety [in Act 5, Scene 5] rests precisely upon this sort of sentiment"\footnote{383}—namely, that our lives are already scripted, entirely, by the divine hand.

Whether or not this view is, indeed, an accurate reading of Aquinas, it seems clear that Wojtyla, for his own part, does not agree with it. We already discussed, in the previous chapter, the precise language with which Wojtyla, rather explicitly, rejects this view, and included equally explicit remarks by Joseph Ratzinger concurring with Wojtyla's position. Whatever the case concerning Aquinas' actual position, Wojtyla does criticize him for being too much of a naturalist, and for having too cosmological a view of the human person, with the result that the dignity of the human person, as such, is sometimes lost, and ethical conclusions drawn that distort the moral reality discernable through experience.\footnote{384} The

\footnote{381} Long, "Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law," 577.

\footnote{382} Long, "Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law," 597.


\footnote{384} We will treat this issue in greater depth in Chapter 3 of the present work.
phenomenological method, insofar as it focuses our attention upon the experience our metaphysical foundation is employed to describe, helps us to avoid these errors.

Let us consider the point in another way. It is difficult to deny that Aquinas himself is, in the final analysis, a causal reductionist as he treats the questions of providence, predestination, perseverance, and the idea of the "Book of Life." As he sees it, unless God wills eternally and simpliciter that this creature will persevere to the end in grace, this creature will not persevere to the end in grace; and unless God wills eternally and simpliciter that this creature will do good and avoid mortal sin in this moment, the creature will fall from grace or fall more deeply into sin. Aquinas certainly did the best he was able to do with the problem at hand, given what he saw as the underlying metaphysical points of reference with which he was philosophically obliged to contend, and his contributions, however inadequate they may appear to many theologians and philosophers in the contemporary period, represent an important voice, among other equally important voices, in the development of the Church's approach to this subject. For this reason, Aquinas' teaching on these questions will always demand our attention.

As important as Aquinas' contribution to the dialogue on this question has been, however, Aquinas' metaphysic does not provide the means whereby insight could be gained into the felt experience of agency—and indeed, one might suggest that his radically deterministic conclusions are evidence of this very charge. To be sure, we could begin, from Aquinas' foundation, to explain something of the mechanism; but we are left, therein, still unable to describe the phenomenon of being the acting person, according to which, a radically deterministic understanding of providence and predestination simply does not ring true. That said, something in the metaphysic itself stands uncorrected by the phenomenological givens of our experience of self-determination, because the approach itself, which Wojtyla attempted to recontextualize, did not include provision for allowing the necessary "pause before the irreducible" in the human person, and failed to "give phenomenology," yet centuries away, "the upper hand over

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metaphysics. With the work of Karol Wojtyla, however, and subsequently, under his papacy as John Paul II, the Tradition has gained access to a new philosophical language for the articulation of the faith. This language promises to lead to a deepening of philosophical insight into the nature and character of the human person, and to an enrichment of theological insight into the mysteries of the redemptive process.

This new language is known as personalism; and while this school, of which Wojtyla is only one member, however preeminent, admits of sufficient breadth to defy any neatly universal definition, it rests, on the whole, in the phenomenological analysis of the essential activity of being-human. At the very beginning of a personalist analysis, therefore, it would seem appropriate to insist, as does Wojtyla, upon a distinction between the activity of being-human and the action of the human-being. Wojtyla, in fact, is adamant that this distinction cuts to the very heart of the issue, and is, immediately, among the first phenomena to be analyzed with respect to the issue of what, precisely, it means to be a human person. He notes that of beings in the world of our

387 In his essay, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible,” Wojtyla says, “We cannot complete the picture through [metaphysical or naturalistic] reduction alone; we also cannot remain within the framework of the irreducible alone (for then we would not be able to get beyond the pure self). The one must be cognitively supplemented by the other. Nevertheless, given the variety of circumstances of the real existence of human beings, we must always leave the greater space in this cognitive effort for the irreducible; we must, as it were, give the irreducible the upper hand when thinking about the human being that is invisible and wholly internal and whereby each human being, myself included, is an ‘eyewitness’ of his or her own self—of his or her own humanity and person” (214). A bit later in the same essay, he writes, “What does it mean to pause cognitively at lived experience? This ‘pausing’ should be understood in relation to the irreducible” (215). Given the discussion in the whole of the essay, and in particular, in the passages immediately following this second quote, it is clear that Wojtyla is speaking of the prerogative of the phenomenological method in directing and correcting metaphysical analyses. Indeed, he goes on to say, “The thinker seeking the ultimate philosophical truth about the human being no longer moves in a ‘purely metaphysical terrain,’ but finds elements in abundance testifying to both the materiality and the spirituality of the human being, elements that bring both of these aspects into sharper relief. These elements then form the building blocks for further metaphysical construction” (216).

388 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 1.6, 2.2 (especially pp. 66–67), 2.5.

389 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 2.5–2.6.
experience, only humans act in the proper, philosophical sense of the term. We may speak meaningfully about the activity of being-horse; but we cannot speak meaningfully about the action of the horse, if, that is, we wish to speak precisely. Once we come to understand this philosophical distinction, the more properly theological implications, as they redound upon the question of human cooperation with grace in a true process of redemption, should be made clear. That will be the focus of subsequent chapters of the present study. For our purposes here, however, let us point out merely that, in his Magisterial writings, John Paul II pays little attention to Aquinas' work in these treatises, and in his pre-papal philosophical writings, Karol Wojtyla does not concern himself with them at all, as far as we have been able to discern. Indeed, we can only surmise that Wojtyla/John Paul II did not find Aquinas' work in these treatises helpful in the formulation of a sound theory of human agency. We argue, elsewhere, in fact, that Wojtyla/John Paul II dissents from Aquinas on this and other related points, and that these failures in the metaphysical moment of the philosophic process are the consequences of previous failures in the phenomenological moment. Wojtyla refers, here, to the evident fact of the irreducible in man—that is to say, the self-evident fact that the human being is not reducible to a nature or a natural function, and can never be properly understood as somehow subject to a larger social or even cosmic purpose. He argues that this fact is simply given in the phenomenological moment, and that metaphysicians who fail to "pause at the irreducible" will tend to fall into naturalistic reductions of the sort we have mentioned here—the sort into which Aquinas himself falls on many occasions.390

That being said, Wojtyla, again, attributes to Max Scheler his whole conception of the person,391 yet describes himself as a

390 We consider this issue in greater depth in Chapter 3 of the present work. Also of relevance here are two conference papers: Richard H. Bulzacchelli, "Facing the Limits of Thomism: When Naturalism Is Not Enough," The Phenomenology of John Paul II, Duquesne University, the Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center, Pittsburgh, PA (December 2006); and Richard H. Bulzacchelli, "Opening the Self to the Other: A Personalist Response to Contemporary Challenges to Catholic Sexual Ethics," Ethical issues in Sex and Marriage, Spring 2008 Institute of Bioethics Conference, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Steubenville, OH (March 2008).

"Thomistic personalist". What does this mean, especially in light of what we have just said? The person, as a unique and unrepeatable for-its-own-sake being is something Wojtyla sees Scheler to have recognized more clearly than anyone else, even if intimations of this insight, insofar as they are naturally knowable, according to Wojtyla, can be found in the philosophia perennis. Scheler was successful in perceiving this irreducible element of the human person because of his employment of the phenomenological method, which Wojtyla sees as a highly refined, and thus, profoundly reliable, approach to observation and analysis, which any responsible philosophical system should employ, now that it is finally available to us. With the phenomenological method and Scheler's conception of the person at his disposal, he is able more clearly to lay out the landscape upon which a more self-authentic Thomistic metaphysic of human action can be constructed. This metaphysic would be more self-authentic—that is to say, more truly Thomistic even than Aquinas' own articulation—because it

392 See, for example, Karol Wojtyla, "Thomistic Personalism," in Person and Community (165–175). According to Sandok's editorial note, Wojtyla presented this essay on February 17, 1961, at the Fourth Annual Philosophy Week at the Catholic University of Lublin. Because of the early date of this essay, it would be disingenuous to present this article as a representation of Wojtyla's mature assessment of the compatibility between Thomism and Personalism. As we saw, for example, in our considerations in Chapter 2 of the present study, in fact, in much of Wojtyla's subsequent work, he presents a more reserved assessment of the personalist elements attributable to St. Thomas. Although beyond the scope of the present project, a separate study would have to be done to trace, more precisely, the exact stages through which his thinking moved on this subject, but our work in Chapter 2 has already provided a starting point for that endeavor.

393 It would not be possible for us, here, to examine, thoroughly, why it is that the phenomenological method does not appear earlier in the history of philosophy. For our purposes here, let us leave this question to the scholarly debate, and say only that, while philosophy has always involved observation, phenomenology seems, for its own part, to rest upon the employment of a scientific method of observation. In this way, it brings nothing new to philosophy qua philosophy, other than a technique for observing, and for organizing the content of our observations in careful and consistent ways. Wojtyla, for example, seems to associate the rise of phenomenology as a method of philosophical observation with the rise of contemporary psychology. On this point, see, Karol Wojtyla, "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act," in Person and Community (3–22).
would remain true to the demands of the phenomenological given of the human value, which Wojtyla sees to be bound-up with the power of self-determination. Scheler, as we have said, could not himself paint such a landscape and ended by undermining the very reality he attempted to elucidate. But Aquinas, for his own part, did not always see the uniqueness and absolute value of the person as clearly as Scheler, and ended by compromising the demands of personhood in favor of a larger cosmology, for the sake of which God was often seen to use the human being as a mere means to an end exclusive of the person’s good. 394

2.4: The Schelerian Elements of The Acting Person:

There can be no question that Karol Wojtyla owes to Scheler a great debt, and that this debt is paid, in part, in his work, The Acting Person. We have already considered the many ways in which Wojtyla has emerged as a voice of the tradition, who traces his own philosophical perspective very consciously to the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. But, from Scheler, Wojtyla has inherited a method of inquiry and, with it, a perspective that favors experience.

394 We will address this issue further in Chapter 3 of the present project, and have treated it in, “Facing the Limits of Thomism,” as well as in our article, “Dives in Misericordia: The Pivotal Significance of a Forgotten Encyclical,” in Karol Wojtyla’s Philosophical Legacy, Nancy Mardas Billias, et. Al., eds., Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change Series I, Culture and Values, Vol. 35, George F. McLean, gen. ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2008), 125–162. Aquinas’ view of predestination requires the affirmation that some human beings—and indeed, for him, the vast majority—are reprobate in the sense that God, from eternity, providentially assigned them the fate of eternal damnation. The reprobate are not reprobate, for Aquinas, on the basis of any foreseen demerits. They are not, in other words, reprobate on account of their sins. Rather, they sin on account of their reprobation, because sin is a prerequisite of justice for damnation. This is so, for Aquinas, for the sake of a larger cosmic plan. We cannot enter, here, upon any lengthy discussion of this point, but we suggest the view is incompatible with John Paul II’s use of the term elect with reference to “each and every individual,” and “every man and woman,” in his encyclical letter, Dives in misericordia (30 November, 1980), §§ 4, 8.
over abstraction. Rather than reinterpret experience on the basis of
metaphysical conclusions, Wojtyla is given to rethinking
metaphysical conclusions in light of lived experience. We will
outline some of the consequences of this shift in emphasis as they
appear in *The Acting Person*, where they come to bear upon the
questions at the heart of the present study, noting, where
applicable, those moments at which Wojtyla finds himself directly
influenced by Scheler's specific insights. Of course, on many
specific points of confluence between Scheler and Wojtyla, we
find a similar confluence between Scheler and Aquinas; but the
point we intend to make in this stage of our discussion is that the
method used to discover the specific truth in question is different,
precisely because the philosophical conversation has changed. It is
here that we find Wojtyla exhibiting a more Schelerian than
Thomistic approach, even as he arrives, in some instances, in the
affirmation of the same position Aquinas himself would support.

In other instances, however, we find that the approach to a
question is not the only point of departure from the Thomistic line
of thought, but that Wojtyla finds some deficiency or
inadequacy—some limitation—in the Thomistic approach, which
he must transcend. In some cases, as we have already had occasion
to consider, Wojtyla flatly disagrees with the Thomistic, or at least
Classically Thomistic line, but in other case, he seeks to refine and
deepen a truth concerning which Aquinas had exhibited a basic
intuition. Here, again, Wojtyla is close to Scheler. Anyone directly
familiar with Scheler's writings perceives, immediately, the extent
to which Scheler had been immersed in the *philosophia perennis*,
and understood the positions of his interlocutors with exceptional
clarity, honesty, and appreciation, even when he found himself in
substantive disagreement with them.

To begin, then, it is clear that Wojtyla accepts, from Aquinas, a
strong emphasis upon the movement from potentiality to actuality
in the human person, but it is not clear that he rests upon what he,
for his own part, would call a "hylomorphic" understanding of
reality, much less of the human person. He writes, in *The Acting
Person*, very much as if this metaphysical model is but a stage in
the historical conversation, which, however important a one, must
now give way to deeper insights. He writes:

> Obviously, we cannot discuss the human body apart from the
> *whole that is man, that is, without recognizing that he is a person.*
> Neither can we examine the dynamisms and potentialities proper
to the human body without understanding the essentials of action
> and if its specifically personal character. In this connection it
seems appropriate to recall the vision of the human reality advanced in the traditional philosophy of Aristotle and Aquinas, which from the likeness of man to other beings of the visible world discovers in him alongside of the hylic or material elements also the element of morphe or form; hence the theory of hylomorphism and the analysis of the human being carried out within its frame. To accept the general principles of this vision, however, does not imply that we intend to repeat once again the formulations of the hylomorphic doctrine. So far all our discussions have reflected clearly enough the effort to rethink anew the dynamic human reality in terms of the reality of the acting person.395

For Wojtyla, the hylomorphic understanding of the human person is not fully adequate because it treats the human person merely as an object or thing in the material world. It considers the human person as a substance—which, though accurate, does not capture what, specifically, differentiates persons from non-persons. Here, we see that Wojtyla wishes to transcend, also, the Boethian definition of the person as “an individual substance of a rational nature,” again, on the grounds not of inaccuracy, but of insufficiency. The Boethian definition presents the human person in static terms, ignoring the dimension of subjectivity-in-action, and thus, of the most essential moment of our own self-discovery as persons. He writes:

In the first and fundamental approach the man-person has to be somewhat identified with its basic ontological structure. The person is a concrete man, the individua substantia of the classical Boethian definition. The concrete is in a way tantamount to unique, or at any rate, to the individualized. The concept of the “person” is broader and more comprehensive than the concept of the “individual,” just as the person is more than individualized nature. The person would be an individual whose nature is rational—according to Boethius’ full definition persona est rationalis naturae individua substantia.396 Nevertheless, in our perspective it seems clear that neither the concept of the “rational nature” nor that of its individualization seems to express fully the specific completeness expressed by the concept of the person. The completeness we are speaking of here seems to be something that is unique in a very special sense rather than concrete. In everyday


use we may substitute for a person the straightforward "somebody." It serves as a perfect semantic epitome because of the immediate connotations it brings to mind—and with them the juxtaposition and contrast to "something." If the person were identified with its basic ontological structure, then it would at once become necessary to take account of the difference that distinguishes "somebody" from "something." 397

In both these moments, Wojtyła follows the phenomenological school and exhibits a Schelerian sensibility. Personhood is irreducible, and thus, must have an account in something deeper than the mere material individuation of a ratio-natural form. For Wojtyła, as for Scheler, the human person is fundamentally unique as person. If the only sort of "account" is a reductionistic one, then the human person is a fundamental mystery at the deepest level of his or her being. The challenges, then, is to provide an account that is descriptive rather than reductionistic, but still metaphysically valid. He writes:

Intuition indeed appears to pave the way for, and lead us near to, an understanding of the soul–body relation, but as we have mentioned, it does not allow us to grasp this relation. We may approach it solely in terms of metaphysical categories. All the more so as the full meaning of this relation appears as a philosophical issue once the notions of soul and body receive a metaphysical interpretation. However they also have a current sense. The current sense of the "soul" and its relation to experience in which is firmly grounded the essentially metaphysical significance of the notions of "soul" and "body," and only in which they acquire their complete meaning for metaphysics. For us the important things are thus, first, that on the evidence of experience and intuition we may exfoliate the complexity of man, and second, that we are able to define its limits.

Wojtyła, however, has left the properly metaphysical stage of the discussion for another day. The project he has in mind is an extensive one, and, thus, it is easy to understand why he never found the opportunity to undertake it. He lays out the basic elements the metaphysical stage of discussion would have to take into consideration, saying:

Our analyses indicate something like a boundary in man, which sets a limit to the scope of the dynamism and thus also of the reach of the body, or of what is also called "matter." They also reveal a

397 Wojtyła, The Acting Person, 2.3 (73–74).
capacity of a spiritual nature that seems to lie at the root of the person’s transcendence, but also indirectly of the integration of the person in the action. It would, however, be a gross simplification if we were to regard this intuitively drawn limit of the body (matter) capacity as equivalent to the boundary _between_ the body and the soul. Indeed, the experience of integration intervenes with such an oversimplification. Integration—precisely because it is the complementary aspect of the transcendence of the person in the action—tells us that the soul–body relation cuts across all the boundaries we find in experience and that it goes deeper and is more fundamental than they are. We thus have confirmed, even if indirectly, our earlier assertion that the complete reality of the soul itself and of the soul’s relation to the body needs a more comprehensive metaphysical expression.\(^{396}\)

Wojtyla finds himself, therefore, very much in Scheler’s place, working on Scheler’s own project, to re-present to philosophy, through a careful, descriptive phenomenological analysis, the foundational givens intuited in our experience. These phenomenological givens must form the basis upon which any further metaphysical consideration could be articulated, and to which such a consideration would have to be responsible, in the end. Wojtyla’s work in _The Acting Person_ is, in this regard, heavily influenced by Scheler’s work. In fact, while Wojtyla attempted to focus attention directly upon the person in his own study, while Scheler, responding to Kant, sought to focus first of all upon the structure of ethical science, Wojtyla’s outline directly mirrors whole sections of Scheler’s work in _Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values_. Both thinkers trace in detail the inner dynamism of the person’s feeling-states, emotivities, reactivities, and instincts, as they come to bear upon value formation and the assertion of the will and the personal act. But still more that this broader outline, the foundation of the mystery of the person—the attempt to bring the human person to givenness—in and through a phenomenology of the acting person, is directly and unequivocally a Schelerian enterprise in the work of Karol Wojtyla. Scheler writes, in language that will seem immediately familiar to any attentive reader of _The Acting Person_, saying:

> If an act-essence is to be concrete, its full intuitive givenness _presupposes_ a reference to the essence of the _person_, who is the executor of acts.

\(^{396}\) Wojtyla, _The Acting Person_, 6.11 (258).
From this it clearly follows that the person can never be reduced to the \( X \) of a mere "point of departure" of acts or to some kind of mere "interconnective complex" or network of acts, as a form of the so-called actualistic theories which conceives of the being of the person in terms of his doings (\textit{ex operari sequitur esse}) would have it. The person is \textit{not} an empty "point of departure" of acts; he is, rather, a concrete being.\(^{399}\)

As Scheler develops this line of thought he explains that no adequate thesis of the person can reduce the person to "substance" conceivable in the context of any theory of "interconnective complex," such as would allow for the idea that what we experience as the "Self" is merely the experience of a collection of acts, forming a kind of "mosaic" that we call "person." He rejects, also, grounding the person in mere consciousness, so as to reduce the body to a merely individuating principle. In a footnote to the sixth chapter of his \textit{Formalism}, he writes, on this latter point:

\begin{quote}
This was Spinoza's deep insight, insofar as he broke away from the Cartesian theory of substance. Thus soul-substances become modes of the attribute "thinking" of a substance. Spinoza correctly saw that there is no place for the \textit{person} on the presupposition that the mind's essence is only "thinking," and he saw as well that the individualization of thinking beings would have to be shifted to mere differences among human bodies (as in the philosophy of Averroes). Thus Spinoza drew correct conclusions from Descartes' false presuppositions.\(^ {400}\)
\end{quote}

Scheler goes on to explain, then that the human person experiences himself as person precisely in and through his experience of his acting. The Person is not, therefore, merely a mind who thinks, nor a bundle of experiences or of events. The Person is the one from whom acts flow as from a source—the irreducible ground of individually-attributable acts. He writes:

\begin{quote}
Surely the person \textit{is} and experiences himself only as a being that \textit{executes acts}, and he is in no sense "behind" or "above" acts, or something standing "above" the execution and processes of acts, like a point at rest. For all of this is a picture taken from a spatiotemporal sphere; and it stands to reason that this does not hold for the relation between \textit{person} and \textit{acts}. This picture always leads to a substantialization of the person. But the \textit{whole person} is
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}

400 Scheler, \textit{Formalism}, 384, n. 20.
\end{footnotes}
contained in *every* fully concrete act, and the whole person "varies" in and through every act—without being exhausted in his being in any of these acts, and without "changing" like a thing in time.\(^{401}\)

By this last qualification, "without 'changing' like a thing in time," Scheler means to say that the person does not come to be constituted as a constellation or conglomeration of acts. The acts do not gradually constitute the person, but the person makes himself or herself present in and through the act. The person does, however, "vary" in and through the act of his own making. Scheler explains that:

... because the whole person is and lives in *each* act without exhausting himself in one act or the sum of these acts, there is no act whose execution does not change the content of the person's *being*, and no act-value that does not increase or decrease, enhance or diminish, or positively or negatively determine the value of the person.\(^{402}\)

This is precisely what Wojtyla is attempting to say when he develops his thesis about the "integration" of the person in the act. Wojtyla explains, along rather similar lines as those articulated by Scheler, saying:

The crucial problem for understanding man's dynamic reality is to establish the fundamental significance of the integration and disintegration of the acting person. Very often man is defined as a psycho-physical unity and it is then assumed that this notion is sufficient to define and express adequately his essence. But in fact the notion expresses only everything that is accessible to the particular empirical sciences; all that makes man to be a person and allows him to realize himself as the person in the action undergoes, in this approach, a specific reduction. It is precisely the reason why in this study [i.e., *The Acting Person*], in which we are trying to trace step by step the experience of the dynamic reality of the acting person, we have to abandon this approach and change drastically our way of looking at the problem.

An interpretation of the fundamental significance of integration as well as of disintegration may serve as a key to our point of view. In the light of the total experience of man the view that he is a psycho-physical entity presupposes the concept of the "person" who manifests himself first of all in action. It thus presupposes a

\(^{401}\) Scheler, *Formalism*, 385.

\(^{402}\) Scheler, *Formalism*, 357.
comprehensive interpretation of the experience of "man acts" in which transcendence and integration are considered as mutually complementary aspects. It is only within this framework of that dynamic unity which is constituted by the person in the action that man can be seen as a psycho-physical unity. 403

Scheler, likewise, writes:

[E]very concrete act always contains inner and outer perception, lived-body consciousness, loving and hating, feeling and preferring, willing and not willing, judging, remembering, representing, etc. All these divisions, necessary as they are, yield only abstract traits of the concrete act of the person—if we are looking at the person. The concrete act of the person can be understood as a mere sum or a mere construct of such abstract act-essences no more than the person can be understood as a mere interconnective complex of acts. Rather, it is the person himself, living in each of his acts, who permeates every act with his peculiar character. No knowledge of the nature of love, for instance, or of the nature of judgment, can bring us one step nearer to the knowledge of how person A loves or judges person B; nor can a reference to the contents (values, states of affairs) given in each of these acts furnish this knowledge. But, on the other hand, a glance at the person himself and his essence immediately yields a peculiarity for every act that we know him to execute, and the knowledge of his "world" yields a peculiarity for the contents of the acts. 404

Again, along the same lines, Wojtyla goes on to explain, just as Scheler had, that no collection of movements or experiences, or even of actions, can give rise to the person, but that it is, instead, the person who integrates himself in and through his concrete acts, and thus, draws all his movements and experiences together under the unity of his person—of himself as person:

The crucial fact in the total experience of man is that it is in action that the whole psychosomatic complexity develops into the specific person–action unity. This unity has precedence relatively to both that complexity and the psycho-physical unity, if the psychosomatic unity is understood as a kind of sum total of the somatic and the psychical as well as their appropriate natural dynamisms. Action comprises the multiplicity and diversity of the dynamisms that belong to the soma and the psyche. In relation to


404 Scheler, *Formalism*, 386.
them action constitutes that superior dynamic unity. This is, in fact, what integration of the person in the action—as the complementary aspect of transcendence—consists in; for the human action is more than a sum of those other dynamisms; it is a new and superior type of dynamism, from which the others receive a new meaning and a new quality that is properly personal. They do not possess this meaning and this quality on their own account and, insofar as they are but the natural dynamisms of the psyche and the soma, they attain these only in the action of the person.

Consequently we may say that only the person’s integration in the action justifies an insight into the elements of that natural dynamic multiplicity constituting the psychosomatic totality of man. This insight allows us to construct an image of man as a psychosomatic unity. But as the image presupposes that more fundamental view of the person—action unity which is given in the experience of “man acts” it also draws from this experience its features and significance. The notion of the “person’s integration in the action” supplies, in fact, the key to this significance. 405

It is in the seventh and culminating chapter of The Acting Person, however, that Wojtyła’s Schelerian sensibilities come most profoundly to the fore. There, he develops a personalist understanding of participation that, like his understanding of the person, must be based not upon a static ontology, but on an active one. He casts this project in terms of the need to transcend the merely cognitive condition that we call “intersubjectivity” through the active moment of “participation”, wherein the person is most fully actualized in his own acting. Not only does the person exist together with others; he also acts together with others. Wojtyła writes:

In the approach adopted in this study it is the action that serves as the fundamental source for the cognition of man as the person. Since in fact man acts “together with others” it is also necessary to extend on the same basis our knowledge of man in his intersubjectivity. In this way in the place of “intersubjectivity” as a purely cognitive category we have now, so to speak, introduced “participation”. We thus have man who in acting together with others,” that is, by participating, discloses a new dimension of himself as the person. It is this dimension, which we have here called “participation,” that we are now going to submit to a brief analysis. This road, we hope, will bring us to a more complete—

405 Wojtyła, The Acting Person 5.3 (197).
or, at any rate, more complementary—understanding of human intersubjectivity. 406

Although Scheler touches on "participation" as the basis for developing an understanding of the acting person as a communal being, he does not develop the concept himself as Wojtyla goes on to do. Still, the basis of Wojtyla's concept of participation is already given in Scheler's work, as Scheler develops both the concept of action as the means of the disclosure of the person, and the concept of intersubjectivity as a basic human orientation.

Wojtyla's work on the concept of participation occurs, as we have said, in the seventh and culminating chapter of The Acting Person. In this chapter, as Wojtyla develops his concept of participation, he connects, as does Scheler in the last chapter of his Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values, the ideas of solidarity, neighbor, and the commandment of love. Wojtyla and Scheler do not develop identical positions, but a careful reading of the two figures side-by-side shows that they are engaged in precisely the same dialogue, and thinking through the problem from the same methodological foundation.

For Scheler, the highest form of social unity is, "the unity of independent, spiritual, and individual single persons 'in' an independent, spiritual, and individual collective person." 407 Wojtyla does not use this sort of language to describe his thesis of participation, but a close reading of both thinkers shows a distinct similarity. Scheler's articulation is decidedly covenantal, and consciously so. He goes on to draw out the idea of this spiritual-personal social unity both in a natural cultural form and in a cultic religious or sacramental form—i.e., in the form of the Church. His treatment on this latter score reflects a clearly accurate and sensitive reading of the New Testament, especially the writings of John and Paul, along with a philosophical affirmation of its rational plausibility without reducing the idea that "Christ is the head of his body and we are his living members," 408 to mere metaphor. He writes:

We assert that this unity, and it alone, is the nucleus and total novelty of the true and ancient Christian idea of community, and that this Christian idea represents, so to speak, the historical

406 Wojtyla, The Acting Person 315, n. 75.
407 Scheler, Formalism, 533. Scheler's emphasis.
408 Cf. Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 5:30.
discovery of this unity. In quite a peculiar manner, this idea of
community unites the being and indestructible self-value of the
individual "soul" (conceived in terms of creation) and the person
(contrary to the ancient theory of corporation and the Jewish idea
of "people") by means of the idea of the salvational solidarity of
all in the corpus christianum, which is founded on the Christian
idea of love (and which is contrary to the mere ethos of "society,"
which denies moral solidarity.\footnote{Scheler, Formalism, 533.}

The mere ethos of "society" denies moral solidarity, for Scheler,
because it places the burden of responsibility upon the shoulders of
the collective person, while the individual person presents himself
solely as a bearer of rights. On the other hand, Scheler
acknowledges another form of social organization in the so-called
"life community", in which the individual is subordinated to the
collective person, which becomes the bearer of responsibility and,
thus, of rights, over against the individual's obligations. The
individual is obligated by the collective's exercise of its own
personal authority, which does not, for its part, bind itself to any
necessary consideration for the individual. Both these poles
involve an asymmetry between the individual and the collective,
such that, in the absence of some unifying or reconciling moment
of mutual interpenetration, the human condition is characterized by
an inescapable alienation.

With Scheler's stage of personal-spiritual unity, or what he
eventually comes to call "coresponsibility":

\ldots any finite person is an individual person and at the same time a
member of a collective person. It simply belongs to the essence of
a finite person (fully known as such) both to be so and to experience himself so. Thus responsibility-for (someone) and
responsibility-to (someone) are essentially different in orientation.
In the life-community the bearer of all responsibility is the reality of
the community, and the individual is coresponsible for the life-
community; in the collective person every individual and the
collective person are self-responsible (= responsible for oneself),
and at the same time every individual is also coresponsible for the
collective person (and for every individual "in" it), just as the
collective person is coresponsible for each of its members. Hence
coresponsibility between the individual person and the collective
person is mutual and does not preclude self-responsibility on the part of both.410

Scheler's idea of "coresponsibility", as he expresses it in this passage, bears a remarkable similarity to Wojtyla's notion of "participation." Indeed, like Wojtyla, Scheler associates his own thesis of "coresponsibility" with a theory of "solidarity", according to which human persons are bound to one another at the level of being, and, thus, mutually implicated in one another's lives. This ontological fact comports axiomatic implications which, in turn, open upon the insight he attempting to articulate. Scheler writes:

[With coresponsibility, the principle of solidarity] changes from a principle of representable solidarity into one of unrepresentable solidarity: the individual person is coresponsible for all other individual persons 'in' the collective person not only as the representative of an office, a rank, or any other positional value in the social structure, but also, indeed, first of all, as a unique personal individual and as the bearer of an individual conscience. . . . In moral self-examination at this level, not only must everyone ask, What of positive moral value would have occurred in the world and what of negative moral value would have been avoided if I, as a representative of a place in the social structure, had comported myself differently? But everyone must ask, What would have occurred if I, as a spiritual individual, had grasped, willed and realized the "good-in-itself-for-me" . . . in a superior manner? The principle of solidarity is thus not precluded by the proposition that there is, in addition to the universally valid good-in-itself, an individually valid good-in-itself. On the contrary, this proposition [i.e., that there is a superadded good-in-itself-for-me] raises the principle [of solidarity] to the highest level that it can possible attain.411

Scheler holds that the good-in-itself is morally relevant precisely insofar as it is personalized—that is to say, insofar as it appears, not as a mere abstraction, but as a love-truth addressed to the person in his particularity as this someone. He explains that a person, "who refuses an act of love of ideal oughtness, which is to correspond to the other's worthiness to be loved, possesses coresponsibility for the negative value lying in the non-being of the positive value of responding love."412 That which is good-in-itself

410 Scheler, Formalism, 533–534.
411 Scheler, Formalism, 534. Scheler's emphasis; my [insertions].
412 Scheler, Formalism, 537.
imposes demands—it gives rise to the experience of "ought" in the form of "I ought to respond-in-love". Scheler does not wish to call this "ideal oughtness" a "duty", but he certainly sees it as resting in a factual value-truth which calls forth to each person individually in the form of a moral ought. Scheler unifies the whole of his thesis by referencing the centrality of God in the dynamics of the spiritual-personal community-of-coresponsibility. He explains that, "both the collective person and the individual person are responsible to the person of persons, to God, and, indeed, in terms of self-responsibility as well as coresponsibility."\(^{413}\) Thus, it is precisely, as he has already pointed out, in the Christian moment that this highest form of social communion comes to be recognized, and, indeed, becomes genuinely realizable.\(^{414}\)

The Schelerian influence in Wojtyla’s thought, here, is undeniable to any unprejudiced reader familiar with both figures. In his article, "Participation and Alienation," in which, again, he sets out to restate the thesis he had developed in The Acting Person, Wojtyla writes:

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\text{[A]lthough we may live and act in common with others in various societies, communities, and social groups, and although this life and activity may be accompanied by a basic awareness of each other's humanity, this alone does not actualize participation in that humanity. The actualization of participation in relation to every other human being arises before each of us as a task. It also seems that this is how we ought to explain the basic need for the commandment contained in the Gospel, a commandment whose complete validity—i.e., key ethical significance—people tend to accept regardless of their professed religion or worldview. On the basic, elementary, pre-ethical level, so to speak, the commandment of love is simply the call to experience another human being as another I, the call to participate in another’s humanity, which is concretized in the person of the other just as mind is in my person.}
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\text{The I-other relationship . . . does not exist in us as an already accomplished fact; only the potentiality for it exists. Experience shows that a certain impulse is needed to actualize this relationship. Although this impulse has been expressed in a commandment, this does not mean that it may remain merely on the outside. It must arise from within. The commandment of love prescribes only this: that each of us must continually set ourselves}
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\(^{413}\) Scheler, Formalism, 534.

\(^{414}\) Scheler, Formalism, 538: "... this unity of collective persons among themselves, as well as the unity of the individual person and the collective person, is possible in God alone. . . ."
the task of actually participating in the humanity of others, of experiencing the other as an I, as a person. This the impulse that the commandment expresses from without must in each instance arise from within. Is this inner impulse purely emotional, as Max Scheler seems to suggest? And does it have an exclusively spontaneous character?  

Lest the reader draw the erroneous and hasty conclusion that Wojtyla intends, by his closing questions in this passage, to repudiate Scheler on the point in question, the reader should note how closely Wojtyla’s overall remarks resemble those we have already considered from Scheler’s Formalism. Wojtyla distances himself, as we have already considered at great length, from what he sees as a kind of sentimentalism in Scheler’s thought, but not from Scheler’s overall approach to the problem presently under our consideration. Indeed, he goes on to say that, “Scheler’s analysis also provides an additional argument for maintaining that people have some sort of basic, innate disposition to participate in humanity as a value, to spontaneously open up to others.”  

Wojtyla does not reject Scheler’s stance on the present question, but, instead, seeks to mend its flaws. Recalling Scheler’s remarks concerning the “good-in-itself-for-me”—that is, the good as it presents itself as a personal address and vocation to the individual human being to respond-in-love, Wojtyla’s thought gains a new significance. He writes:

While in no way detracting from the importance of emotions and spontaneity in the development of authentic I-other relationships, it would be hard to deny that, since the other stands before us as a specific task, the actualization of such relationships always depends to a basic degree on the will. Experiencing another human being, one of the others, as another I always involves a discreet choice. First of all, it involves choosing this particular human being among others, which simply means that this particular one from among the others is hic et nunc given to me and assigned to me. The choice here consists in my acceptance of this particular individual’s I, my affirmation of the person. I thus in a sense choose this person in myself—in my own I—for I have no other access to another human being as an I except through my own I.  


416 Wojtyla, “Participation and Alienation,” 203.

417 Wojtyla, “Participation and Alienation,” 203–204.
In what remains of Wojtyla’s clarification and rehabilitation of Scheler’s overall insight, Wojtyla also reaffirms his basically Scotistic understanding of the will—or, more precisely, of the person through the faculty of the will—as a genuinely spontaneous cause of the person’s own acts. He explains:

An emotional disposition and a purely emotional spontaneity may facilitate this choice—but may also impede it. I have purposely used the term “emotional spontaneity” here because we must acknowledge the existence of another kind of spontaneity as well, namely, that of the will. The choice here seems to lie on the plane of the spontaneity of the will. The constitution of the I of another in my consciousness and will is not the result of choosing among people, among others; it is a matter, as I said, of choosing the human being who is hic et nunc given to me and assigned to me. This is also why I do not experience this choice as a choice. Rather, it is a matter of simply identifying one of the others as another I, which does not require a more prolonged process of the will—assent or conflict of motives, etc. 418

Wojtyla has, thus, attempted, not only to re-articulate Scheler’s overall position, but to explain why Scheler, according to Wojtyla’s reading of him, mistakes the movement of love as pure emotional spontaneity, neglecting the role of the will in the affirmation of values. That said, Wojtyla’s concept of participation, like Scheler’s concept of coresponsibility, involves the idea that, as Wojtyla says, “by the very nature of interpersonal community, the persons also become mutually responsible for one another.” 419 He explains that, “Such responsibility is a reflection of conscience and of the transcendence that for both the I and the thou constitutes the path to self-fulfillment and, at the same time, characterizes the proper, authentically personal dimension of community.” 420 Again, continuing along explicitly Schelerian lines, Wojtyla writes:

_We—as I said at the outset—does not signify just the simple fact of a human multi-subjectivity. It refers not only to the multiplicity of human I’s, but also to the special subjectivity of this multiplicity, or at least to a decided tendency toward the achievement of such a subjectivity. This is obviously a diversified_

418 Wojtyla, “Participation or Alienation,” 204.
tendency, which should be understood and realized in proportion to the different we’s and in accord with the specific communal nature proper to each of them. This tendency, together with the resulting realization of the subjectivity of the multiplicity, develops in one way in the case of a we such as marriage or the family, in another in the case of a particular circle, association, or social group, and in still another in the case of a nation, a country, or, finally, all humankind (the term “human family” also speaks very eloquently in this regard). In these different dimensions, the human I’s display a readiness not only to think of themselves in categories of a we but also to realize whatever is essential for the we, for social community. In the context of such community, therefore, and in keeping with its human essence, they also display a readiness to realize the subjectivity of the many, and, in the universal dimension, the subjectivity of all—for this is what a complete realization of the human we entails. It seems that only on the basis of this kind of social community, one in which a factual multi-subjectivity develops in the direction of the subjectivity of the many, can we perceive in the human we an authentic communio personarum. 421

Like Scheler, Wojtyla clearly considers the importance of the fact that the person can relate to the collective in various forms of alienation, but that the genuine communio personarum—what Scheler calls the “collective person”—consists in an interpenetration of the individual person with the whole, and with each other person so-related to the whole. Again, in words that recall Scheler’s own comments, Wojtyla writes:

It might seems as though transcendence toward a common good would lead us away from ourselves, or, more precisely, would lead us all away from the human being. A thorough analysis of this good, however, shows that the human being is deeply inscribed in the true meaning of the common good—the human being not as conceived in the species definition, but the human being as a person and subject. For this reason, too, the true meaning of the common good, its full “integrity” (honestas), is and must be in science a central issue for social ethics and in practice a matter of the greatest responsibility.

Wojtyla idea of participation closely resembles Scheler’s idea of coresponsibility, and appears to have been influenced by Wojtyla’s reading of Scheler’s work, especially in the Formalism. The two ideas are not entirely identical, but it would be disingenuous to

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deny the similarities and the situation of Wojtyla's thoughts within the personalist school as he finds himself a student of Scheler, and not merely his critic. Wojtyla's concept of participation will play a central role in his theological anthropology, and, as we will see, in his Mariology. Before we arrive at those considerations in the next two chapters of the present essay, we should provide, in broad strokes, a basic summary of Wojtyla's synthesis in *The Acting Person* as we have come to understand it in light of the foregoing points, and our analysis of his intellectual influences. Here, Wojtyla emerges as a kind of "Thomistic/Schelerian Personalist".

### 2.5: Wojtyla as a Thomistic/Schelerian Personalist:

According to Wojtyla, then, the synthesis of Scheler and Aquinas, along the lines discussed above, allows for a coherent articulation of the fact that the human being, through the exercise of agency properly so-called, in fact, makes himself good or evil, at the same time that the willing of the moral object is brought to realization. This, according to Wojtyla, is what a phenomenological analysis of the experience of the moral act gives to us as its real content. Thus, we must find a way to say, coherently, that, in a very meaningful sense, every moral object comports the self; and this, according to Wojtyla, is really the heart of what Aquinas had attempted to express. It is this comportment of the self that ultimately empowers the human act, not simply with a kind of horizontal transcendence, whereby the creature goes beyond himself to some intentional object, but vertical transcendence, whereby the person, conscious of his or her own orientation, goes beyond what he or she is-now, to become someone more fulfilled, or, if the chosen object is evil, less fulfilled. When the agent seeks to realize some object, he or she declares through the exercise of agency, "I will that reality is such as this." In so-doing, the agent simultaneously declares, "I will", and thus, "I will", and "I will this". In this way, the will as a true power—i.e., as something more than simply affective, but as effective, emerges as a central issue in Wojtyla's understanding of the human person and the human person's act. He writes:

422 Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 3.2 (112–113), 3.3 (120).
Since we are now considering the integral dynamism of the will we have first to gain a deeper insight into the problem of efficacy. This will bring us to view, as it were, a new dimension of the synthesis of efficacy and subjectiveness; for we shall now see the objectiveness appropriate to efficacy, the dynamic core of which consists in self-determination identifiable with the experience of "I will." Self-determination puts the ego, that is to say, the subject, in the place of the object. Thus, simultaneously, it effects the objectiveness of the ego in subjectiveness. 423

Another way of saying this is, "It is a truth about me that I embrace such a reality as a value—and, indeed, as a value of greater importance to me than the other values that compete with it for my valuation enjoy." 424 We ought, of course, to be careful about what we are, and are not, saying here. An otherwise virtuous man may find an evil object (e.g., an illicit sexual encounter) desirable at some level—and in that respect he may be said to value it. But this sort of passive valuation alone does not vitiate the character of the man, however much it may reveal an imperfection in that character. This inappropriate valuation is not, in other words, the cause of the man's defect in character, but a symptom of that defect—a defect the man diminishes over time, through the exercise of agency directed toward appropriate objects. 425 This process is known, classically, as habituation. It is only once the man chooses to engage a disordered value in preference to a properly ordered alternative value, that the man, through his action, realizes—that is to say, makes-real—his own immorality. That immorality in the man assumes the moral form of the external moral object, whatever it may be (in the above example, unchastity). Thus, furthermore, precisely as an object, the moral form (e.g. unchastity) rests, principally, not so much in the external moral object, but more properly in the very character of the willing

423 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 3.2 (112).


425 We should stress, here, that virtue as a perfect functioning of the human being through the exercise of his powers is rarely, if ever, found in the world of our own experience, Jesus and Mary excepted. Instead, human beings tend to approximate virtue to a greater or lesser degree of perfection, and warrant the descriptor virtuous, not because they are never subject to the influence of a merely apparent good, but because, in them, this temptation is overpowered by the command of reason and will to do what is good, not only apparently, but in fact.
agent. This is precisely the point, in Catholic moral thinking, behind distinctions such as those between culpable and invincible ignorance, so-called objective and subjective evil, and mortal and venial sin. Wojtyla calls this the intransitive dimension of the human act—that is, the act considered with respect to the self, who is, paradoxically, always the first object of the human act, precisely inasmuch as that act is an act of self-determination with respect to the subject’s ultimate values. He writes:

Implied in the intentionality of willing and acting, in man’s reacting outside of himself toward objects that he is presented with as different goods—and thus values—there is his simultaneous moving back into his ego, the closest and the most essential object of self-determination. This structure serves as the basis of morality—or of moral value as an existential reality—and it is owing to it that morality as a modality of conduct participates in the innerness of man and achieves a measure of durability in him. It is connected with the intransitiveness of actions but it also in a special manner itself constitutes the intransitiveness. Human actions once performed do not vanish without a trace: they leave their moral value, which constitutes an objective reality intrinsically cohesive with the person, and thus, a reality also profoundly subjective. Being a person man is “somebody” and being somebody he may be either good or bad.

To understand precisely why we must maintain this, from Wojtyla’s perspective, we must understand more thoroughly what

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426 Indeed, this is what Christ means when he says that it is not what goes into a man’s mouth that defiles him, but what comes out of it (Matt 15:11); for such reveals the inner character of the acting person. This is also the nature of the discussion in the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus speaks of the inner thoughts of the person, even where they are not realized in action (5:21–48). Here the issue is what the person intends to realize, whether or not he has the power to do so externally. Thus, in the Catholic Tradition, the Greek term ἀδυναμία has never been completely reducible to the single meaning, adultery or sexual immorality, but has always been understood to suggest a fundamental defect of personal integrity related, specifically, to one’s δύναμις for an unconditional commitment to another person without reservation, such that an act of total self-offering is rendered impossible in this agent. It is this that constitutes the ground for the idea that a sacrament, such as matrimony, may be subject to a decree of annulment.


he sees as the essential moment in the relationship between self-determination and personhood. Quite clearly, his reasoning is not that one is a person only while willing actively. Such a stance would oppose the existential Thomism to which he is especially partial. 429 It is not that we exist only inasmuch as we operate, but that we operate only inasmuch as we exist. One must insist upon this latter claim if any objective standard of reality is to be maintained. The principle of cause and effect necessitates it. If we maintain that one's personhood comes and goes with activity, we undermine the causal framework within which we can give an account of that activity's emergence; should this happen, we must view the emergence of activity as a chaotic, random event. Indeed, from this perspective, free will, at every level, is utterly destroyed; for the activity of "choice" is either a random, spontaneously emerging, counter-Parmenidean occurrence, 430 or else something caused in us wholly from without. Either way, it is something done

429 Rocco Buttiglione argues that Wojtyla tended to receive Thomism in this form, in contrast to that affirmed by more "conservative" Thomists in the Lublin school, who, with Garrigou-Lagrange, sought to purify Thomism from later interpolations. These prominent thinkers offered frank criticism of Wojtyla's work in The Acting Person—Criticism Wojtyla apparently found finally unpersuasive, given his "complete approval" of the revisions undertaken in cooperation with Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (ix). We do not wish to enter, here, into a discussion of the very complicated controversy surrounding this work—since the burden of proof would seem to rest on the shoulders of one who would question the author's own explicit declaration. In any event, with (and, indeed, to a greater extent than) Maritain, Wojtyla saw a rootedness in the intuitions of experience as the ultimate authority against which metaphysical speculation must be measured and checked. This set him at odds in many ways with the more conservative currents of his time, and especially, with the so-called "manualist" tradition.

430 That is to say, an occurrence that defies Parmenides' principle of the conservation of being, according to which non-being, inasmuch as it is entirely null, lacks any power of operation or production, and thus, cannot come to be, such that we cannot suddenly have something where before we had nothing. Later thinkers came to see, here, the basic principle of sufficient causality, according to which every non-eternal reality is necessarily contingent, inasmuch as the fact of its coming into being at all requires that there had existed a cause sufficient to produce it. In the end, this principle lays the foundation for Aquinas' arguments for God's existence on the grounds of the nature of efficient causality and the dependency of what is possible upon the necessary (Summa Theologiae I.2.iii).
to us, and not really by us. Even a stoic stance, from this perspective, fails; for we cannot, from this perspective, really choose even our emotional response. By contrast, if we insist that activity proceeds from existence, we can appeal to the power of production inherent in the act of being for the cause, at least cooperatively and contingently, of the emergent activity. The being is there, we must insist, as an objective fact about the cosmos; and it is from the stores of that being, as it is made to be according to the manner of its being, that agency is possible. When, therefore, we speak of a person, according to Wojtyla, we can speak neither of determinism nor indeterminism, but must speak insistently about auto-determinism or self-determinism. This principle will remain valid, as we have said, even as we enter upon the properly theological stage of the present study; for with respect to the question of salvation, while we must insist that the creature is made to be this way by grace, not simply by nature alone, the creature is, nonetheless, made to be this way—i.e. made to be a self-determining agent of responsibility. Through a properly human act, the human agent is both the subject and the object—not merely one or the other, but both at once.

That being said, as Wojtyla reads him, Max Scheler fails precisely in this moment. For, as we have said, Wojtyla sees Scheler as saying that the human person is fundamentally an affective reality. Willing is, for Scheler, a pure response to an uninitiated stimulus of affection, wholly outside the human person’s sphere of influence. Willing is not, from this perspective, an action at all, but a passion, such that the human being is purely a product of chance influences as the activity (not the act) of willing happens-in the human being. Because we cannot control the initial influences we face in our lives, and, on this model, all our willing is a mere response, determined wholly by these influences, the sense of self-determination would seem to reduce to an illusion. For Wojtyla, such an understanding of willing wholly destroys human personhood, where personhood is understood in any morally or philosophically significant sense. As we have

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already intimated, Wojtyla takes self-determination to mean that the human being has a kind of procreative power, even with respect to himself.\textsuperscript{434} He writes:

The performing of an action, through the fulfillment it brings, is coordinate with self-determination. It runs parallel to self-determination but as if it were directed in the opposite sense; for being the performer of an action man also fulfills himself in it. To fulfill oneself means to actualize, and in a way to bring to the proper fullness, that structure in man which is characteristic for him because of his personality and also because of his being somebody and not merely something; it is the structure of self-governance and self-possession.\textsuperscript{435}

To be sure, human persons are, admittedly, powerless to determine the parameters of our own nature. We can, however, participate in determining the degree of perfection to which we realize the parameters of that nature as individuals.\textsuperscript{436} As corporeal entities, we are born only partially realized in the instantiation of our formal character; more remains to be done in the manifestation of our nature. As rational, and therefore, voluntary agents, we can participate actively in our own, individual unfolding in time and space—our kinetic movement. How well we turn out in the end, therefore, has something to do with our own choices.

Contemporary skeptics may wish Wojtyla to demonstrate, at this point, that human beings do, indeed, possess such a power of self-determination; but here, Wojtyla shows his deep scholastic roots. However moderate a one he may be, he is a philosophical realist, taking for granted that the most fundamental core of our human experience of the world in fact tells us something true about that

\textsuperscript{434} By procreative, here, we mean, literally, that man works, in a contingent manner, as an agent in the process of creation, as God operates over and above, and metaphysically prior-to the human agency he creates in creating the human being. To say, therefore, that the human being is pro-creative, is not necessarily to reduce the claim to the realm of sexuality—although, to be sure, it is therein that the operation finds its fullest expression. Rather, pro-creation should be understood as a dimension of the reality of the human person’s power of self-determination whereby authentic transcendence contributes to the efficacious realization of the human person’s act of “I will” in harmony with God’s act of “I will.”

\textsuperscript{435} Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 4.1 (151).

\textsuperscript{436} Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 4.6 (177).
world's real and objective character. In the givenness of the phenomenal encounter, the human mind is able to engage more than a mere Kantian categorical experience without certain reference to an extra-mental noumenal reality; for Wojtyla, through the givenness of the phenomenal encounter, the human mind is able to engage the world itself. That being the case, the Kantian problem of the transcendental ego—the real, noumenal "I" irrespective of my phenomenal experience of self,437 is not a problem in Wojtyla's epistemological frame of reference, nor is the free will and self-determinability of the ego to be affirmed solely as a necessary moral postulate.438 Indeed, for Wojtyla, free will surely is a necessary moral postulate, but it comes to us in the very givenness of the phenomenal encounter; it is discovered in and through that encounter as we experience our free assumption of volitional postures in the face of those involuntary affections wrought by the objects which impress themselves upon us. In this way, the "necessary moral postulate" of free will is also a dimension of our lived experience, and no mere intellectual construct. Wojtyla writes:

The remarkable feature in the interpretation of acting, of the action, that we are representing in this study [i.e. The Acting Person] is that the person is already presumed in it; to unveil step by step the reality of action we have simultaneously to uncover the deeper layers of the person. The person's dynamic activation is, on the one hand, the primordial experiential fact and, on the other, the


438 For Kant, freedom is indemonstrable to reason, and must be taken, therefore, not as a self-evident truth, but as a necessary moral postulate—that is, as a hypothetical necessity, should we wish to ground a system of morality. For this reason, the concept of freedom as a rational prerequisite of morality is bound up with his formulation of the so-called categorical imperative, which rests, as a moral foundation, upon the only bedrock of self-evident truth he leaves himself—namely, that phenomena are received into intelligible categories, which fact alone, without sure reference to any external reality, constitutes the meaning and character of rationality. His discussion of freedom as a necessary moral postulate occurs in his Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals (446–463). See Immanuel Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals, James W. Ellington, trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1981), 49–61.
final theme and objective of interpretation, which we are gradually approaching.\textsuperscript{439}

Wojtyla, therefore, does not see the purpose in attempting to demonstrate the fact of free self-determination, embedded as it is, in the very givenness of human self-awareness, but to analyze the nature of the experience of choice and action against the backdrop it provides, for the sake of discerning the core truth about our personhood.\textsuperscript{440} For Wojtyla, self-determinability is a self-evident truth upon which our natural sense of morality stands at the first moments of conscious human willing. He writes:

This shape, the shape of transcendence, is in concrete that of human existence: it is the shape of human life itself. Man as the person both lives and fulfills himself within the perspective of his transcendence. Is it not freedom, obligation, and responsibility which allows [sic] us to see that not only truthfulness but also the person’s surrender to truth in judging as well as in acting constitute the real and concrete fabric of the personal life of man? Indeed, it is on them that, as we have more than once endeavored to bring to light in our analyses, the entire phenomenological structure of self-governance and self-possession is based.\textsuperscript{441}

What remains, then, is for us to discern precisely what it is in us that we are determining in the act of self-determination. Here, again, we must return to the distinction between human being on the one hand, and, on the other, the human person, properly speaking. While we cannot determine our nature, nor the fact that we are this-individual-here as opposed to that-individual-there, we can determine the quality of individual we wish to become. We can, to be sure, change ourselves in ontologically significant respects through our choices, rendering ourselves good examples of human beings or bad. Indeed, we may be good or bad in any number of non-moral respects, simply by genetic accident—we may possess a natural aptitude for gymnastics, or else be naturally inept in sport—but such non-moral qualities remain entirely upon the surface of our identity, failing to cut to the heart of our essential being. Moral characteristics, however, are different. They

\textsuperscript{439} Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, 3.7 (136).

\textsuperscript{440} Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, Introduction, 2 (10–11).

\textsuperscript{441} Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, 4.7 (181).
constitute us as good or bad, without reference to some particular power, but simply—they make us good or bad persons. 442

This is the heart of the matter. Wojtyla objects to the tendency of philosophers to rest upon a static definition of the human person, such as Aristotle's rational animal (or animal that has λόγος) or Boëthius' individual substance possessed of a rational nature. Nonetheless, he insists that such definitions provide a necessary starting point for a more dynamic analysis—an analysis focused upon the kinetic movement of the individual substance in the process of becoming who and what we are intended to be. 443 There must be something in particular for us to become if the moral experience—that such-and-such is right and thus-and-so is wrong—is to be more than an illusion of bald sentimentality, as it is, for example, in the thought of Hume, 444 and, according to Wojtyla, for somewhat different yet historically related reasons, in the thought of Scheler. 445 The human act is thus taken to be the

442 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 4.1 (151).

443 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, Draft Preface (xiii–ix). By kinetic movement we mean, again, specifically, the process of κίνησις, whereby a thing is seen to move from a specific potentiality, toward a specific actuality, such that the entity subsists, properly, in the fact of its coming-to-be-this-specific-kind-of-thing.


445 Scheler is responding to Kant, who responds to Hume. It seems that Scheler desires to supply some objective ground for Hume's gross sentimentalism, so as to acknowledge what is worthy in Hume's insights without allowing the loss of all moral universality. His unwillingness to opt for Kant's solution is understandable, and is, indeed, shared by Wojtyla. Kant's formalism, as a morality based in the presumably universal categories of intellectual thought, reduces entirely to the question of whether or not a course of conduct could be sustained if it were undertaken always and by everyone. This reduction to the abstract does violence to the uniqueness and historicity of each person, whose condition in the world is, while more or less similar to that of others, yet in some particular respects, utterly unique and unrepeatable, and thus, non-universalizable. Kant's formalism, therefore, cannot adequately account for the person who is a concrete historical and somatic reality. Nonetheless, Scheler's response to Kant is not altogether acceptable to Wojtyla, because it emphasizes the somatic-affective dimension of the
exercise of the power within the human being to engage his own kinetic movement, and to aid in, or to impede his own individual coming to be—i.e., coming to manifest what God intends to objectify in the creation of this-particular-individual-here. Make no mistake; the human being is capable of interjecting an intention of his own, especially in the sense that much of what we will become is intended by God to be our own choice. Whether, for instance, we will be married or not, consecrated or not, ordained or not, depend, at least in part, upon our own choice in the face of what is offered to us. God may, indeed, call us to one or another state in life, but he seems also—it is phenomenologically clear—to allow us the power to refuse. Indeed, where personal choice is lacking, the end in question simply cannot be realized—no matter what extrinsic causes are employed. Indeed, this is the very intuition that rests at the basis of the Catholic Church’s acknowledgment of matrimonial nullity on the ground of defective consent. 446 Nonetheless, our intentions are contingent for their efficacy upon their compatibility with the divine intention, since the very power whereby we intend is contingent upon the divine power. 447 For this reason, we are capable of intending inefficaciously, in a manner of speaking, at the very ontological moment when an efficacious intention is required in the kinetic movement God has made us to

human person to the detriment of the objectivity of reason which is, however much Kant overplayed it, nonetheless, an indispensable dimension of the human being’s engagement with his or her world of experience. For a concise discussion of Scheler’s sentimentalist ethical perspective, see Peter H. Spader, Scheler’s Ethical Personalism: Its Logic, Development, and Promise (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), especially 121–125, where he presents Scheler’s four-tiered value-system in outline. 446 Cf. Codex Iuris Canonici, Cans. 1089, 1095–1107. 447 Without entering, here, into a lengthy discussion of tangential questions, we should note that this is really the core issue in all questions wherein the Church does not discern any authority to alter an extant covenantal structure, such as male-only priesthood, the indissolubility of marriage, or exclusive legitimacy of monogamo-heterosexual marriage, to name only a few. No matter what philosophical and theological arguments can and ought to be advanced in an effort to penetrate more fully into these truths, the underlying point remains that they are, in fact, truths given by God, and thus, not subject to alteration by the creature. We can grant or withhold our assent to those truths, but we cannot supplant them. They enjoy a real ontological status derived from God’s own creative intention.
engage. The result is that, for all our volitional effort, we achieve nothing; and we mean to say this in the ontological sense. We achieve non-being where we ought to have achieved some-being. When we do this, we leave ourselves partially uninstantiated as individual persons: we are not fully what—or perhaps, more properly, who—we ought to be. By intending inefficaciously, we thus cause ourselves positive harm. Wojtyla writes:

[T]he performance of the action by the person should not be seen as having a purely ontological significance; on the contrary, we should attribute to it also an axiological significance, since, as we have proposed above, the performance itself of the action by the person is a value. If we call this value “personalistic” it is because the person performing the action also fulfills himself in it, that is, acquires a personal feature. In reverse, “moral evil” may be regarded as the opposite of fulfillment; indeed, it is a nonfulfillment of the self in acting. When the person actualizes himself in the action, his appropriate structure of self-governance and self-possession is manifested. It is in this actualization, which we have defined as “performance of the action,” that ethical value is rooted; it [i.e., ethical value] emerges and develops on the “substratum” of the personalistic value, which it permeates but as we have already noted, is not to be identified with it.448

This fact will be of eternal significance; for in failing to become what or whom we ought, we fail to become fully proportionate to our ultimate object of volition, which is fulfillment—and ultimately, fulfillment in and through our intimate communal uplifting into the inner life of God. Failure at the level of ethical valuation indicates, as a symptom, failure at the level of personal valuation, whereby, according to more traditional phraseology, we “miss the mark” of our ultimate teleological vocation—that is to say, we “sin.”449 Moral and ontological fulfillment thus become, in the end, the same thing for us, such that we cannot entertain the notion of happiness apart from virtue. It is virtue—which, as a tendency to do good, finds its completion in the action whereby good is done—that disposes us to the fullness of being, in a reality

448 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 7.2 (26–266).

449 The Greek quaprávo is the consistent rendering throughout the New Testament. It means, literally, “to miss the mark.” Its distinctly covenantal implications come from the revelation—fully unfolded in the Incarnation wherein the Old Testament threads of “Son of God” and “Son of Man” become one in the Christ—that the “mark” in question is the unending life of interpersonal covenant with God.
in which being and goodness are identical. Thus, any human action, according to Wojtyła, even where no external object is realized, nonetheless forms a manifestation of the acting person who wills that act internally. As persons, we are, by nature, public entities, constituted for relationship. To the degree to which we remain uninstantiated, we are manifestly so, just as to the degree to which we are well-instantiated, we are manifestly so. In this way, we can speak, as we ought, about what is private in contrast to what is personal. While our sins may be principally personal, no sin, from this perspective, is ever exclusively so. This is because persons, as inherently relational beings, impact one another of necessity by our very act of being, as well as by the quality of that act. Our sins should rather be described as private, in the literal sense—that is to say that they manifest a lack of some due form (from the Latin privatio). Insofar as they are externally evil, they are merely bad; but insofar as we can understand them with reference to the inner person—i.e., as failures at the level of the human act, and thus as efficacious (or inefficacious) manifestations of the personalistic value—they manifest a lack within the very character of the person who acts, insofar as he acts to this end; and this is the meaning of the term moral evil or sin. Moral evil is a failure, through the power of will, to manifest what is proper to us as persons. It is a failure, in other words, to manifest what is proper, not simply to our nature, but to us, according to our specific nature precisely as integral psychosomatic persons. We can speak, therefore, not merely of sins of commission, but also of omission, insofar as we ought, at times, effect certain sorts of relations in certain sorts of ways, but choose not to do so.

With this, Wojtyła’s understanding of the notion of participation as something not merely ontological but fundamentally personal, or personalistic, becomes clear. In the end, this represents a divergence in Wojtyła’s thinking, from Classical Thomism, which

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450 See, Wojtyła, The Acting Person, 3.2 (114–115), where Wojtyła discusses the “immanent act.”

451 See, Wojtyła, The Acting Person, 3.7 (139), where Wojtyła discusses the “moment of truth.” Cf., also, his play, The Jeweler’s Shop, in which he speaks of the specific weight of a man—that is to say, the moral weight of a man as a man-person who has given himself a sort of moral mass through his choices and acts. On this issue, see, Joseph Rice, “On the ‘Proper Weight of a Man’: Reexamining the Poetic Foundations of Wojtyła’s Theory of Participation,” in, Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophical Legacy, (297–324).
tends to treat the notion of participation in purely receptive, and to that extent, ultimately passive rather than active terms. According to Wojtyla, "to be a person means to be capable of participation." But Wojtyla is careful, here, to develop the concept of participation beyond its traditional parameters. To do this, he first notes that the traditional conception of the human being rests principally on the ground of nature. He explains:

[T]he nature of man is supposed to be rational and he is the person in virtue of the function of reason; but at the same time he has a "social" nature. In this respect the way of thinking about man has evolved not toward the rejection of the principle itself but rather in search of a better understanding and more comprehensive interpretations. . . . Our questions thus refer to the meaning of

452 Classical Thomists, such as Báñez and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, speak of the human will's activation in the sense that God, having given the human person a power, must additionally actualize that power by concretely making the person exercise that power. The ad hoc assertion is made that this metaphysical account does not destroy human freedom, because God creates us as free. In other words, he infallibly and efficaciously wills, in this individual, that he do-X freely. This explanation, however, merely begs the larger question, reducing the concept of contingency to nothing other than ontological dependency, and refusing the question of whether an act can really be called "free" in any sense that comports moral responsibility, if the object of choice is already infallibly determined, and the "agent" unable to effect any alternate future from the one eternally willed by God. The Classical Thomist, while asserting that each and every detail of history, down to the internal states of human willing, unfold only, and exactly, as God eternally decrees, simultaneously asserts that human beings are free and responsible. Compatibilists, they are able to affirm both these propositions at once because human freedom, like human being, is participated, rather than self-subsistent. But they so contrast participated being with self-subsistent being that they strip the notion of participation of any active dynamism. Thus, their compatibilism ultimately reflects a fundamentally different understanding of freedom, agency, and even personhood, from that which Wojtyla seems to espouse. For two revealing articles on the Classical Thomistic understanding of participated freedom, see, Steven A. Long, in his article, "Providence, Freedom, and Natural Law", Nova et Vetera, English Edition, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2006): 557–606; and Thomas M. Osborne, Jr., "Thomist Premotion and Contemporary Philosophy of Religion," Nova et Vetera, English Edition, Vol. 4, No. 3 (2006): 607–632.

these assertions from the point of view of acting, that is, of the
dynamic correlation of the action with the person.\textsuperscript{454}

Wojtyla intends, therefore, to place the focus not so much on what
it is to be human, but on what it is to be a person, or more
specifically, a man-person or a human-person, where personhood,
as a concept, is bound-up with the experience of free self-
determination in action. Rather than seeing the nature of the human
being under a variety of different lenses—i.e., that of rationality,
on the one hand, and that of sociality on the other, an integral view
can be taken of the human person-in-action as he or she acts as an
individual, or within the context of any one of the indefinite
number of social relationships into which human beings can
embrace initiation. In the end, the notion of sociality in human
action can be deepened with recourse to the "personalistic value,"
such that the emphasis upon nature is, in fact, exposed as, not so
much incorrect, but superficial and consequently, in certain
respects, misleading. For Wojtyla, a proper understanding of the
notion of participation requires not simply ontological dependency,
but communally-referenced, mutually co-responsible, personal
agency or cooperation. It requires that the individual determines
himself in the very act of willing and working for a communal
value. Again, Wojtyla does not suggest that the traditional
articulation is false, but that it does not probe deeply enough into
its subject. He, therefore, offers us, as he sees it, a more
contemporary insight, namely, that participation "corresponds to . . . the integration of the person in the action."\textsuperscript{455} With this new
orientation, he goes on to explain that:

To be capable of participation thus indicates that man, when he
acts together with other men, retains in this acting the personalistic
value of his own action and at the same time shares in the
realization and the results of communal acting. Owing to this
share, man, when he acts together with others, retains everything
that results from the communal acting and simultaneously brings
about—in this very manner—the personalistic value of his own
action.\textsuperscript{456}

\textsuperscript{454} Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 7.3 (267–268).

\textsuperscript{455} Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 7.3 (269). My emphasis.

\textsuperscript{456} Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 7.3 (269).
If we insist, therefore, upon a view of participation that reduces it to a mere *linkage* between the human being and some transcendent object—whether that transcendent object be another human being, a human community, or even, we suggest, the divine essence—we miss what is most fundamental to the very *experience* of participation, and thus, what is most fundamental to the human *person* whose experience it is. This is not, of course, to deny the reality of human dependency upon the divine—a reality knowable by natural reason unaided by grace—but only to say that such dependency must be understood in such a way as to allow for a truly meaningful affirmation of auto-determinism. The merely *ad hoc* assertion that the human being is a "secondary efficient cause" of his own act, while simultaneously asserting that God’s eternal, infallible, and immutable will has set our lives on a predetermined and unalterable course, the outcome of which is already decided, simply will not do. The notion, therefore, of a salvation that merely *happens-to* the human being, and does not, in any meaningful way, involve the human person as a free and responsible agent who, in and through his actions, can alter his destiny, is not really a notion of salvation consistent with real *personhood*—even a *participated* personhood. But this means that Wojtyla/John Paul II’s articulation of *participation* will have implications even in the order of grace, and will provide explanatory power for much of what apostolic Christianity affirms, in contradistinction to Protestant denials of those theses.

Precisely what these points are, and how they ought to be understood from within the personalist framework provided by Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II will be the subject of subsequent chapters. But suffice it to say, for our purposes here, that, Wojtyla has provided this foundation by producing a lively synthesis of the philosophical views of both Aquinas and Scheler, purifying and perfecting one through the contribution of the other, leading us to something really quite new in our understanding of both the human person and the human person’s act, while, at the same time, decidedly traditional. That being said, he cannot be reduced to a simple *Thomist*, nor can he be said to receive Scheler without serious reservation and correction. In the end, as we have said, he offers a selective synthesis of two profoundly different thinkers, not eclectically and *ad hoc*, but with the sort of synthetic genius typically ascribed to Aquinas’ integration of Aristotelian metaphysics into the received teaching and Tradition of the Church. As we have said, the deeper significance of this fact will become apparent in the subsequent chapters of the present study,
as we begin to treat the properly theological dimensions of Wojtyla/John Paul II's personalism. Indeed, like Aquinas before him, Wojtyla/John Paul II supplies the Church with a new philosophical foundation upon which theologians can explore the constant and unchanging Truth of the Faith, especially as it pertains to the topic at hand in our broader study—that of the acting person in the order of grace. Rocco Buttiglione suggests, in fact, that *The Acting Person* is intended, "as an attempt to give a philosophical account of the conception of man presupposed in the conciliar documents." 457

2.6: Summary Comments on the Place of Our Analysis of the Thought of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II, Concerning the Acting Person, within the Context of Select Recent Scholarship:

As we have already said, the thought of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II has become the focus of a great deal of scholarly attention in recent decades; and while a great deal of attention has been paid to his personalism in general, those studies do not develop in depth the issues at the heart of the present dissertation as a unity. Once again, we note that much of the scholarship today is dedicated to the technical content of Wojtyla's personalist philosophical perspective as such, 458 and that the bulk of studies can be divided


into two categories—namely: 1) those dealing with sexuality, marriage and family issues, and the surrounding moral questions;\(^{459}\) and 2) those dealing with questions of economics, political theory, and social justice.\(^{460}\) We had noted, as well, that


\(^{459}\) This has not been the focus of the present work, so we cite, only by way of illustration, the following examples in the academic arena: Damian P. Fedoryka, John Paul II as a Prophet of Life in a Culture of Death, *Faith & Reason*, Vols. XXIV–XXV (1999–2000): 67–84; William E. May, “The ‘New’ Evangelization, Catholic Moral Life in Light of *Veritatis splendor*, and the Family, *Nova et Vete*, English Edition, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Fall 2004): 393–402; also, see, Richard H. Bulzacchelli, “Opening the Self to the Other: A Personalist Response to Contemporary Challenges to Catholic Sexual Ethics,” Ethical issues in Sex and Marriage, Spring 2008 Institute of Bioethics Conference, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Steubenville, OH (March 2008), although the thought of Wojtyla/John Paul II is not the exclusive focus of the essay. The preponderance of contributions on John Paul II’s theology of the body, in spite of the heavily academic flavor of the work, has been offered to populist audiences. For a notable exception to this rule, of course, see Michael Waldstein’s extensive commentary in, John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, Michael Waldstein, trans. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 1–128.

there has been overlap, but that, most relevant to us, at this point, are studies with still a different emphasis not yet widely represented in the literature.

Our concern, as we had mentioned earlier, rests in the personalist thinking of John Paul II, precisely as it comes to bear upon the more mystical dimension of the Catholic world-view—in particular, the participation of the creature in the process of redemption. This as yet underexplored area of inquiry promises to bear a great deal of fruit. We had noted that Wojtyla played a significant role in the Second Vatican Council, especially in the composition of *Lumen gentium* and *Gaudium et spes*, and that it is reasonable to suppose that, as suggested by his pre-papal work, *Sources of Renewal*, he would go on to apply his personalist perspective to the work of the council as the proper hermeneutical lens through which the conciliar documents ought to be interpreted. In the following chapter of the present study, we examine the issue of John Paul II’s involvement in the Second Vatican Council as we explore the development of the personalist trajectory of thought in magisterial interventions throughout the course of the twentieth century, through the texts of the Council.

Indeed, we contend that John Paul II did, in fact, endeavor to interpret the Council for the Church. But, once again, we would like to focus particularly upon the personalistic dimension of the

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thought of Wojtyla as it comes to bear upon the question of participation in grace as an efficacious act of self-determination, and that, as concerns the question of creaturely interpersonal intercession, most fully realized in the person of Mary.

This is an important question. The association of John Paul II with Thomism is well-known; but it may also be over-assessed. In his Keynote Speech for the International Conference on Karol Wojtyla’s Philosophical Legacy at Saint Joseph’s College in West Hartford Connecticut, March 22, 2006, Köchler forthrightly addressed the tendency to reduce Wojtyla to a mere Thomist. Critiquing Samuel Gregg’s reading of Wojtyla in his book, Challenging the Modern World: John Paul II/Karol Wojtyla and the Development of Catholic Social Teaching, Köchler sees Gregg as someone, “who obviously wants to see Wojtyla’s philosophical conception absorbed by the theological tradition of Catholicism.” Köchler takes issue with a tendency Gregg, in fact, shares with a number of contemporary interpreters of John Paul II’s thought. For such thinkers, “John Paul II’s prePontifical writings merely acknowledge ‘insights into the truth which emerge outside the Church,’ using language that is familiar to contemporary audiences, as if the writing of The Acting Person was a mere tactical move by a theologian and Church politician.” Köchler is not at all surprised at the outcome of this approach to Wojtyla’s thought. He writes, “It is no wonder that in such a narrow hermeneutical context, lacking proper understanding for Wojtyla as a philosopher, ‘The Acting Person reads like a neo-Thomism couched in Husserlian language.’

Köchler, however, sees this sort of reduction of Wojtyla’s thought to Thomism as an unnuanced interpretation of Wojtyla that

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467 Köchler cites, here Gregg, Challenging the Modern World, 62.


does not manifest an adequate appreciation of his involvement in the phenomenological movement. Köchler, of course, is in a position to speak with authority on matters of dispute among John Paul II’s interpreters, offering scholars today the benefit of his first-hand knowledge regarding Wojtyła/John Paul II’s stance as a phenomenologist. To my satisfaction, Köchler puts to rest any contest over the trustworthiness of the English translation of *The Acting Person*,\(^\text{470}\) upon which we have relied for the purpose of the present study. Not only does he note the publication’s own official preface by Wojtyła, in which Wojtyła gives his “full approval” to the English Translation,\(^\text{471}\) but he introduces other first-hand evidence of the true mind of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II. In a matter on which a scholar must finally take a stand for or against a particular text, Köchler’s testimony, uncontroverted by other such proofs, may enjoy the presumption of authority, in establishing the English text of *The Acting Person* as the definitive version of Wojtyła’s work, just as it claims to be. It would be helpful, here, however, to provide a summary of the evidence Köchler presents, in the context of a contrasting set of objections that appear, for our purposes here, to miss the larger point in favor of a comparatively minor, and tangential issue, however validly argued it happens to be. In light of the analysis conducted in this chapter and the chapter before it, the reader should see that whatever shortcomings may be rightly ascribed to the English text of *The Acting Person*, they do not obscure those elements in Wojtyła’s thinking that reflect his genuinely scholastic and Thomistic sympathies, especially when the text of *The Acting Person* is read in light of Wojtyła’s many other writings.

In his article, “Karol Wojtyła’s Mutual Enrichment of the Philosophies of Being and Consciousness,” George F. McLean provides a succinct exposition of the central criticism leveled

\(^{470}\) Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, , 1.6, 2.2 (especially pp. 66–67), 2.5. A revised Polish edition was published in 1985, but it is unrelated to the “definitive” revision undertaken in association with Tymieniecka. We can remark only briefly, here, upon the broad contours of the ongoing debates surrounding the degree of authority to be accorded to the English edition over against the Polish or the many foreign translations based upon it. The reader should be reminded, however, that the English translation is made from a “definitive” Polish manuscript, which Wojtyła himself had approved, and that this is not the manuscript used in the original Polish edition, nor in the revised Polish edition.

against the English-language edition of *The Acting Person*. He writes:

Wojtyla's project was too focal to the progress of philosophical insight to escape those who thought in terms merely of one or the other component, that is, of consciousness or of being and essence. Though some now suspect later interference by Vatican theologians in these matters, this article ["Person: Subject and Community"] was written two years before Cardinal Wojtyla was named Pope, while the English edition of the *Acting Person* was in the process of being edited. In order to assure that the English translation of the original Polish would be effective for an English readership Cardinal Wojtyla had asked the help of the editor of the *Analecta Husserliana*, in which his previous articles had appeared. In the process some elements essential to the Scholastic notion of the person, such as "substance" and "supposit" (e.g., for Capreolus, supposit was substance precisely as with its corresponding esse) were removed from the *Acting Person* and replaced by phenomenological terms related to consciousness. As a result, rather than the objective notion of person being enriched by a philosophy of consciousness, it was replaced thereby. In turn, the replacement lacked the foundation in being which Wojtyla considered necessary for the philosophy of consciousness.

Continuing with his exposition, McLean explains that Wojtyla's article, "Person and Community," which we have already studied, was intended as a summary of *The Acting Person*, and that this article employed the scholastic terms that had been edited out of the book. He says:

At the same time, Cardinal Wojtyla wrote an extensive summary of the *Acting Person* entitled, "Person and Community" to be published in another channel, namely, *The Review of Metaphysics*. He had this translated by Sr. Emilia Ehrlich and passed it to me with the request that I assure its effectiveness for an English readership.

What seems especially notable is that in the first 14 pages of "Person and Community" which summarize the *Acting Person*, he used the technical terms 'substance' and 'supposit' (substance as exercising its proportioned esse) some 38 times. Without doubt he intended to insist with the greatest emphasis upon the importance

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of the very terms which were in the process of being removed from the English edition of the *Acting Person*. Indeed, John Paul II later requested that these terms be restored to the *Acting Person* when a second edition was being planned — which, however, never eventuated.\(^{474}\)

Without questioning the substance, so to speak, of McLean’s point, it seems to me that, historically speaking, it has proven to be rather inconsequential. No commentator in fact questions the centrality of the concepts of *object*, *substance*, or *suppositum* in the thinking of Karol Wojtyla. It may be that in making the editorial decisions so widely criticized in the literature, Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka had simply acted on the confidence that any changes of the sort she had made would not lead to any confusion concerning these points, but would have the effect of “assuring the work’s effectiveness for an English readership,” which, in this case, was expected to consist mainly of phenomenologists—the focal audience of *Analecta Husserliana*. If John Paul II admitted himself that “the basic concept of the work has remained unaltered,”\(^{475}\) but still wished to insist upon the centrality of the concepts of *substance* and *suppositum*, among other Scholastic terms, his true motive may well have been his now clearly unwarranted concern that in the absence of this terminology, serious interpretive errors would result in the minds of his readers. In truth, it is not the centrality of the philosophy of being and essence in Wojtyla’s thought that has widely failed to traverse his reader’s interpretive threshold, but the philosophy of consciousness with its truly profound and nuanced emphasis upon the centrality of the subject of action and experience. In spite of everything, it is this dimension of his thought that appears most broadly overlooked, and at the expense of that very “enrichment” he had intended to provide. Perhaps, in the end, the fact that John Paul II had not followed through with his intention to publish a second English edition reflects his eventual realization that he had misjudged the hermeneutical context within which the first English edition had been received, and had come to see that any changes of the sort he had originally intended would likely serve only to exacerbate the actual problem, which ran counter his initial expectations.

\(^{474}\) George F. McLean, “Karol Wojtyla’s Mutual Enrichment of the Philosophies of Being and Consciousness,” 25.

McLean's personal and professional relationship with Wojtyla extended to "the deepest years of the Cold War," when, on Wojtyla's advice, McLean founded The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, in the mid-1970's. Köhler's history is equally authoritative; and, with respect to the overall implications of Wojtyla's thought, he and McLean appear, in the end, to find themselves in substantive agreement. Even beyond this general agreement in their respective assessments of Wojtyla's position, however, Köchler's authority among Wojtyla interpreters must be ranked in the first order. Tracing his relationship with Wojtyla back to 1974, Köchler establishes credible evidence that his own reading of the later pope's mind is unquestionably accurate. He writes:

I was especially interested in his view of "participation" which he had outlined in his written contribution to the Fribourg colloquium made available to me in advance. He distinguished between the mere sociological phenomenon of a group of human beings and a community in the sense of an interdependent relationship in which "the other" is part of my personal self-determination, i.e. not perceived as a mere "object," but determinative and corrective of my self-experience and identity — was exactly what I had aspired to work out in my hermeneutical approach towards what we call today the "dialogue of civilizations." Explaining the content of Wojtyla's view of "participation" and his own view of "dialogue of civilizations", and their respective related concepts, Köchler notes that Wojtyla had explicitly pronounced his own position to be essentially identical to that of Köchler. Köchler writes:

In a lecture on "The Cultural-philosophical Aspects of International Co-operation" delivered in March 1974 before the Royal Scientific Society in Amman (Jordan), I tried to explain

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476 McLean, "Karol Wojtyla's Mutual Enrichment of the Philosophies of Being and Consciousness," 27.

477 McLean, "Karol Wojtyla's Mutual Enrichment of the Philosophies of Being and Consciousness," 27.

478 Köchler, "Karol Wojtyla's Notion of the Irreducible," 166.

the phenomenon of cultural identity in terms of the dialectical nature of consciousness as manifested in the interdependent relationship between the self and the other. Thus, what Wojtyła had called the "personal structure of self-determination," had been identified in my system of cultural hermeneutics as the basis of a philosophy of "cultural self-comprehension," i.e. a civilizational dialogue. 480 This made me rather susceptible to an approach, such as Wojtyła's, that was oriented towards a definition of subjectivity – or personal identity – in the sense of an interdependent relationship between ego and alter ego (which I had characterized as "dialectical" in the strict Hegelian sense481).

In line with this common approach, it was understandable that the then Cardinal of Kraków, in a letter dated 12 February 1975, had confirmed to me that the interpretation which I had advanced under the title "The Dialectical Conception of Self-Determination" fully expressed his own intentions as outlined in his paper on "Participation or Alienation?" 482 In the text of the published article (1977), he had acknowledged the co-operation that led to my writing a companion paper to his text. 483

Continuing his discussion concerning his personal and professional interactions with Wojtyła/John Paul II, Köhler recalls John Paul II's own words, spoken to him in a private audience in connection with the Annual Conference of the Italian Section of

References:


481 Köhler's n. 15: In the context of cultural hermeneutics and personalistic anthropology such as the one advanced here this notion has nothing to do with the field of social theory covered by Marxist doctrine.

482 Köhler's reference: Carolus Cardinalis Wojtyła, Archiepiscopus Metropolita Cracoviensis, letter dated Kraków, 12 February 1975 (German) [in the author's personal archive]: "... Only a limited amount of material was available to you as source of information on my conception; in view of this, your profound understanding of my conception deserves even higher respect ..." (Trans. from the German original / H.K.)

the International Husserl and Phenomenological Research Society, held that year in Viterbo, Italy, in February of 1979. At this conference, Köchler had presented a paper on Wojtyla's phenomenology of the person entitled, "La fenomenologia del Cardinale Karol Wojtyla. Sul problema d'un'antropologia a base fenomenologica."484 "After that meeting," recalls, Köchler:

... our group was received by John Paul II in the Vatican. In a personal conversation, he assured me that he will always remain committed to the phenomenological movement and consider himself a phenomenologist; but he also made clear that he would not be able to take an active part in the debates of the phenomenological community any longer. Irrespective of his disengagement from daily philosophical work due to the assumption of his high office in 1978, he remained loyal to the personalistic philosophy of his phenomenological period -- as I was able to observe during the long years of his pontificate ...485

That said, Köchler sees a point of tension between Wojtyla's personalist anthropology and his basically Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysic. According to Köchler, this tension exists for Wojtyla because the Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysic is fundamentally objectivistic in its approach to reality,486 while the personalist approach is fundamentally subjectivistic. In characterizing personalism as fundamentally subjectivistic, however, it is

486 Without digressing into a lengthy and discussion of tangential considerations, we suggest that the properly Thomistic view is actually somewhat more thoroughly objectivistic than the Aristotelian view. Aristotle seems, clearly, to allow for a full range of formation in a continuum between prime matter and pure actuality, leading to a world in which most "objects" are not true substances. Aquinas seems to accord substantial reality to nearly every physical entity, seemingly unaware of Aristotle's distinction, available to him in Greek, between a τὸ δὲ τι (tode ti = some-this) and a ύποκείμενον (hypokeimenon = underlying unity). For Aristotle, a rock is not a true substance because it is not a ύποκείμενον. A rock split in two is, indeed, two rocks, quite unlike a dog, which cannot be split in two without being destroyed in the process. I have explored these and other distinctions in my paper, "From Atoms to Organs: Rethinking Hylomorphism Courageously," The Annual Conference of the American Maritain Association, Nashville, Tennessee (2006).
important to understand that neither Köchler nor Wojtyla means to suggest anything reducible to a form of relativism. Theirs is a view in which subjectivity, in contrast to subjectivism, is given primacy. Yet even our terminology seems rooted in a fundamentally objectivistic criterion of truth-value assessment, when the question is posed, “what is the objective truth?” Indeed, it seems nearly impossible to avoid this sort of phrasing when attempting to distinguish the truth as it exists, whether it is known by another or not, from the manner in which the knower apprehends it. None of this is to say, of course, that Wojtyla denies the category of kath auto being. It is, rather, to insist that he affirms the category of the personal subject in a way that requires a different mode of understanding than that associated with mere objects. 487

He makes this point, in essence, in his preface to the English/American edition of The Acting Person, where he discusses the historico-conceptual frame within which he found himself taking the personalist turn. Noting that Immanuel Kant had developed his pure, categorical duty ethic—his so-called formalism—in an attempt to recover that which is genuinely objective in the moral arena, Wojtyla perceives that this basic controversy, as Scheler successfully pointed out for him, “presents at its very root the problem of the subject, namely, the problem of the person, or of the human being as a person.” 488 He goes on:

This presentation of the problem, completely new in relation to traditional philosophy (and by traditional philosophy we understand here the pre-Cartesian philosophy and above all the heritage of Aristotle, and, among the Catholic schools of thought, of St. Thomas Aquinas) has provoked me to undertake an attempt

487 It is well-known, for example, that, even early in his career, while a doctoral candidate at the University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, Wojtyla sustained criticism from his dissertation director, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, for his refusal to refer to God as the “divine object.” This early battle is wholly to the point of our remarks, though Wojtyla’s emergence in phenomenology had not yet begun. His dissertation, Doctrina de fide apud S. Joannem a Cruce (Rome: Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1948), has been made available in English as, Karol Wojtyla, Faith According to Saint John of the Cross, Jordan Aumann, O.P., trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981).

at reinterpreting certain formulations proper to this whole philosophy.\footnote{Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, xiii.}

In the end, therefore, he intends \textit{The Acting Person} to reflect, not a mere \textit{rearticulation} of the “traditional philosophy,” but instead, a “more synthetic formulation”\footnote{Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, xiv.} of the relationship between the human act and the subjective experience of the act.\footnote{Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, xiii–xiv.} Yet he remains aware that this “more synthetic formulation” cannot leave the “traditional philosophy” without a certain philosophical “work order” that he, for his own part, has left undone. Without doubting that he has succeeded, nonetheless, in articulating something genuinely important, even in the face of the unsettled questions raised by his study, he offers the following appeal:

Perhaps, the reader, after having surmounted all objections that may be put forward from the point of view of the splendid precision and inner logic of philosophical systems, will accept something from my broadened discovery of the person through his actions. In this, the author sees a turn toward the most interesting “thing itself” (\textit{zurück zum Gegenstand}) which is precisely the human being as a subject.\footnote{Wojtyla, \textit{The Acting Person}, xiv.}

It is impossible, indeed, to read Wojtyla’s preface attentively without accepting that he is conscious of presenting a challenge to a rather basic intellectual orientation of the “traditional philosophy” of objects, even if, as McLean persuasively argues, he had not at all intended wholly to repudiate it.\footnote{McLean, “Karol Wojtyla’s Mutual Enrichment of the Philosophies of Being and Consciousness,” 22–25.} Is it possible to say that a truth is \textit{real} and \textit{foundational}—and even that a truth is \textit{absolute}—without reducing the entire discussion of \textit{truth} to a question only of \textit{objects}? To ask about \textit{subjectivity}, is it necessary to abandon any meaningful concept of \textit{truth}, leaving us only with the constant flux of the feelings and perceptions of innumerable individuals? As we will discuss later, Wojtyla, who had been deeply influenced by the thought of Max Scheler, read Scheler as being caught precisely in this trap, and sought to correct him for
For Wojtyla these questions had to be answered in the negative, or there would really be no hope for a compelling link between our moral sensibilities and our moral responsibilities—a link, which, for Wojtyla, emerges as an indisputable phenomenological given.

It is precisely here that Wojtyla finds in his Thomistic background an important contribution, in the form of Aquinas' analysis of the human act in his *Summa Theologiae*. There, Aquinas manages, though still, in terms not yet wholly satisfactory to Wojtyla, to present an analysis of the human act, taking into account a sense of the act's absolute character, even in the context of the distinct, yet clearly related question, of the subjective intentionality of the agent. In the end, Wojtyla cannot simply point to Aquinas and end the discussion, because he has been persuaded that the concept of personhood is inadequately developed in Aquinas. But he can neither remain entirely within a Schelerian framework, because he is likewise persuaded that Scheler does not...
afford any serviceable avenue outside the problem of subjectivism, and cannot account, adequately, for the ontological link between the human act and the interior character of the human agent.497

What, then, does Scheler offer? In his turn to the subject, Scheler offers, in the final analysis, a reinterpretation of the person as a center of value, thus introducing the primacy of love in the philosophical assessment of personhood.498 This will make an enormous difference in the end, as a shift will have to be made from a fundamentally cosmological understanding of the person as a mere part at the service of a more worthy whole, to a personalistic understanding in which the cosmos itself is placed at the service of persons, who exist for their own sake. At the outset, it must be stated that, for Aquinas, the human person is not a for-its-own-sake being, but exists for the sake of the cosmic order, and can be sacrificed, by God and man, for the sake of that end.499

One consequence of this perspective is the hyperteleologistic understanding of personal morality in Aquinas’ analysis, where he arrives at conclusions we would, today, take to be distorted. For example, without rejecting a meaningful framework of teleology or finality, many, today, would take issue with Aquinas’ view that masturbation is more gravely disordered than rape.500 Wojtyla is critical of Aquinas’ view, which he calls, naturalism—and which he quite consciously associates with the Aristotelian-Thomistic


498 See, on this point, Peter J. Colosi, “The Uniqueness of Persons in the Life and Thought of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II, with Emphasis on His Indebtedness to Max Scheler.”

499 Aquinas is clear on this point. See, for example, Summa Theologiae I.22–23; Summa Contra Gentiles III.94.xi.

500 Aquinas’ argument rests upon his understanding of the teleological purpose of the genital organs, concluding that whatever thwarts the “natural”—i.e. biological—purpose of the organs is evil per se (i.e., objectivistically). Masturbation in per se evil because it is contra natura; it employs the sexual organs without the proper teleological object of their use—i.e. the organs of a member of the complementary gender, such that procreation can occur. Rape is not so disordered as this, since as an evil act merely contra modum, it does not exclude the proper teleological object of the sexual organs. This argument fails precisely because of its basically cosmological, teleologicistic view of the person, in which the question of the for-its-own-sake value of the person does not factor in our moral analysis.
framework within which Catholic moral arguments have typically been formulated in recent centuries.⁵⁰¹

Again, correcting this sort of distortion does not require abandoning a basically teleological perspective. Indeed, Wojtyla/John Paul II will continue to formulate arguments on the basis of teleological insights; but the concern is no longer the ordering of parts to the great cosmic whole. It is the ordering of the person as a self-determining, for-its-own-sake being, toward those interpersonal relationships in which his or her full flourishing can be realized. This fundamentally personalistic understanding of teleology means that the person will belong to the whole, not merely for the sake of “the whole”, but for the sake of each and every person who, as persons, can only really find themselves by giving themselves to the other as gift.⁵⁰² The whole does not exist for its own sake, nor the person for the sake of the whole. Rather, the whole is an expression—a natural outgrowth—of the personal tendency to recognize and value the personhood of others, choosing the good of others as a value for ourselves, identifying it with our own self-realization. This dynamic, is what Wojtyla means by the term, participation.

We cited earlier Köchler’s comments on Wojtyla’s understanding of participation, and the point of intersection it afforded with his own work, thus leading to their academic cooperation. His comments, in fact, help to bring to clarity, what Wojtyla’s understanding of participation, which we will discuss in much greater detail in subsequent chapters, finally has to do with

⁵⁰¹ Karol Wojtyla, “Ethics and Moral Theology,” in Karol Wojtyla, Person and Community, 101–106. In this little-studied but singularly pivotal essay, Wojtyla begins to describe rather clearly what he had come to perceive, in the maturation of his own analysis, to be the limits of the Thomistic approach to moral reasoning against the horizon of contemporary philosophical insight. See, also, Karol Wojtyla, “The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics.” Also, see, Karol Wojtyla, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being.” We have addressed this issue elsewhere. See, Richard H. Bulzacchelli, “Facing the Limits of Thomism”; and Richard H. Bulzacchelli, “Opening the Self to the Other.

the thesis we intend, here, to propose. While there can be no doubt that Köchler understands Wojtyla's thinking about the person better than most, he seems not fully to appreciate the relationship Wojtyla sees between personalism and the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. Köchler acknowledges Wojtyla's professed dependency upon the metaphysic of Aquinas with his application of it in his analysis of the human act. But, at the same time, Köchler confesses that, in his own analysis, "it still cannot be clearly determined, as far as a strictly philosophical approach is concerned, how those competing schools of thought (with different, if not mutually exclusive notions of humanity) were reconciled in the Pope's world view."503

Köchler is clearly not alone in his confusion with respect to this point, although his awareness of the precise point of confusion seems a rare thing among Wojtyla's commentators. As we have already said, many Thomists fail fully to understand the extent to which Wojtyla's personalist turn distinguishes his thinking from that of St. Thomas.504 They do not really see how the two schools


504 There is no need to offer textual demonstrations for the assessment that, prior to Descartes, nearly all Christian philosophers of the West held to a view of reality in which things in the world, including human beings, could be considered as such, and not simply as they happen to be perceived by themselves or others. Whether or not this view is supported better from within an objectivistic or subjectivistic perspective—or if, as Wojtyla seems to suggest, it points to the need for a sort of synthesis between objectivism and subjectivism—is a matter for debate. That said, scholars today seem, often, to attribute specifically to Thomas an array of ideas not actually unique to his own mind, but widely-held by thinkers throughout the middle ages, while they minimize or ignore the contributions of other thinkers of the age who, precisely in disagreeing with Thomas, led to insights that have since become part of the Church's official teaching. Duns Scotus represents a prime example of this sort of selectivity. His views on the ontological status of women in relation to men led, over time, to a much richer sense of the Church's understanding of Matrimonial love, and formed, for Scotus, the foundation of his argument in favor of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, in favor of which the Pope Pius IX finally came to pronounce in December 8, 1854 apostolic constitution, Ineffabilis Deus, taking a stand in explicit contradiction to that articulated by Aquinas. While Pius IX declares that the Immaculate Conception is revealed by God, and thus, theoretically knowable by anyone "thinking with the faith" about this question (Cf. Donum veritatis, § 35; Summa Theologiae II-II.11.iii, 64.ii), Aquinas explicitly denies this claim, saying instead, that, "nothing is handed down
of thought were reconciled, for they do not adequately acknowledge their tension. While we cannot hope to offer a decisive resolution in this dissertation alone, we can, nevertheless, offer a few brief indications of the direction in which such a resolution might, in the end, be found; but such a project will require the abandonment of the attempt to cast Wojtyla as a Thomist in the classical sense, or, for that matter, as a Schelerian. To be quite sure, indeed, Karol Wojtyla will emerge for us, here, as his own thinker.

in the canonical Scriptures concerning the sanctification of the Blessed Mary as to her being sanctified in the womb; indeed, they do not even mention her birth” (Summa Theologiae III.27.i).
Chapter 3
The Implications of Personalism for a Broader Catholic Anthropology

In this chapter, we consider the implications of Personalism for a broader Catholic anthropology, asking how, in the end, Personalism provides a philosophical language within which to present the Faith of the Church in the context of the modern world, wherein the place and meaning of humanity has come to rest in the central place of the ongoing philosophical dialogue. Our focus, of course, for the purpose of the broader project of this dissertation, rests upon the particular contribution of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II. Thus, after providing a sketch of the development of the concept of the person in Magisterial thought in the twentieth century, we will turn our attention to Wojtyla’s emphasis upon the theme of participation, which we had introduced earlier, in chapter 2. With this, we will then be able to offer an application of this concept in a brief sketch of the Catholic covenantal economy, viewed through that lens. The reader should be careful to note, however, that our purpose in offering this sketch is wholly subordinate to the work undertaken in the following chapter, in which the broad strokes applied in the present portrait will be refined in an analysis of the figure of Mary, as the preeminent manifestation of the insights presented here. In the interim, however, it may be said that twentieth-century magisterial teaching dealt increasingly with the question of the human person in social, economic, and political circumstances, and that this concentration of interest in the human person corresponded to an increasingly personalist approach to the Church’s moral and theological articulations. In his final capacity as Pope John Paul II, Karol Wojtyla would go on to develop this personalist line, not only as an expression of his own philosophical and theological perspective, but as what he thought to be a faithful development of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, at which he had participated and contributed as a Council Father.
Among the most important contributions of the Second Vatican Council, and, we contend, one of its main concerns, is the articulation of the Christian mystery along personalist lines. But if we are fully to understand the Second Vatican Council and its teachings, we must first consider the Council's broader historical context, because the documents of the Council do not emerge from within a vacuum, as pure conceptualizations. In fact, it is precisely the historicity of a Church Council that gives it its special relevance, since the once-and-for-all deposit of God's self-revelation remains for the Church to continuously receive for herself in every moment, through every generation. The ambiguities associated with this process ultimately give rise to the Church's need for formal magisterial interventions, sometimes more and sometimes less far-reaching. Through those interventions, in consort with still other means, the Church continually brings into clear focus her collective vision as she looks upon what, precisely, remains de fide, and therefore, truly Catholic, across all times and places.\(^{505}\)

That said, the Second Vatican Council came on the heels of the Second World War. It seems we sometimes forget that the War had come to an official close just fourteen years before Pope John XXIII announced the Council and began the first stages of its preparation.\(^{506}\) The European continent was still recovering from the War's devastation, while the United States and the Soviet Union faced one another down in a Cold War, and the related issue of the Korean conflict was transmuting itself into a new conflict in Viet-Nam. Through it all, the world struggled to remain full of hope in the face of exciting new technologies, and yet found

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\(^{505}\) This process is brought to light in the document of the International Theological Commission, *The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die Without Being Baptised* (19 April 2007).

\(^{506}\) While Pope John XXIII began informal discussions of his interest in convening an ecumenical council early in his papacy, even by January of 1959, the formal vocation would come with his Apostolic Constitution *Humane Salutis* (25 December 1961). By the time of that formal announcement, preparations for the Council were already underway.
herself, at the same time, full of dread over the thought of the evil those technologies could be called upon to unleash; for over the preceding fifty years, we had learned that a few among us were, indeed, prepared to make use of such evil to advance their own agendas. This constellation of circumstances constitutes the hermeneutical framework within which the meaning and purpose of the Second Vatican Council ought to be interpreted.

Wojtyła firmly believed that this question—that of the meaning, place, and value of the human person in the cosmos—could be addressed by philosophy. In the first chapter of the present study, we referenced Wojtyła’s remarks to Henri de Lubac concerning what Wojtyła saw as the foundational evil of the present age in the form of a, “denigration, indeed . . . a pulverization, of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person,” and which belonged more fundamentally to, “the metaphysical order than . . . the moral order.” Wojtyła insisted that, “we must oppose [this disintegration of the person, not with] sterile polemics, [but with] a kind of ‘recapitulation’ of the inviolable mystery of the person.” As his remarks make clear, he was convinced that such a project would have to be undertaken with the aid of a phenomenological method whereby metaphysics, with its natural inclination to abstraction, could be reined in by a constant reminder to “pause before the irreducible” —that is, before the inviolable dignity of the human person as a for-its-own-sake being, so that what is given in the phenomenological moment might “have the upper hand over metaphysics.”


508 Cited from, de Lubac, At the Service of the Church, 171–172.

509 Cited from, de Lubac, At the Service of the Church, 171–172.


511 In his essay, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible,” Wojtyła says, “We cannot complete the picture through [metaphysical or naturalistic] reduction alone; we also cannot remain within the framework of the irreducible alone (for then we would not be able to get beyond the pure self). The one must be cognitively supplemented by the other. Nevertheless, given the variety of circumstances of the real existence of
philosophy, was a matter to be discerned through the exercise of a disciplined approach to observation, reasoning, and argumentation, was, from within the perspective of the Christian faith, clearly and definitively revealed. Woltyla himself had worked jointly with de Lubac on the Second Vatican Council's sub-committee responsible for Schema XIII, which was ratified in its mature form as the Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. It begins with the words:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man.

human beings, we must always leave the greater space in this cognitive effort for the irreducible; we must, as it were, give the irreducible the upper hand when thinking about the human being that is invisible and wholly internal and whereby each human being, myself included, is an 'eyewitness' of his or her own self—of his or her own humanity and person" (214). A bit later in the same essay, he writes, "What does it mean to pause cognitively at lived experience? This 'pausing' should be understood in relation to the irreducible" (215). Given the discussion in the whole of the essay, and in particular, in the passages immediately following this second quote, it is clear that Woltyla is speaking of the prerogative of the phenomenological method in directing and correcting metaphysical analyses. Indeed, he goes on to say, "The thinker seeking the ultimate philosophical truth about the human being no longer moves in a 'purely metaphysical terrain,' but find elements in abundance testifying to both the materiality and the spirituality of the human being, elements that bring both of these aspects into sharper relief. These elements then form the building blocks for further metaphysical construction" (216). Also, see John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, Fides et ratio (15 September 1998), § 83.

512 In illustration of this point in Woltyla's thinking, see, "Ethics and Moral Theology," in Person and Community (101–106), 105–106. where he even suggests that the so-called "theological virtues" are not per se beyond the grasp of "natural reason," this re-opening the debate about the respective characters, and the distinction between nature and grace.

But what was it about this document that struck the world—or even the Church—as new and clarifying? The rise of Fascism and Communism, respectively, had forced the Church to reexamine the question of the human person in relationship to the larger society and the cosmos. Whatever inadequacies existed in earlier approaches to this question, it was not until these systems pushed such notions to their most radical implications that the Church came to see clearly what could be at stake in a then commonly accepted starting point. In classical Thomism, which begins with a natural philosophy of God as First Cause, the human person comes to be conceptualized as the manifestation of a rational nature, coming to be in, and for the sake of, a *polis*, which itself exists as a substructure of order in the greater order of the cosmos itself, which the rational animal, then, brings to completion. This view is fine, to a point; but if taken too far, without the necessary “pause before the irreducible,” it ends by *reducing* the human person to the status of a mere part in a larger and nobler whole, to which his or her own worth is wholly subordinated. This view, which Wojtyla criticizes as overly *naturalistic*, leads to a number of conclusions the Catholic Church seems, at best, not to favor, and in some cases, to reject explicitly. Yet, again, it was, in the final analysis, the radicalism of twentieth-century violence, originally in the form of Fascism and Communism, that brought the underlying question into clear focus in the eyes of the Church.

Indeed, in the years leading up to the Second World War, Pope Pius XI promulgated two encyclicals of pivotal, but as yet, largely underappreciated significance, in the vernacular. These were *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* (1931) in Italian, and *Mit Brennender Sorge* (1937) in German. As a matter of form, the publication of an

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514 See, for example, *Summa Theologiae* I.22–23; *Summa Contra Gentiles* III.94.xi. Aquinas is explicit in his assertion that the human person is *not* an end in himself, but an end ordered to something greater—something for the sake of which the individual person’s naturally (or even supernaturally) ordered good may have to be frustrated according to God’s providence.

515 Pius XI, encyclical letter, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* (29 June 1931); Pius XI, encyclical letter, *Mit Brennender Sorge* (14 March 1937). Pope Leo XIII had set such a precedent nearly a half-century prior to *Non Abbiamo Bisogno*, with the publication of his encyclical, *Vi è Ben Noto* (20 September 1887), in which he urged the bishops of Italy to encourage a renewed devotion to the Rosary as a defense against various sects then sweeping through Europe via the Italian peninsula.
encyclical in a vernacular, rather than a Latin, original, represents a prudential judgment on the part of the pope that those most directly affected by the issues addressed in the encyclical, and those most morally responsible for responding to them, must be enabled to receive the document expeditiously, even as the issues addressed in the encyclical are recommended to the whole Church as her common concern. But that fact alone is already a hermeneutical key to understanding these encyclicals, because it means that one of the very points at issue is that of subsidiarity, and the dignity of the human person as a free and responsible participant in the acting-out of the Church’s covenantal charge. Non Abbiamo Bisogno was addressed to the Italian Catholic bishops, and through them, the Italian Catholic laity who labored under the threat of Mussolini’s fascist State. Through these directly-affected parties, the encyclical manifests its relevance as a concern for the whole Church. Mit Brennender Sorge, was addressed to the German Catholic bishops and their charges under Adolf Hitler.

Today, true Fascism is an easy target. But an understanding of these two encyclicals leads to an understanding of the Second Vatican Council’s central purpose, and what it is, precisely, that Pope John Paul II has brought to flourishing from among the Church’s twentieth-century insights into the meaning and purpose of human life. At the time these encyclicals were written, the full scope of the problem of Fascism was still not yet fully perceived. Both encyclicals place primary focus on the issue of safeguarding the Church’s purview in relation to the secular State. But between Non Abbiamo Bisogno and Mit Brennender Sorge, Pius XI began to make more concrete references to the role and dignity of the laity within the life of the Church, and to see the affront of Fascism as an affront, also, against the interests of the laity, and not merely those of the hierarchy or the institution. In the end, this stance led to increased clarity in the Church’s thinking and teaching on the question of human dignity, leaving the Church poised for the precise contribution that Personalists like Wojtyła would bring to the Second Vatican Council.

In illustration of this point, we might consider the following passage from Mit Brennender Sorge:

Human laws in flagrant contradiction with the natural law are vitiated with a taint which no force, no power can mend. In the light of this principle one must judge the axiom, that “right is common utility,” a proposition which may be given a correct significance, it means that what is morally indefensible, can never contribute to the good of the people. But ancient paganism
acknowledged that the axiom, to be entirely true, must be reversed and be made to say: “Nothing can be useful, if it is not at the same time morally good.” 516 Emancipated from this oral rule, the principle [i.e., that what serves the needs of the whole is right,] would in international law carry a perpetual state of war between nations; for it ignores in national life, by confusion of right and utility, the basic fact that man as a person possesses rights he holds from God, and which any collectivity must protect against denial, suppression or neglect. To overlook this truth is to forget that the real common good ultimately takes its measure from man’s nature, which balances personal rights and social obligations, and from the purpose of society, established for the benefit of human nature. Society, was intended by the Creator for the full development of individual possibilities, and for the social benefits, which by a give and take process, every one can claim for his own sake and that of others. Higher and more general values, which collectivity alone can provide, also derive from the Creator for the good of man, and for the full development, natural and supernatural, and the realization of his perfection. To neglect this order is to shake the pillars on which society rests, and to compromise social tranquility, security and existence. 517

While this passage does not represent innovation on the part of the Church, it clearly represents a new emphasis, beginning from a different starting point, which leads, in the end, to a different terminus than that associated with classical Thomism. Rather than beginning with the premise that the human being exists for the purpose of instantiating a rational nature in the material universe, 518 Pius XI begins with the fundamental orientation of the universe and everything in it for the good of the human person. While we would attempt to avoid an anachronistic reading of the text, it is clear that Pius XI has become more insistent upon the rights of the human person as the larger context within which to understand his relationship to the larger society and the cosmos. Indeed, he uses the term freedom eleven times, and rights, eight times with reference to individuals or small, voluntary associations. For its time, this language is unprecedented. A growing awareness on the part of the Church led through an evolution from the presumption that a polis ought to be in conformity with the divine will, and, thus, with the authority of the

516 The document quotes here, Cicero De officiis, III.30.110.
517 Pius XI, Mit Brennender Sorge, § 30.
Church, through the realization that this presumption, though a matter of moral ideal, corresponds less and less with the actual historical state of affairs, and, finally, to the realization that, not only is the Church, at the institutional level, an enemy of the exclusively atheistic State, but also the human person, most especially insofar as that person is incorporated into the Church. With the rise of Fascism, it became clear that if rights mean nothing without responsibility, the converse is also true; and a State that does not, at a certain point, defer to the dignity of the

519 We should consider, for example, the secular revolutions of the early twentieth century, to which the popes spoke in the interests of the Church as she came under attack. The Mexican Revolution of 1910–c. 1920 favored a more representative, democratic form of government but, elsewhere, communist, totalitarian dictatorships would seize upon the same prevailing early-twentieth-century sentiments in the face of a growing sense of social, political, and economic alienation. These would introduce radically materialistic cultures of death in which the Church came to be seen as a marked enemy of the State. Such was the case in the Portugese Revolution of 1910, the Russian Revolution of 1917 that gave rise to the Soviet Union (deposed in 1991), and the chaotic Spanish Civil War that resulted in an incessant restructuring of government in the years 1930–1939, only to emerge from the ashes at the dawn of the Second World War. In his encyclical Delectissima nobis (3 June 1933), Pius XI confronted the anti-clerical, atheistic, and anti-ecclesial agenda at work in the new secular Spanish State. He said that, “it is a serious error to affirm that this separation is licit and good in itself, especially in a nation almost totally Catholic. Separation . . . is only the baneful consequence . . . of . . . the apostasy of society that today feigns to alienate itself from God and therefore from the Church” (§ 6). Pius XI saw the issue primarily in terms of State vs. Church, rather than as State vs. the human person as he gradually comes to see in his later encyclicals, and as the Second Vatican Council will see with rather startling clarity. Pius defended the Church’s rights in relation to the State, arguing that the State had turned against the Church as against an enemy. The secular authorities, “wished to strike fully . . . at the very Supreme Authority of the Catholic Church,” defining, “as extraneous . . . the authority of the Vicar of Christ, as if the authority of the Roman Pontiff, conferred by Jesus, Himself, could be called extraneous to any part of the world whatsoever” (§ 18). Pius insisted that legitimate human authority finds no enemy in the divine authority of Christ, and that, a contradiction between Church and State, “cannot exist except through the malice of those who desire and want it” (§ 18), so as to absolutize the power of the World.
person and subordinate its own ratio to that fundamental value, can foist upon the citizen no responsibilities toward the State. 520

During the Second Vatican Council, these concepts would be more fully developed, partly in retrospect of the events of the first half of the century. Mid-Council, Pope John XXIII would publish his encyclical, *Pacem in terris*, 521 in which a personalist approach to the question of human community takes center stage. In the thought of Karol Wojtyla, this idea must ultimately find expression in the notion of participation, which provides context for the proper understanding of the relationship between the individual person and the larger society or the cosmos. It is precisely in the notion of participation in the way he understands it, that we secure the guarantee for the individual person, that his responsibilities also involve rights, and that his value and worth are irreducible to any social or cosmic function. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, when John Paul II was pope, this point would form the foundation for the assertion of the right to life, comfort, care, and support for the most helpless members of society. Paradoxically, because the idea of participation, according to Wojtyla, presupposes the irreducibility of the person as an incommensurate, for-its-own-sake value, even those who could not participate—who could perform no direct service of their own for the larger society, and who were unable to perform their “natural, cosmic function”—remained, nonetheless, worthy. Society held responsibilities toward them, even as they, for their own part, could not embrace responsibilities of their own.

Before going further in our sketch of the development of the personalist consciousness in magisterial interventions during the

520 Of course, it is important to distinguish, here, between the State as a formal political organization, and the community to which a person belongs by nature, and with which the person is bound by a mutually dependent relationship of obligation from birth to natural death. Fascism and other totalitarian structures, as well as any “exaggerated nationalism”, will always represent an attempt to identify the political structure itself with that fundamental characteristic of human inter-relatedness. It is in this move that such paradigms are able to assert a claim to all that belongs to both individual and society; for they claim to be all, inasmuch as they identify not with one or another dimension of the primordial interrelatedness of persons, but with the interrelationship itself, in its entirety. This is a philosophical mistake, and one which a careful phenomenological analysis would never permit to stand.

twenty-first century, however, it would be helpful to recall, again, Wojtyla's concept of participation as articulated in *The Acting Person*. Wojtyla's understanding of the idea is already beginning to find purification and distillation in the mind of the Church in the mid-twentieth-century, even though it will not be until the Second Vatican Council that the idea really begins to take its mature shape. Wojtyla explains:

> [P]articipation corresponds to the person's transcendence and integration in the action because, as we have already emphasized, it allows man, when he acts together with other men, to realize thereby and at once the *authentically personalistic value*—the performance of the action and the fulfillment of himself in the action. Acting "together with others" thus corresponds to the person's transcendence and integration in the action, when man chooses what is chosen by others or even *because* it is chosen by others—he then identifies the object of his choice with a value that he sees as in some way or another homogeneous with his own. This is connected with self-determination, for self-determination in the case of acting "together with others" contains and expresses participation.

When we say that "participation" is a distinct feature of the person we do not mean the person in the abstract but a concrete person in his dynamic correlation with the action.

In this correlation "participation" signifies, on the one hand, that ability of acting "together with others" which allows the realization of all that results from communal acting and simultaneously enables the one who is acting to realize thereby the personalistic value of his action. However, this ability is followed by its actualization. Thus the notion of "participation" includes here both that ability and its realization.

Let us be clear on what is being said. As Wojtyla sees it, the concept of participation properly understood—that is, understood in any really meaningful and coherent sense—implies that the person participate precisely as a *person*; and that means that he or she participates as a free, self-determining agent. Wojtyla thereby moves beyond the mediaeval view of a purely ontological mode of participation that would allow Domingo Báñez to describe a participated freedom and power of action while denying our ability to realize this power in terms of action.

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The incommensurability of the human person’s intrinsic value will have far-reaching implications, indeed. Even the issue of civil penalty for positive harm done to the polis due to free acts of will comes, under John Paul II to be treated from a new vantage point, and thus, with new emphasis on the unrepeatable value of the human being, who remains a moral patient whom society, in her dealings with the offender, must take into account as she pursues a truly common good—a good inclusive of the offender’s own basic interests. John Paul differs markedly on this point, from both Kant and Thomas, who hold to capital punishment as a social value, if each for rather different reasons. While, for Kant, the employment of capital punishment is embraced as a method of affirming the rationality of the offender, and respectfully honoring his or her rational choice to face the consequences that follow as socially necessary effects from his actions considered as causes,523 Aquinas embraces capital punishment as a way of purging society of those who, through sin, have descended from rationality and rendered themselves unfit instantiations of the rational nature.524 We have already treated this matter in some detail, however, in Chapter 1 of the present study.

Recalling our discussion in Chapter 1, there can be no question that the growing shift toward a personalist perspective will make a profound difference for us, theologically. The personalist turn forces us to shift our whole understanding of the exitus-reditus/creation-redemption dynamic from a naturalistic-cosmological paradigm to a personalistic-anthropological one. Cosmology, in other words, is to be worked out in light of what we can first know about the person, rather than the other way around, as is the case in classical Thomism. This turn toward the primacy of anthropology—not in the sense of making man the center of theology, but in the sense of making God’s love for man the center of it—will find reflection in the whole of the Church’s life and practice, and will provide a framework within which natural reason can come more fully to perceive the “reasons of faith”.


524 *Summa Theologiae* II-II.11.iii, 64.ii.
Indeed, the documents of the Second Vatican Council clearly reflect a personalist understanding—and, in particular, a personalist understanding of the concept of participation as Wojtyla articulates it. It is reasonable to suppose, therefore, that Wojtyla and like-minded periti did, indeed, exercise real influence in developing the “mind” of the Council as a whole, even beyond the specific committees to which they personally belonged. There can be no question, for example, that the decree, *Apostolicam actuositatem*\(^{525}\), represents a significant manifestation of this perspective. It is the culmination of the Church’s growing awareness over the course of several centuries, but in particular, over the course of the preceding century-plus, of the role played by the layperson, as a uniquely responsible agent, in the realization here and now of the constant in-breaking of the Kingdom of God. In his series of lectures on *The Idea of a University*, John Henry Cardinal Newman had argued that a national Catholic university was necessary in Ireland, a largely Protestantized, democratic country, so that Catholics could be properly prepared to participate fully in the political life of the society.\(^{526}\) This same reasoning seems also to have persuaded the church in the United States. The encyclicals, *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* and *Mit Brennender Sorge*, written nearly a century later in response to specific political circumstances, also stress the importance of lay-involvement in the working-out of God’s salvific will. The organization, *Catholic Action*, is mentioned alongside other lay organizations, as a principal target of Fascism, and a mark of pride and hope for the Church.

Political events, strictly speaking, were, by no means, the only circumstances within which the Church faced the need to develop her understanding of human dignity-in-agency during this period of time. At the close of the nineteenth-century, Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical, *Rerum novarum*,\(^ {527}\) addressed the question of the


relationship of mutual responsibility between employer and laborer. There, Leo insisted that the human person enjoys a natural right to work, and to develop himself in the context of his work, even while the one with whom he contracts also enjoys rights with respect to the work rendered. Leo’s encyclical was revolutionary for its ability to avoid both poles of the dichotomy then offered in the context of the philosophic-economic dialogue of the day. Karl Marx had roundly criticized unfettered Capitalism in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*,\textsuperscript{528} and elsewhere. His criticisms addressed the question of alienation in labor arrangements under a Capitalist model—language which struck very near the heart of the Church. But his premise was essentially materialist. Indeed, he regarded religion as an outgrowth of material circumstances, and social structure now serviceable to the preservation of power in the hands of the elite. Unfettered Capitalism, on the other hand, rests upon the premise of personal property, which the Church recognizes as a principle motivation for, and just consequence of, work. Just as the good of the whole earth is oriented to the use of the human race, so the particular use made by the human person contributes to the good of the whole human race. The development of new technologies in human industry thus represents evidence in favor of Capitalism’s fundamental harmony with the very nature of work. In the end, the teleological argument, then, is brought into dialogue with the phenomenological givenness of the experience of human labor under a variety of circumstances. Marx’s observations concerning alienation cannot be roundly dismissed for his failure as a metaphysician. Rather, we must come to understand more fully how the exertion of human effort relates, not only to an impersonal end in the material order, but to human dignity itself. We must come to explore, more fully, what Wojtyla would call, the *intransitive dimension* of human labor.

It is telling that *Rerum novarum* treats this issue under the theme of “new things”; for it reminds us that, indeed, the Church had never before considered the matters addressed in that encyclical from precisely the point of view Leo had taken up. The circumstances that prompted the encyclical were the result of very new sociologico-historical developments. Yet Leo was able to discover, in the midst of these “new things,” some very primal

truths about the dignity and purpose of human life; and it was precisely these new challenges that brought those truths into clearer focus than ever before. *Rerum Novarum* became, for the Church, a kind of seminal document upon which a now well-established tradition of Catholic social teaching rests. That teaching seemed to erupt full-force with the Second Vatican Council, and has remained a predominating and recurring theme, both in magisterial interventions and private theological inquiry, ever since. Indeed, John Paul II himself contributed quite notably to this body of work over the course of his papacy.

Among the most important contributions Pope John Paul II made, on this point, has come in the form of the idea of *solidarity*, which he even proposed should be counted as a virtue in the proper sense, like *courage*, or *liberality*.

The idea of *solidarity* is the idea of a participation in the concerns of one’s neighbor. John Paul II takes this idea beyond that of mere *empathy* or *compassion*, even if we would wish to draw distinctions between these two concepts as well. *Solidarity* is not simply an *affective* presence of one person to the other, but a concretely *volitional* presence to the other. In solidarity, we make the values of the other, as experienced in the concreteness of the other’s arena of personal agency and engagement, values of our own—personal values *for us*. In this, we transcend ourselves both horizontally and vertically, and become united with the other in will. This union is no superficial thing, but something with real ontological implications. If the act of volition entails the *intransitive dimension*, then this choosing of the other’s value really is a choice to *become*, inwardly, *one with the other*. This concept will have both secular and theological implications.

Without entering into any current controversies over matters of liturgics, we should point out that the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*\(^530\), calls for “full, conscious, and actual participation”\(^531\) on the part of the laity in the celebration of the liturgy. This means that the liturgy, as an entrance into the very work of salvation across time, cannot happen in a vacuum, because salvation itself does not happen that way. Salvation does not merely *happen to* the human


\(^{531}\) *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, § 14.
being as a purely passive entity; it involves the person as a person, who most fully realizes his or her personhood in participatory action. This requires "that the faithful come to it with proper dispositions, that their minds be attuned to their voices, and that they cooperate with heavenly grace lest they receive it in vain." For the grace of the liturgy to be efficacious for the person, the person must engage it, must be present to God's action, not simply in time and space, but in mind, heart, and will. He must make an offering of himself or herself to the work of God as to a personal value.

In the end, this is the purpose and meaning of personal piety and devotion. Its goal is the disposition of the person to the grace of God, as the person makes of himself or herself an offering to the Father through Jesus Christ. Without a vibrant sense of participation, the idea of personal piety suffers. As evinced in Calvinist circles, religion tends to be reduced to a matter of the mind, with little or no outward religious activity. Worship is largely reduced to study and catechetically-oriented performance, while services are conducted under the merely academic authority of the scholar-minister who preaches in his doctoral gown. Even within the visible communion of the Catholic Church, it is possible to engage in a kind of reduction of the faith to an intellectual assent according to which Christianity seems little more than an elaborate metaphysical system. This reduction of faith to philosophy was

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532 Sacrosanctum Concilium, § 11. The text references, here, 1 Cor. 6:1.

533 See, for example, the Third Eucharistic anaphoras of the Roman Rite, where this precise point is made: "May he make us an everlasting gift to you . . ." Likewise, the Epiclesis for Trinity Sunday reads, "Lord our God, make these gifts holy, and through them make us a perfect offering to you." Although vehement arguments rage over the merits or demerits of ICEL's translations of these passages, the relevant portions, for our purposes here, are not under dispute.

534 The soap-box apologetics prevalent in the Catholic Church in the Unites States in the 1940's is evidence of this very sort of problem. It was believed that conversion would come as a result of one's encounter with an argument, while the truth of the matter is that this rarely occurs, and apologists of this sort are typically frustrated with what they perceive as the obstinacy of their interlocutors. What this approach fails to understand is that if Christianity is true, it is the truth about who God is, over and above anything we can say about what God is, and that conversion to this Eternal Thou requires, most of all, an encounter with a person. It is in the personal encounter with the one who is truly, inwardly, alive with the faith that the interlocutor will come to encounter the Person of Jesus.
the principle target of the liturgical reform. The idea was to bring the people and the liturgy into intimacy with each other—to make the liturgy a participation in the salvific work of God, not a mere spectacle or performance at which the faithful might be physically present but still fundamentally little more than interested observers at best. The call, in other words, to be engaged in, and present to, the liturgy, and not simply to attend it, is the real thrust of the liturgical movement.\textsuperscript{535} That said, if the liturgy cannot be celebrated in a vacuum, neither can liturgical rites be drawn up in a vacuum. The idea of Tradition involves the assent to a communal experience as a personal value. The assent of the person to "what has been handed down to us" facilitates the very development of that Tradition, as each member of the Church shows solidarity with the rest across time.

\textsuperscript{535} We make this point wholly irrespective of the larger practical question of whether the goals of the liturgical movement have, in fact, been achieved forty years later, or whether the later developments of liturgy accurately reflect the concerns of the Council. Such an examination would take us far beyond the scope of the present study.
3.2: Participation as the Central Theme in Wojtyla’s Interventions at the Second Vatican Council:

According to Wojtyla, the power of self-determination is so inextricably bound-up with personhood in what he proposes to be personhood’s proper sense, that the notion of a purely passive person constitutes an inherent contradiction. A merely scholastic/platonic understanding of participation lends Catholic theologians little help in formulating meaningful articulations of such concepts as the intercession of the saints, the necessity of the sacraments, or the mediation of Mary. This fact appears obvious in light of the historical fact of the Protestant Reformation, during which these theses came increasingly under attack as the participation of the human person in salvation was distilled into a pure passivity before God. Formulations of the elements of the Faith in its properly Catholic structure require a robust sense of self-determinability if we are to avoid the pitfalls of a predestinarian determinism. Nonetheless, the Church has not always possessed the philosophical language in which to articulate per perspective with the necessary clarity. Still, there is much more at stake in this discussion than whether or not Catholics are correct in what we say, theologically. Rather, the very mystery of salvation itself rests upon what we say here about human agency, and what it means to “participate” in God’s activity. Here, Wojtyla makes a distinct contribution.

We have learned from Wojtyla that we cannot suggest that the human being is, in fact, actualized—that is, made actual—without being raised to the level of personal, self-determining agency. Salvation consists in the restoration of God’s intention for our act of being, an act which he intends as personal, and, thus, for Wojtyla, as participatory. It is precisely at this point that we may introduce, in the context of the present thesis, an original term derived through an application of Wojtyla’s insights to theology. On the basis of Wojtyla’s insights, we can say that, just as we must speak of procreation, wherever we consider the proper relationship of the human person to the furtherance of the good within the order of nature, so must we speak of pro-redemption536 wherever we

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536 To our knowledge, this term is our own, although the thesis it is employed to communicate is thoroughly traditional. Broader considerations of this thesis, especially as they pertain to the Marian question, will be considered later.
speak of the human being as person in the order of salvation, which consists in friendship, and which in turn, presupposes, not merely a passive activation, but an act of will, whereby each lover goes out to the embrace of the other. This new term is our own coinage, but it is employed to express an insight that runs through the thought of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II on the question of the human person in the order of salvation.

The creature's response to grace must be understood as agency in the proper sense, and not merely as an efficiently-cause effect of God's causative activity. The human being must be understood as capable of initiating a movement from within, and thus, of objectifying some intention whereby the very self is shaped. No one denies that the power to do this is a created one. But the pervasion of grace within the acting person upholds that person as an agent of participation in the process (properly so-called) of the person's own salvation, thus making the human person fully what the human person ought to be, precisely as person. By contrast, one might suggest that it is precisely on the basis of his premise that the First Cause actualizes us in a way that leaves us purely passive in the encounter that Aristotle finds himself unable to affirm conscious immortality for the individual human soul. If

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537 It would be useful, here, to distinguish between passions and emotions. We might say that passions, properly speaking, are literally passive, such that they only happen-to or happen-in the human being, while emotions are, literally, a going-out-from-the-self-to-the-other, and constitute an act of will-to-receptivity.

538 "Since in every class of objects, just as in the whole of nature, there is something which is matter, i.e., which is potentially all the individuals, and something else which is their cause or agent in that it makes them all—the two being related as an art to its material—these distinct elements must be present in the soul also. Mind in the passive sense is such because it becomes all things, but mind has another aspect in that it makes all things; this is a kind of positive state like light; for in a sense light makes potential into actual colours. Mind in this sense is separable, impassive and unmixed, since it is essentially an activity; for the agent is always superior to the patient, and the originating cause to the matter. Actual knowledge is identical with its object. Potential is prior in time to actual knowledge in the individual, but in general it is not prior in time. Mind does not think intermittently. When isolated it is its true self and nothing more, and this alone is immortal and everlasting (we do not remember because, while mind in this sense cannot be acted upon, mind in the passive sense is perishable), and without this nothing thinks" (Aristotle, On the Soul, W. S. Hett, trans., in G. P. Goold, ed., Aristotle: On the Soul, Parva Naturalia, On Breath, with an English Translation by W.S. Hett,
we wish to affirm the salvation of the human person—the full actualization of the human person as person through a share in the divine life—we must insist upon an active notion of participation.

This insight is critical. Wojtyla insists, as we have already seen, that the ability to participate actively is not something accidental to, but essential to, our very personhood, such that, "[p]articipation thus represents a feature of the person itself, that innermost and homogeneous feature which determines that the person existing and acting together with others does so as a person."\(^{539}\) That is to say that the person, acting together with others, in fact does act in the fully human sense.

Again, Wojtyla insists that participation in the proper sense necessarily entails something more than a purely ontological relationship. We must affirm that the person participates precisely as a person; and that means that he or she participates as a free, self-determining agent. What is more, if the concept of agency is itself to be properly understood (and it must if our understanding of participation is not to collapse), it must be understood as itself efficacious. If, in the end, the human person acts but does not, through that act, either succeed in attaining or fail to attain self-fulfillment by realizing, on the basis of the action taken, some transcendent value, we cannot be said to act, in the proper sense, at all. To put it more simply, if the act we undertake does not, within itself, somehow possess the power to realize its object, it is really not an act at all. That being said, we return to our earlier point, that without a true act—that is, an act of self-determining, fulfillment-realization—we cannot claim personal participation. Rather, in such an instance, by speaking only of something that happens-in or happens-to the person, the event is, at best, non-personal, and at worst, anti-personal and thus, positively destructive. Absolute, passive, non-participation in the Absolute Agency of God, would thus reduce, not at all to redemption, but quite to the contrary, to annihilation.

It is for these reasons that Wojtyla’s participation at the Second Vatican Council reflects a desire to communicate the active participation of the human person, even in the order of grace. In Rocco Buttiglione’s summary of Wojtyla’s participation at the

\(^{539}\) Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 7.3 (269). My emphasis.
Second Vatican Council, he notes a number of interventions that reduce, in the end, to this point. While Buttiglione does not concentrate on this dimension of Wojtyla's interventions, we are able to extrapolate from his analysis the support we need for our own assertion. Buttiglione writes:

Against the first schema on the Church, Wojtyla argues that the laypeople do not have merely a "passive possession of the faith." On the contrary, the specificity of their charism, destined to lead every human action to its own truth which is Christ, implies an active and apostolic faith. Therefore to the schema "... it is necessary to add that the apostolate is something which springs immediately and subjectively from the faith and the love in the soul of the believer in Christ. In the notion of apostolate, even when it is used for the laity, is included the Christian's consciousness of the personal vocation, which surely differs from the mere passive possession of faith. For this reason, in the apostolate of the laity there is a certain actualization of the faith united with the responsibility for the supernatural good divinely conferred in the Church to any person.

In light of our expositions in the present study, it is clear that Wojtyla's intervention in this passage reflects his personalist position, influenced as it is by his reading of Scheler. In an intervention on the subject of religious freedom, which came, in the course of the Second Vatican Council, to find quite radically novel formulation in the history of magisterial proclamations on the subject, Wojtyla notes that modern states exercise their coercive authority without any necessary link to the moral or natural law, much less the divine right of the Church, and, in fact, atheistic influences seek to turn the state against the Church and God as a matter of principle. Atheists, he explains:

... want to see in every religion nothing else but an alienation of the human spirit from which they desire to set man free with all the means which are available to the State. Devoted to materialism, they teach that this liberation should be brought by scientific

540 My footnote: Buttiglione refers, here, to a draft in the development of the document that would, in its final form, be ratified by the Council Fathers as the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen gentium (21 November 1964).

Mary and the Acting Person

progress and above all technical and economical progress. Thus in the particular of religious freedom we should with great decisiveness represent the human person as something that simply cannot be considered as a means in the economy and in society—as if that were his end. It is necessary that the human person appear in the real sublimity of his rational nature and religion as the height of his nature. Religion in fact consists in the free adhesion of the human mind to God, which is from any point of view personal and conscious. . . .

In this passage, we see Wojtyla’s insistence that the human person cannot be understood in reductionistic terms, as a mere “part” in relation to a “whole”. We should recall from our discussion in the previous chapters of the present study that such an understanding of the human person denies the person the dignity of a reciprocal relationship. Wojtyla’s eventual formulation of his notion of participation in terms that resemble Scheler’s idea of coresponsibility are anticipated in Wojtyla’s intervention on the subject of religious freedom. Like Scheler, Wojtyla here insists that the whole of which the individual person is a constitutive member owes a debt of responsibility to the individual person. Responsibility moves in both directions. In any event, however, the idea of “responsibility” in the face of the reality of the person as a self-determining agent is central to Wojtyla’s thought, even as early as the Second Vatican Council. In a statement about the freedom of conscience as a dimension of the problem of the freedom of religion, Wojtyla says:

It is not sufficient on this point to say “I am free.” It is necessary to say rather “I am responsible.” This is the doctrine which is based on the living tradition of the Church of the martyrs and confessors. Responsibility is the necessary culmination and fulfillment of freedom. This should be underlined in such a way that our declaration be seen as intimately personalistic in the Christian sense but not as indebted to liberalism and indifferentism. Our public powers should respect with great rigor and great sensitivity religious freedom both in its collective and in its personal dimension. . . .

542 Wojtyla in, Acta Synodalia 3/2, 532, as quoted in Rocco Buttiglione, Karol Wojtyla, 191–192.

543 Wojtyla in, Acta Synodalia 4/2, 12, as quoted in Rocco Buttiglione, Karol Wojtyla, 193.
Here, Wojtyla makes clear that the individual person must be understood as possessing a responsibility to his own conscience in matters of religion, even if his judgments are finally in error. To coerce the individual in matters of religious participation is to violate his dignity as a self-determining agent of responsibility, and constitutes, for this reason, a performative contradiction. Thus, when the Church calls for "freedom of religion," this call cannot be restricted to the interests of the corporate person of the Church, but must include the individual person as well. It is no longer enough, from Wojtyla's point of view, that we defend the prerogatives of the Church in relation to State—although that still remains essential. In the maturity of the Church's consciousness of the dignity of the human person, a defense of the prerogatives of the individual person in relation to any religious body, including the Church itself, becomes an imperative for the Church at the level of policy. If the Church must be permitted the right to exist and to practice in any society, no matter its political structure, so the individual must be free to decide for himself whether or not to participate in the Church's life, and to discern for himself with a responsibility toward his own judgment of conscience, what sort of religious response to make in the face of the paradoxes of human existence as he discovers them in the particularity of his own experiences.

Indeed, in his interventions on Schema XIII, which eventually gave rise to the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et spes, Wojtyla spoke of the need to respect the human person's own existential quest for the truth, which involves an embrace that the individual must make for himself, as a decidedly particular act. Paradoxically, however, that act brings the human person into a participatory relationship with all others who do the same for themselves. In this way, the Church is able to speak to human beings in the modern world as a co-participant in the existential quest for truth, even though she, in fact, already has

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544 A performative contradiction is an act that speaks against itself. In this case, it is possible (as, indeed, we ourselves assert) that the Catholic Church's faith is true. There is no logical contradiction in this assertion. But the moment we coerce a person to assent to the Catholic faith, we undermine the very claim to which we seek his assent, because this faith involves an understanding of the person as free and responsible before God, and coercion to assent is predicated on the denial of that understanding—that is to say, on the contradictory assertion that belief can be a matter of external imposition, and the individual can be incorporated into the covenantal life of the Church with regard to his free assent.
the answer to the questions we face. Wojtyla explains that, “the distinction between ontological truth and existential truth prevents the attitude of our mutual inquiries leading to relativism. If we respect the two aspects of truth, then there is no need for the project of “being in search together with other men” to coincide with a lack of certainty and a clear proposal of truth for the other men.” As Buttiglione notes, Wojtyla was later recruited to the theological commission that re-wrote Schema XIII, and brought it into its final shape. Wojtyla worked principally on the fourth chapter of Part I of the document, dealing with the role of the Church in the modern world. In this capacity, Wojtyla made his understanding of the human person and his dignity clear. He said:

Since the schema is intended to have above all an intimate pastoral character, then it is good that the principal importance be given to the human person in himself and in community (in social life) as well as in general. In fact, all pastoral care presupposes the human person both as a subject . . . and as an object . . . All pastoral care, every apostolate, both priestly and lay, intends for the human person, because of his integral vocation, to know and concretely express the truth in every relation: with himself, with other persons, and with the world.

A final point should be made on the issue of Wojtyla’s participation at the Council. Buttiglione points out that his personalist perspective had set him in opposition to the classical Thomistic wing at the Council on the subject of the distinction between nature and grace. As we have already noted on the basis of other evidence presented in chapters 1 and 2 in the present study, Wojtyla does not affirm the thesis of so-called “pure nature,” according to which it is presumed that a fully adequate account of the human person can be made on the basis of nature alone, without reference to the arena of grace. Buttiglione asserts that Wojtyla’s stance on this question was a factor at the Council. Buttiglione explains:

[In] Wojtyla's view the order of nature is a function of the order of grace, and it is reinterpreted starting from the experience of redeemed man and only in this perspective reveals its whole richness. Christ, in fact, comes to bring to man not only eternal life but also the hundredfold in this life, that is, the recovery and the full reorientation of his natural existence.\textsuperscript{549}

We contend that this fact about Wojtyla's position comes to be reflected in the document. With that in mind, then, we should turn, at this point, to a reflection on the documents of greatest concern to present study, namely \textit{Lumen gentium} and \textit{Gaudium et spes}. We will ask in what representative areas these documents appear to reflect the sort of personalism Wojtyla had promoted at the Council, and to which he would later give forceful expression in his own works, including \textit{The Acting Person}.

\section*{3.3: Reflections of a Personalist Perspective in \textit{Gaudium et Spes} and \textit{Lumen Gentium}:}

Between the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, \textit{Lumen gentium} and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church, \textit{Gaudium et spes}, the latter must be judged the more obvious instantiation of a personalist perspective, overall. But \textit{Lumen gentium} is important for the fact that it set the stage, in the context of a dogmatic affirmation by an ecumenical council, for the development of the Mariological tradition in the foreseeable future. In this section, we will consider both documents, in brief, drawing out their most significant lines of thought concerning personalism and Mariology by way of excerpt, with the latter issue addressed with an eye toward any indications the Mariological presentation in \textit{Lumen gentium} may recommend toward a personalist interpretation, given what else will have been said in \textit{Gaudium et spes}. Although \textit{Lumen gentium} is the earlier document, our consideration will begin with \textit{Gaudium et spes} because of its more obvious and personalist articulations.

The pastoral Constitution on the Church, \textit{Gaudium et spes} can be characterized as a personalist treatise, so extensive are its

\textsuperscript{549} Buttiglione, \textit{Karol Wojtyla}, 198.
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personalist articulations. It focuses upon the human person as a for-its-own-sake being, and not as a property of the cosmos, thereby revealing the Conciliar option away from a cosmological and functionalist understanding of the human person. We have already discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of the present study this essential point of departure between the classical Thomistic line and the personalist line favored by Wojtyla. That said, an understanding of the person as a free and self-determining agent of responsibility undergirds every line of the text, while the atomization of the human person is avoided by casting the person in relational terms, wherein the proper use of freedom comes in the act of love and self-donation. Human personal fulfillment is seen in terms of self-gift and participation in the common good, not in a way that reduces the person to a mere part of a larger whole, but in a way that rises from the person's unique sphere of his own action as he chooses the public good as his own, and works to attain it for the community of which he is a co-participant—a coresponsible agent. The Fathers write:

Only in freedom can man direct himself toward goodness. Our contemporaries make much of this freedom and pursue it eagerly; and rightly to be sure. Often however they foster it perversely as a license for doing whatever pleases them, even if it is evil. For its part, authentic freedom is an exceptional sign of the divine image within man. For God has willed that man remain "under the control of his own decisions," so that he can seek his Creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to Him. Hence man's dignity demands that he act according to a knowing and free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within, not under blind internal impulse nor by mere external pressure. Man achieves such dignity when, emancipating himself from all captivity to passion, he pursues his goal in a spontaneous choice of what is good, and procures for himself through effective and skilful action, apt helps to that end. Since man's freedom has been damaged by sin, only by the aid of God's grace can he bring such a relationship with God into full flower. Before the judgment seat of God each man must render an account of his own life, whether he has done good or evil.550

In Gaudium et spes, the Fathers explain human dignity, not primarily in terms of reason as a stage in the manifestation of God's glory in the created order, but in terms of covenant. The

550 Gaudium et spes, § 17.
return to the biblical theme of covenant is indicative of the Council's personalist turn, because the concept of covenant is necessarily dialogical. It presupposes mutual self-donation and the interpenetration of persons in a way that the "gradation of being model" does not capture in its own right. The fathers write:

The root reason for human dignity lies in man's call to communion with God. From the very circumstance of his origin man is already invited to converse with God. For man would not exist were he not created by God's love and constantly preserved by it; and he cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and devotes himself to His Creator. 551

As the fathers continue, they go on to reframe the concept of participation in a way that opens the door, again, to a personalist approach that transcends the traditional platonic/Scholastic conception. But this turn also entails an explicit move away from the sharp nature–grace distinction endorsed by classical Thomism. It is difficult to see how one could fully accept Gaudium et spes § 22 and still affirm a classical Thomistic approach to this issue. The Fathers explicitly assert that the human person is an insoluble mystery—that the human person cannot be adequately understood, and is, indeed, an obscurity—in the absence of Jesus Christ and the arena of grace that refers to him. They write:

The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown. 552

When the Fathers explain the relationship between the Incarnation and salvation, they cast the problem in terms of participation. They say that the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice stems from his union with us as a relational sharer in our human nature. Without asserting that Christ is a "human person," the Fathers rest upon the idea of personhood as an inherently relational concept, such that the assertion that the divine Person of the Son penetrates human existence and takes our nature for his own means that he

551 Gaudium et spes, § 19.
552 Gaudium et spes, § 22.
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comes to share with us the troubles under which we labor while, at the same time, communicating to us the grace that is a share of his own inner life as God. The problem is not cast, in other words, in the terms of St. Anselm's *Cur Deus homo*, which, as Ratzinger would later say, "put a decisive stamp on the second millennium of Western Christendom," and, "has extensively moulded the general consciousness," leaving the whole problem of Christian Redemption to appear, "cruelly mechanical and less and less feasible." The Council's approach represents a return to the more patristic and biblical interpretation of the Incarnation, according to which the Incarnation is not seen as a metaphysical problem in its own right over-against separate theological questions concerning soteriology and eschatology, but, instead, as the key that unlocks the whole synthesis of theology as a Christological-soteriological-eschatological unity. The Fathers write, on this point, with a patristic eloquence, saying, "He Who is 'the image of the invisible God' (Col. 1:15), is Himself the perfect man. To the sons of Adam He restores the divine likeness which had been disfigured from the first sin onward." Reaching into the very heart of the mystery of the Incarnation, behind and beneath the analogy of mere "satisfaction," to the depths of divine-human reciprocity, they explain that, "by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man," and that he, "acted by human choice and loved with a human heart," having been born into union with us from the womb of Mary. This union with us, explain the Fathers, means that we, for our own part, can be conformed to him, in turn, and thereby become, "capable of discharging the new law of love." Thus, the

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554 Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 172.
555 Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 172. In the end, of course, this can only mean that the great cost Ratzinger associates with Anselm's project has been born to no real profit with respect to its intended purpose—namely, to present Christianity in a reasonable light in the eyes of those not yet persuaded to genuine faith.
556 *Gaudium et spes*, § 22.
557 *Gaudium et spes*, § 22.
558 *Gaudium et spes*, § 22.
559 *Gaudium et spes*, § 22.
human person comes to be understood precisely and properly only in terms of the divine Love, and the divine solicitude. The Fathers write:

Such is the mystery of man, and it is a great one, as seen by believers in the light of Christian revelation. Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. Apart from His Gospel, they overwhelm us. Christ has risen, destroying death by His death; He has lavished life upon us so that, as sons in the Son, we can cry out in the Spirit; Abba, Father.  

Continuing with the idea of personal self-donation, the Fathers further develop a notion of participation that clearly moves beyond the platonic/scholastic notion, and does so in a way that, once again, denies a sharp distinction between the orders of nature and grace. In this development, the Fathers move through the commandment of love, to the concept of “neighbor,” and, finally, into a contextualization of natural social organization in light of the eschatological mysteries of the Church and the resurrection. The Fathers write:

God, Who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood. For having been created in the image of God, Who “from one man has created the whole human race and made them live all over the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26), all men are called to one and the same goal, namely God Himself. For this reason, love for God and neighbor is the first and greatest commandment. Sacred Scripture, however, teaches us that the love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbor: “If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. . . . Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law” (Rom. 13:9-10; cf. 1 John 4:20). . . . Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, “that all may be one. . . . as we are one” (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.  

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560 Gaudium et spes, § 22.  
561 Gaudium et spes, § 24.
Once again, their language reflects a concept of co-responsibility between the persons in the human community, and also between the community itself and the persons who comprise that totality. “Man’s social nature,” they explain, “makes it evident that the progress of the human person and the advance of society itself hinge on one another.” This mutual reference of person to community and community to person, means that, “the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person which for its part and by its very nature stands completely in need of social life.”

The Fathers then go on to define the notion of the “common good” in a way that very clearly builds upon the notion of co-responsibility, making the fundamental reference point something much more inclusive that the whole society. Rather, the society itself having been rethought along personalistic lines, we now see, once again, that responsibility moves in both directions, and the fulfillment of the individual person is a dimension of the measure of the common good. The individual person is not expendable for the sake of a higher interest, even if, in the end, it remains true that the individual comes most fully to himself by making a sincere gift of himself, potentially to the point of personal sacrifice. Because we are speaking of a personalistic understanding of society and the common good, we must now recognize that the sacrifice of the person is only noble and moral when it is free. Otherwise, it is an act against the person—a reduction of the person to an object, and a rejection of society’s responsibility to the individual as a co-participating agent in his own right. The Fathers make this point by mentioning that even in the order of grace in the arena of the divine action, the dignity of the human person is a direct and constant concern. Carefully defining “the common good” as, “the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment,” The Father’s note that, “the social order and its development must invariably work to the benefit of the human person if the disposition of affairs is to be subordinate to the personal realm and not contrariwise, as the Lord indicated

562 Gaudium et spes, § 25.
563 Gaudium et spes, § 25.
564 Gaudium et spes, § 26.
when He said that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” 565

The Fathers turn, next, to the principle of solidarity, which, once again, can only be understood adequately in personalistic terms. The human person is not an isolated, merely “substantial” being, but exists in relation to others. Indeed, in a sense, his existence as a person represents his being at once subject and object, and thus, existing both as substance and as relation at once. This fact about the human person leads to the principle of solidarity as a direct conclusion. We might say, alternatively, that it is, in fact, the phenomenological givenness of solidarity as mode of human existence that allows us to uncover the relational-substantial dynamism of human-personal existence. Here, the Fathers appeal to revelation as the key to this discovery, explaining that, “God did not create man for life in isolation, but for the formation of social unity,” 566 and that, “from the beginning of salvation history He has chosen men not just as individuals but as members of a certain community. Revealing His mind to them, God called these chosen ones ‘His people’ (Ex. 3:7-12), and even made a covenant with them on Sinai.” 567 They go on, saying of Christ that:

As the firstborn of many brethren and by the giving of His Spirit, He founded after His death and resurrection a new brotherly community composed of all those who receive Him in faith and in love. This He did through His Body, which is the Church. There everyone, as members one of the other, would render mutual service according to the different gifts bestowed on each.

This solidarity must be constantly increased until that day on which it will be brought to perfection. Then, saved by grace, men will offer flawless glory to God as a family beloved of God and of Christ their Brother. 568

In Gaudium et spes, the Fathers’ thinking on the subject of the acting person closely resemble Wojtyla’s own thinking with its emphasis upon the transitive and intransitive dimensions of human action as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 in the present study. The realm of the intransitive—that dimension of the human act that remains within and forms the person who performs it—is the more

565 Gaudium et spes, § 26.
566 Gaudium et spes, § 32.
567 Gaudium et spes, § 32.
568 Gaudium et spes, § 32.
essential of the two dimensions of the human act, since it is the
intransitive dimension that renders the person morally good or
morally bad as a person. The Fathers write:

Human activity, to be sure, takes its significance from its
relationship to man. Just as it proceeds from man, so it is ordered
toward man. For when a man works he not only alters things and
society, he develops himself as well. He learns much, he cultivates
his resources, he goes outside of himself and beyond himself.
Rightly understood this kind of growth is of greater value than any
external riches which can be garnered. A man is more precious for
what he is than for what he has. Similarly, all that men do to obtain
greater justice, wider brotherhood, a more humane disposition of
social relationships has greater worth than technical advances. For
these advances can supply the material for human progress, but of
themselves alone they can never actually bring it about.

Hence, the norm of human activity is this: that in accord with
the divine plan and will, it harmonize with the genuine good of the
human race, and that it allow men as individuals and as members
of society to pursue their total vocation and fulfill it. ⁵⁶⁹

As Buttiglione had pointed out, Wojtyla was assigned to the
theological commission that revised the text of Schema XIII,
giving rise to the final document, Gaudium et spes, and that he
worked, specifically, on the fourth chapter of Part I of the
document. ⁵⁷⁰ In this section, some of Wojtyla’s central themes
come to the fore. We find, in fact, an explicit articulation of the
Church’s responsibility to safeguard the rights and the freedom of
the human person. The Fathers write:

By no human law can the personal dignity and liberty of man be so
aptly safeguarded as by the Gospel of Christ which has been
entrusted to the Church. For this Gospel announces and proclaims
the freedom of the sons of God, and repudiates all the bondage
which ultimately results from sin. (cf. Rom. 8:14-17); it has a
sacred reverence for the dignity of conscience and its freedom of
choice, constantly advises that all human talents be employed in
God’s service and men’s, and, finally, commends all to the charity

This agrees with the basic law of the Christian dispensation. For
though the same God is Savior and Creator, Lord of human history
as well as of salvation history, in the divine arrangement itself, the
rightful autonomy of the creature, and particularly of man is not

⁵⁶⁹ Gaudium et spes, § 35.
⁵⁷⁰ Buttiglione, Karol Wojtyla, 194.
withdrawn, but is rather re-established in its own dignity and strengthened in it.\textsuperscript{571}

Later in the document, the theme of the relationship between freedom and work is raised. There, we come to see a reaffirmation of the Church’s social teaching as it had been developed in the previous seventy-four years. This time, the articulation is, again, explicitly personalistic. We read:

In economic enterprises it is persons who are joined together, that is, free and independent human beings created to the image of God. Therefore, with attention to the functions of each—owners or employers, management or labor—and without doing harm to the necessary unity of management, the active sharing of all in the administration and profits of these enterprises in ways to be properly determined is to be promoted. Since more often, however, decisions concerning economic and social conditions, on which the future lot of the workers and of their children depends, are made not within the business itself but by institutions on a higher level, the workers themselves should have a share also in determining these conditions—in person or through freely elected delegates.\textsuperscript{572}

Finally, taking up the relationship between authority and freedom, so as to avoid the false dichotomization that would pit the one against the other, the Fathers take note of the new political situation. While the twentieth century had seen the rise of authoritarian, oppressive regimes that crushed the dignity of the human person, it has also seen a spreading of more participatory forms of government. These forms of government have their own inherent threats to human dignity in the promotion of a false dichotomy between freedom and truth, freedom and moral goodness, freedom and God—but, in the end, if they can remain anchored to the foundation of human dignity, these forms of government are a potential means of recognizing and even promoting the dignity of the human person as an agent of co-responsibility. We read:

All Christians must be aware of their own specific vocation within the political community. It is for them to give an example by their sense of responsibility and their service of the common good. In this way they are to demonstrate concretely how authority can be compatible with freedom, personal initiative with the solidarity of

\textsuperscript{571} Gaudium et spes, § 41.

\textsuperscript{572} Gaudium et spes, § 68.
the whole social organism, and the advantages of unity with fruitful diversity.\footnote{Gaudium et spes, § 75.}

Turning, now, to the text of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, \textit{Lumen gentium}, we can see still more evidence of a personalist turn in the mind of the Church. This text predates \textit{Gaudium et spes} by over a year.\footnote{Lumen gentium was promulgated on 21 November 1964, while \textit{Gaudium et spes} was promulgated on 7 December 1965.} It is fair to say that \textit{Lumen gentium}, as a dogmatic rather than a pastoral act of a Council that understood itself to hold ecumenical standing, is a much more restrained document than \textit{Gaudium et spes}. As a dogmatic statement at an ecumenical council, \textit{Lumen gentium} possesses a degree of authority simply that cannot be attributed to \textit{Gaudium et spes}, which the Fathers presented as merely pastoral. We cannot escape the fact that, if one accepts \textit{Gaudium et spes} in its totality, one must reject a cosmological view of the human person, and that this fact reveals to us that the mature mind of the Church in fact has transcended such a view. But one need not accept \textit{Gaudium et spes} with the same degree of assent required by \textit{Lumen gentium}, which the Fathers represented as a dogmatic constitution.\footnote{We should note, by way of illustration, that the Fathers close \textit{Lumen gentium} with the following exhortation: “Each and all these items which are set forth in this dogmatic Constitution have met with the approval of the Council Fathers. And We by the apostolic power given Us by Christ together with the Venerable Fathers in the Holy Spirit, approve, decree and establish it and command that what has thus been decided in the Council be promulgated for the glory of God” (§ 69, postscript). \textit{Gaudium et spes} does not feature any such language. Rather, a note is appended to the preface explaining the limitations within which the document should be received from the Fathers. Even so, however, it would be theologically irresponsible to pretend that \textit{Gaudium et spes} does not contain authoritative doctrinal elements. In fact, the note in the preface of \textit{Gaudium et spes} clearly addresses the fact that the pastoral meditations in the document should be seen as “resting on doctrinal principles” (\textit{Gaudium et spes}, Preface, n. 1 [Vatican translation]).}

Magisterial authority is understandably and appropriately reticent to make dogmatic statements unless doing so is absolutely required for the preservation of covenantal integrity, because the Church does not wish to close theological discussion, but merely to safeguard the parameters within which it can be conducted with authenticity. So the Council appears unwilling to dogmatize certain...
concrete propositions about personhood that we find in *Gaudium et spes*; but, even with the Fathers’ cautiousness in mind, it is possible to discern a personalist emphasis in the pages of the text of *Lumen gentium*. On this point, the theme of the personal “task” plays a central role. The Fathers approach the question of the laity with a view to the layperson as a free and responsible agent, and not merely as a passive recipient of the Church’s action in the order of grace. This person is engaged in the soteriological activity of the Church according to his own proper sphere of competence, which does not belong to the province of magisterial authority. But since the layperson is a co-responsible participant in the Church’s soteriological activity, and shares in the Church’s eschatological orientation, he finds himself invited to take up his own work in response to grace. The laity, explain the Fathers:

... conduct themselves as children of the promise, and thus strong in faith and in hope they make the most of the present, and with patience await the glory that is to come. Let them not, then, hide this hope in the depths of their hearts, but even in the program of their secular life let them express it by a continual conversion and by wrestling “against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness.”

This responsibility, “takes on a specific quality and a special force in that it is carried out in the ordinary surroundings of the world.” And since this is a task that belongs to the Church, even as it is a task specific to the laity, the Fathers explain that, “even when preoccupied with temporal cares, the laity can and must perform a work of great value for the evangelization of the world.”

Continuing, the Fathers go on to develop the idea of the “royal priesthood” of all those who live in Christ as a particular consecration of the laity in their own states of life. They work to further instantiate the transformative and purifying power of the Gospel even within the framework of the temporal and secular order. This task is, itself, ordained to the final eschatological fulfillment that remains beyond time, and, thus, already shares in the dignity of the coming world. The Fathers explain that, “the Lord wishes to spread His kingdom also by means of the laity,


577 *Lumen gentium*, § 35.

578 *Lumen gentium*, § 35.
namely, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace.\textsuperscript{579} They are careful to say, moreover, that, insofar as this task involves the ordering of secular human affairs through daily work, "The laity have the principal role in the overall fulfillment of this duty."\textsuperscript{580} The Fathers call the laity to this task as they write:

Moreover, let the laity also by their combined efforts remedy the customs and conditions of the world, if they are an inducement to sin, so that they all may be conformed to the norms of justice and may favor the practice of virtue rather than hinder it. By so doing they will imbue culture and human activity with genuine moral values; they will better prepare the field of the world for the seed of the Word of God; and at the same time they will open wider the doors of the Church by which the message of peace may enter the world.\textsuperscript{581}

The Fathers then go on to assert that, since the laity have a distinct role to play in the Church, stemming from their distinct competencies, they must also enjoy certain rights in the Church. It is interesting, here, that the Church even speaks about the "rights" of the laity in the order of grace, explaining that, "The laity have the right, as do all Christians, to receive in abundance from their spiritual shepherds the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the assistance of the word of God and of the sacraments."\textsuperscript{582} This fact, again, shows a distinct turn toward a recognition of the human person as a participant in an intersubjective dialogue, and not merely as an object in relation to other objects. The dimension of intersubjectivity is brought forward here as an essential dimension of personhood, requiring the Church to recognize certain truths about the person as a subject to whom the whole organism of the Church is obligated to respond, even as they, themselves, are called to respond to the intersubjective whole, and to recognize and accept the implications of that intersubjectivity in the form of an obedience that constitutes an \textit{act} in its own right. Again, the concept of co-responsibility is discernable in the Fathers' thinking. They write:

\textsuperscript{579} \textit{Lumen gentium}, § 36.  
\textsuperscript{580} \textit{Lumen gentium}, § 36.  
\textsuperscript{581} \textit{Lumen gentium}, § 36.  
\textsuperscript{582} \textit{Lumen gentium}, § 37.
A great many wonderful things are to be hoped for from this familiar dialogue between the laity and their spiritual leaders: in the laity a strengthened sense of personal responsibility; a renewed enthusiasm; a more ready application of their talents to the projects of their spiritual leaders. The latter, on the other hand, aided by the experience of the laity, can more clearly and more incisively come to decisions regarding both spiritual and temporal matters. In this way, the whole Church, strengthened by each one of its members, may more effectively fulfill its mission for the life of the world.\footnote{Lumen gentium, § 37.}

Turning, now, to the Marian treatise in the final chapter of \textit{Lumen gentium}, we should recall the insightful commentary offered by Hans Urs von Balthasar in the third volume of his \textit{Theo-Drama}.\footnote{Hans Urs von Balthasar, \textit{Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory}, Vol III: \textit{The Dramatis Personae: The Person in Christ}, Graham Harrison, trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992).} Balthasar notes that the Marian treatise in \textit{Lumen gentium} represents an important stage in the development of the Church's Mariological teaching in the contemporary period, following upon a long period characterized by increasing excesses, of which he is unapologetically critical. He sees these excesses as providing Protestantism a reasoned, but unnecessary objection to Catholicism. Their objection is reasoned because these excesses represent a distortion of Christology and theology in general; but the objection is unnecessary because these excesses are not authentic to the Faith. They are, instead, inauthentic attitudes held by many who live, in any event, in harmony with the Church—at least for the most part. This fact, however, creates an understandable stumbling-block to dialogue because it raises its own set of difficult theological issues surrounding how the Church manages to preserve orthodoxy through tradition when tradition is also the arena in which accretions can come to threaten the integrity of the pure gospel. This is not the place to deal with those issues, of course. Our point is merely to attempt to frame Balthasar's criticisms, when he begins his lengthy discourse on this period of "distortions"\footnote{Balthasar, \textit{Theo-Drama III}, 312–315.} with almost aggressive indictment, declaring that, "In terms of content, the history of the present question from the thirteenth to the twentieth century has hardly produced anything new."\footnote{Balthasar, \textit{Theo-Drama III}, 312.} He sees the history of this period as
framed by an oscillation between exaggerations and calls for moderation because, “the principles that would make it possible to keep the mean position... are seldom clearly set forth.” For Balthasar, *Lumen gentium* represents the needed articulation of those “principles that would make it possible to keep the mean position.”

Balthasar’s outline of the exaggerations that characterized the Marian piety of this period will provide a sufficient setting against which we can discuss the importance of the contribution made to the Mariological discussion by the Marian treatise in *Lumen gentium*. Balthasar explains:

Mary’s universal intercession is heightened to a quasi-divine “omnipotence”, which is hers because the Son, who was obedient to her for so long on earth, remains obedient to her in heaven. This omnipotence can even break ultimate decrees issued by the Son; it is an “almighty power of mercy” that stands over against the Son’s almighty justice and wrath. The title of Theotokos leads some to conclude that, since she shares the eternal Son with the divine Father, she herself is “divinized”, even to the extent of possessing prerogatives that God himself does not have. Her substance is said to be eternal and celestial, she is said to be a co-creator of the world, together with God, “supplementing the Trinity”. Particularly embarrassing is the conclusion that, since Mary is “Mistress of the universe”, “Empress”, and so forth, we should all bind ourselves to her as her slaves (*doulai*), her “pages”, her “lackeys”—and here the earlier idea recurs—in order to attain divine grace “more quickly” through her than through her Son, who is preoccupied with justice. Such exaggerations and distortions, and many others, were the product of pious imagination; not only did they create a stumbling block, understandably, for Protestants; they were clearly getting farther and farther away from authentic Catholic tradition.

Balthasar explains that, “The change in Mariology undertaken by the Second Vatican Council could not happen until, by way of preparation, there had been serious exegetical reflection on the Bible and new and serious attention to the patristic view of the

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588 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama* III, 313–315. We have not reproduced Balthasar’s footnotes here, which far exceed, by way of sheer documentary evidence for each of his claims, the textual content of the body itself of this passage.
relationship between Mary and the Church. Thus, he is pleased with the renewal envisaged in *Lumen gentium* precisely because it is a renewal based upon a return to the sources or *ressourcement*, which means, first above all, a return to the authoritative and universally valid witness of the Bible, read in continuity with the Fathers of the Church. Balthasar is enthusiastic as writes:

In deciding to make its teaching on Mary part of the Constitution on the Church, as the latter’s conclusion, the Council has set a landmark that will not easily be moved. Even in matters of detail, it deliberately returns to the starting points of patristic Mariology (the Mary/Eve parallel in nos. 56 and 63; Mary as the Church’s *typus et exemplar* in no. 53) and its early medieval development (Mary as the *realsymbol*, pattern and goal of the Church, which sets its sights on her and becomes assimilated to her in faith, hope and love: 65, 68). Following the biblical and patristic line, the Council insists that the obedient Virgin (who obeys in the darkness of faith: 58) is absolutely subordinate to God and to Christ, the “one mediator”. The idea that she is “mediatrix” is introduced with great caution, simply as an expression of her intercessory help (62); the term “coredemptrix” is entirely avoided.

Our purpose in the present study, however, is not to present an analysis of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the figure of Mary, but to reveal a distinguishing insight of Pope John Paul II in his own teaching on Mary. That insight is the animating principle we have termed, “proredemption,” and which is based in Wojtyla’s understanding of participation as a distinct characteristic of personhood and the highest form of human action. Thus, in what follows in our brief consideration of the Marian teaching of *Lumen gentium* in this section of the present study, we will, again, consider only those passages in which we see distinct evidence of the development of a personalist line of thought on the question of the figure of Mary.

The first point to note, then, is the Fathers’ insistence upon a return to the patristic understanding of Mary as someone intimately bound-up with the Church. The Council Fathers will describe Mary in her role as a “member of the Church.” While this membership

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590 Balthasar, *Theo-Drama* III, 316

591 *Lumen gentium*, § 53.
is, "preeminent and singular," that preeminence and singularity can only be understood in the context of her membership. Thus, everything that the Fathers have said about the members of the Church up to this point, including their statements about the laity in the context of their lives as spouses and parents, must now form the context within which the figure of Mary in the Church is to be understood. For, "because she belongs to the offspring of Adam she is one with all those who are to be saved. She is 'the mother of the members of Christ . . . having cooperated by charity that faithful might be born in the Church, who are members of that Head.'"

Thus, it is as member of the Church that Mary's role in the economy of salvation must be articulated. It is Mary's typological signification as the woman of faith, the embodiment of Israel, and, thus, of the People of God, that draws the Church's attention. But faith is not merely a passive impression made upon human consciousness by the divine hand. It is an act performed by the human person in response to God's self-revelation. We read:

The Father of mercies willed that the incarnation should be preceded by the acceptance of her who was predestined to be the mother of His Son, so that just as a woman contributed to death, so also a woman should contribute to life. . . . Thus Mary, a daughter of Adam, consenting to the divine Word, became the mother of Jesus, the one and only Mediator. Embracing God's salvific will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son, under Him and with Him, by the grace of almighty God, serving the mystery of redemption. Rightly therefore the holy Fathers see

592 Lumen gentium, § 53.

593 "In connection with the prophetic function is that state of life which is sanctified by a special sacrament obviously of great importance, namely, married and family life. For where Christianity pervades the entire mode of family life, and gradually transforms it, one will find there both the practice and an excellent school of the lay apostolate. In such a home husbands and wives find their proper vocation in being witnesses of the faith and love of Christ to one another and to their children. The Christian family loudly proclaims both the present virtues of the Kingdom of God and the hope of a blessed life to come. Thus by its example and its witness it accuses the world of sin and enlightens those who seek the truth" (Lumen gentium, § 35).

594 Lumen gentium, § 53. The interior quotation is from St. Augustine's De Verginitate, § 6.
her as used by God not merely in a passive way, but as freely cooperating in the work of human salvation through faith and obedience. For, as St. Irenaeus says, she "being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race." Hence not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert in their preaching, "The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience; what the virgin Eve bound through her unbelief, the Virgin Mary loosened by her faith."595

The fathers go on to depict Mary as one who makes a personal offering of the gift of Christ which she receives on behalf of humanity from the unfathomable generosity of the Father. Her presence throughout the public life of Christ is understood in this context, again, emphasizing a personalistic perspective on the place of Mary in the history of salvation and the life of the Church. They write:

In the public life of Jesus, Mary makes significant appearances. This is so even at the very beginning, when at the marriage feast of Cana, moved with pity, she brought about by her intercession the beginning of miracles of Jesus the Messiah. In the course of her Son's preaching she received the words whereby in extolling a kingdom beyond the calculations and bonds of flesh and blood, He declared blessed those who heard and kept the word of God, as she was faithfully doing. After this manner the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, grieving exceedingly with her only begotten Son, uniting herself with a maternal heart with His sacrifice, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this Victim which she herself had brought forth. Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross as a mother to His disciple with these words: "Woman, behold thy son."596

Turning to the difficult question of Mary's "mediation" in the arena of grace, the Fathers are careful to emphasize the uniqueness of Christ's place in salvation. There is a sense of the term "mediation" that can only be applied to Christ, because it is the characteristic of his being, in his own person, the very point of intersection between God and humanity. Under no circumstance can Mary—as a pure creature—ever be called "mediator" in this

595 Lumen gentium, § 56.
596 Lumen gentium, § 58.
sense. Nonetheless, there is a subordinated, actively participatory sense in which the term is properly applied to her. The Fathers explain the matter with great care. We quote them at length, as they write:

This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent which she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, and lasts until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into the happiness of their true home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator.

The Fathers then turn to the concept of the interpenetration of persons that rests at the heart of the Church's concept of subsidiarity. Here, all human beings interpenetrate in such a way that, while remaining uniquely ourselves and personally distinct, that very distinction is bound-up in our relatedness to others. This fact about us gives rise to the possibility of concepts like the Communion of Saints and the Church as the "Body of Christ." In this context, therefore, it becomes clear how one human being can intercede on behalf of another in the order of grace—how the individual member can strengthen the whole through his personal, participatory act. This principle applies to all persons in the membership of the Church, and not only to Christ the Head. Nonetheless, Mary emerges in this context precisely as that "preeminent and singular member" because of her radical purity and because of the unique and unrepeatable relationship she enjoys with her Son. The Fathers write:

By reason of the gift and role of divine maternity, by which she is united with her Son, the Redeemer, and with His singular graces and functions, the Blessed Virgin is also intimately united with the Church. As St. Ambrose taught, the Mother of God is a type of the

597 Lumen gentium, § 60.
598 Lumen gentium, § 62.
599 Lumen gentium, § 53.
Church in the order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ. For in the mystery of the Church, which is itself rightly called mother and virgin, the Blessed Virgin stands out in eminent and singular fashion as exemplar both of virgin and mother. By her belief and obedience, not knowing man but overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, as the new Eve she brought forth on earth the very Son of the Father, showing an undefiled faith, not in the word of the ancient serpent, but in that of God’s messenger. The Son whom she brought forth is He whom God placed as the first-born among many brethren, namely the faithful, in whose birth and education she cooperates with a maternal love.  

Finally, the Fathers call upon Mary’s intercession in the context of the document itself, noting that Mary’s active participation in the salvific work of Christ is a perfect, and therefore, perpetual one, as it is taken up into the very meta-temporal reality of her glorification in Christ, wherein she shares in the inner life of God. They write:

The entire body of the faithful pours forth instant supplications to the Mother of God and Mother of men that she, who aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers, may now, exalted as she is above all the angels and saints, intercede before her Son in the fellowship of all the saints, until all families of people, whether they are honored with the title of Christian or whether they still do not know the Saviour, may be happily gathered together in peace and harmony into one people of God, for the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity.

3.4: Applying Wojtyla’s Concept of Participation to the Catholic Covenantal Economy:

Once we accept this view of the acting person, the whole of Catholic anthropology falls easily into place. The sacramental

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600 *Lumen gentium*, § 63.
601 *Lumen gentium*, § 69.
602 Indeed, prior to his election to the papacy, Wojtyla contributed considerably to Paul VI’s encyclical letter, *Humanae vitae* (25 July 1968), a document dealing with one his principle areas of specialization, dealt
life, inasmuch as it emphasizes the spatio-temporal dimension of human reality, confesses human participation, which occurs within the spatio-temporal framework, as a process. Participation, in this context, involves real human agency understood as efficacious and self-determinative, without in the least suggesting a Pelagian independence of human power from divine omnipotence. Indeed, to suggest such in-dependence would destroy the very concept of participation as surely as would inefficacy.

Participation, thus understood, admits easily of the practice of indulgences whereby the person participates in the formation of his own interior disposition toward eternal realities. Indeed, this is really the whole point behind the practice of indulgence; the penance assigned to a penitent, who is already forgiven before he sets himself to the task, is no different in its character. In both instances, the human person is undertaking a course of action oriented outward, and thus, with the intransitive realization of the person himself as an other-centered self—one open to the dialogue of giving and receiving real love.

with so ground-breaking and extensively in his Love and Responsibility (see, Karol Wojtyla [Pope John Paul II], Love and Responsibility, H. T. Willetts, trans. [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981, 1993]. As we have already noted about Lumen gentium and Gaudium et spes, Humanae Vitae, too, bears the stamp of Wojtyla’s view of the acting person as a genuinely self-determining agent of responsibility. Later, as pope, this same personalistic stamp impressed the magisterial teaching much more extensively, especially, for our purposes here, in his encyclicals Veritatis splendor and Redemptoris Mater, which may be read, along with other encyclicals, as further elaborations upon the themes addressed in the Conciliar passages we have already mentioned. Indeed, when Wojtyla became Pope John Paul II, he gradually began to employ personalism to the heritage of the Second Vatican Council as the proper hermeneutical framework according to which her documents ought to be interpreted. In this way, John Paul II did more than simply offer clarification, direction, and definition concerning this or that particular issue; he expounded the full breadth of Christianity over the course of his twenty-seven year papacy, from a new perspective, and thus taught Christianity to the Church in an entirely new way. For this incalculable contribution, he is likely to be numbered, in the future, among the Doctors of the Church. For a discussion of Wojtyla’s work at the Council, including his work on Lumen gentium see George Weigel, Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II (New York: Cliff Street Books, Harper Collins Publishers, 2001), 161–172. For a discussion of his contribution to the composition of Humanae vitae, see Weigel, Witness to Hope, 206–210.
This notion is inseparable from the affirmation, essential to the Catholic view, that it is possible to forfeit the gift of grace, and choose death over life. This idea of mortal sin rests at the heart of the sacrament of reconciliation. This sacrament is an invitation to the sinner to embark upon the way of grace again, as it opens out before him in the bosom of the Church. That way of grace had previously been rejected in a decisive turning away from communion with the Father's will, and thus, a rejection of that very oneness in the Triune Life that Christ makes available to us, and which constitutes the Church's mystical unity apart from which we cannot find salvation. Only this communal life can be salvific, precisely because God has made the human person in his own image and likeness—the image and likeness, that is, of the one who is, in himself, communion.

This is an important difference between the Calvinist view and that of the Catholic Church. For the Calvinist, there simply is no integration between value and action. Paul's testimony rings out without qualification: "There is a war within my members, so that the good that I desire to do, I do not do, while the evil that I desire to avoid, I commit." Because of the radical division between the

603 That said, all Christians would wish to appeal to the lived experience of imperfection even in the life of grace. Such an appeal must be part of a phenomenologically honest theological appraisal. Our residual concupiscence continues to disallow for us a persistently unambiguous experience of sanctification, even within the covenantal life of the Church. Calvinists explain this fact through the introduction of a kind of dual nature view of the Christian, according to which we possess both a "Christ-nature" and a "sin-nature," which war against one another until, at death or upon Christ's return, our "sin-nature" will be destroyed, and only our "Christ-nature" will remain. Now, this articulation, taken from Paul (Romans 7:1–8:22), assumes, within this theological context, the character of something more than a metaphor, precisely because we cannot, from the Calvinist point of view, suggest a struggle at the level of human agency with respect to the life of grace. For the Calvinist, the work is done and completed for us, by God, already. We cannot do anything more by way of contribution or participation. Instead, the strict Calvinist must hold that the struggle is entirely one-sided. We struggle against sin, but never for righteousness; for the two conditions are in no way correlative in us, who are, according to our dual nature, simul iustus et peccator.

604 The Christian insight of divine triunity is not entirely novel, but radicalizes an insight already present within the Old Testament, and manifest in the Hebrew word, Elohim, which represents a plural form.

605 Cf. Romans 7:13–25.
Mary and the Acting Person

old man and the new, our sins, as actions, do not redound upon the agent/subject. To employ Wojtyla's terminology, they lack any characteristic of intransitiveness with respect to the Christian as Christian, such that grace is irresistible and justification, once received, can never be lost, no matter how strenuously we may repudiate it.

In his encyclical Veritatis splendor, John Paul II concerns himself precisely with this question of intransitiveness in human action, when he points out the limits inherent in a certain formulation of so-called fundamental option theory. According to that thesis, the moral character of the human person is not assessed on the basis of any one, concrete act, but against the overall trajectory of his acts in the course of life, taken as a whole. John Paul II rejects this view because it draws an artificial dichotomy that would presume to separate the concrete act from one's fundamental option for or against the Good, Truth, and God. Instead, he insists that it is precisely in and through the concrete act that this fundamental option is made, because the first dimension of the reality of a truly human act is precisely that of its intransitiveness, according to which it redounds upon the agent himself or herself as person. It is this and only this fact that makes possible mortal sin, on the one hand, and righteousness, on the other. Thus, where a conscious choice has been made in rejection of the will of the Father, a conscious choice must be made—an act performed—whereby it is again embraced; we must repent, concretely, just as we had concretely sinned.

That said, intercessory prayer also finds a philosophical language in the concept of participation as Wojtyla understands it. Because participation means that the agent as a distinct person makes his or her own a good beyond himself, willing as a person what the community desires, the classically Judaic understanding of the Torah as an expression of God's will, inviting us to be conformed to it, becomes a philosophically coherent concept. As we develop in holiness, we come to will in conformity to God, who invites us to ask him for what benefits others. This is the concept expressed in scholastic terms under the category of "merit." As participatory agents in the order of grace, we can "merit" before God by his grace, and contribute to the up-building of the Kingdom of heaven through intercessory prayer and participatory ascetical sacrifice.

Even the Eucharist, though in its principle respect it is the gratuitous act of Christ himself, calls for "full and actual
participation"\(^{606}\) on the part of all the faithful, as we ourselves enter consciously and deliberately into the reality of Christ's passion here and now, climbing up onto the Cross with him, commingling with him body and blood, dying with him, rising with him, and ascending with him to share forever his divine felicity. Indeed, this "full and actual participation" of the faithful in the Eucharistic moment stems precisely from the inscrutably mysterious fact that in and through the reality of the Incarnation, the divine Person who, first above all, performs the Eucharistic act, is now, himself, a man—a man who participates, seamlessly yet freely, in that act, by virtue of the fact that in this unique instance, that man is in fact, the divine agent himself. His participation in the act, however, is moreover, a participation in the efficacious realization of his own personalistic value, not merely as the eternally-realized \(\Delta\theta\omicron\gamma\omicron\omicron\omicron\omicron\) but as Jesus of Nazareth, whose humanity is oriented-toward and completed-in, communion-of-friendship with the very Person he is himself.

Again, Wojtyla's notion of participation helps us to understand the concept of the Communion of Saints, according to which the Church finds herself bound together in Christ so intimately that even death itself cannot disrupt that unity. Especially by virtue of the Eucharist, Christians find themselves bound-together-in-Christ, and confess that when we have been fully actualized—that is to say, when we are most fully one with Christ—our participatory power is most fully manifest, such that the saint in glory can and does exercise intercessory cooperative agency even more than those of us as yet on pilgrimage in the present life. This insight itself comes to the fore in the Mariological dimension of Catholic anthropology, where Mary, who is most fully redeemed (i.e. the full-of-grace-one), perpetually participates in the redemptive activity of Christ in a uniquely exemplary way.\(^{607}\) We will explore this point more fully in the next chapter.

Here, however, we can consider, very briefly, the notion of the threefold life of the Church, in the context of the soteriological question of the so-called "last things." Considered


\(^{607}\) Cf., Cf. Karl Rahner, "The Fundamental Principle of Marian Theology," *Maria: A Journal of Marian Studies* (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000): 86–122 (especially 103ff). Rahner develops this concept at some length in this article, and articulates the principle in a variety of terms. Characteristically, he describes Mary as, "She who has received the fullness of grace and has been perfectly redeemed" (105).
in light of a vital sense of participation, the idea of the pilgrim Church in prayer for the Church penitent, with their mutual orientation to the Church Triumphant is the very picture of solidarity. Tradition comes to be affirmed, here, as a common experience binding these three communities within the Cosmic Church together in a common interest. All members of the Church, across time, and across the whole spectrum of eschatological realization, are working together for a common value—that of the realization of God’s salvific will for “all human beings to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth.”608 From those bound imperfectly to the Church through a genuine desire to know the truth and do the good,609 to those already assumed into heavenly glory,610 the human person is called to participate actively in the

608 1 Tim. 2:4.


610 We speak in the plural, here, because, in addition to Mary, assumption traditions exist for figures such as Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, and Enoch. Enoch is referenced explicitly in Scripture, both in Genesis and Hebrews. Elijah is seen being taken up by God in a flaming chariot. Moses’ tomb is unknown to man, because God himself laid him to rest (Deuteronomy 34:6). Indeed, Moses and Elijah are presented vividly as assumed into heavenly glory in the transfiguration narratives in all four gospels. In addition to Moses and Elijah, John the Baptist and Jeremiah are explicitly mentioned as answers the people at large might give to the question, “who is the Son of Man?”—and even the general statement, “one of the prophets” suggest a wide array of other figures for whom assumption traditions likely existed even in the first century (Matthew 16:14). From all of this, we can suggest that while the Assumption of Mary is certainly paradigmatic and even truly exceptional on account of her divine maternity whereby Christ’s whole human nature derives from her own body, the grace of bodily assumption has been extended to a number of figures already. Indeed, since we do not know the precise relationship between chronological time and “the end of time,” firm dogmatic statements about the so-called “general resurrection” as a properly historical event would go beyond revelation. While Ratzinger has argued extensively and persuasively that some concrete content must endure in the traditional concepts of an “intermediate state,” a “particular judgment” and a “general resurrection and judgment,” he also admits that these ideas can be interpreted, today, as somehow, and necessarily, bound-up with history, yet without being constrained by history conceived in a purely linear sense. See, Johann Auer, ed., Dogmatic Theology, § 9: Joseph Ratzinger, Eschatology, Death and Eternal Life, Michael Waldstein, trans., Aidan Nichols, ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 104–274. Indeed, as appears clear, the Scriptural
salvific work of Christ, until that "fullness of joy" 611 comes, when the alienation of sin gives way to unity in love, and "God will be all in all." 612 The liturgy we pray is bound to the liturgy prayed across time, so that the liturgy is not a-historical, but trans-historical; it is both historically situated and timeless at once.

The same is true of the Church's common doctrines, whereby what comes to us de fide in Christ's self-revelation is received by the Church in time, and within certain culturally conditioned settings. Doctrine can develop, even as the faith itself is given whole and entire in Jesus Christ. 613 Indeed, this fact brings us precisely to the present project. John Paul II has offered the Church the philosophico-theological tools with which to renew our approach to Christian mystery, especially as it comes to bear upon the question of human participation in the process of redemption—a thesis consistently maintained in the constant teaching and Tradition of the Church. While some seem reluctant to attribute any real originality to the thought of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II at all, interpreting them only as restatements of Thomas in contemporary language, 614 the fact of philosophical dialogue—whatever we may think about the direction it has taken in recent centuries or decades—possesses the power to force certain questions, which, if carefully and honestly engaged, will serve to

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* data would seem to mitigate against such an approach. That said, if Christ is "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25), yet, as we have seen, Scripture references several figures already assumed historically prior to Christ's own historical resurrection and ascension, it is impossible to say how many of the faithful who have died with Christ have already received this promised fruit of redemption.


612 1 Corinthians 15:28.

613 In their recent statement, *The Hope of Salvation for Infants who Die Without Being Baptised*, the International Theological Commission provide an illustration of precisely this point.

614 Cf., for example, Romanos Cessario's comment on the cover notes for Kupczak's *Destined for Liberty* (Jaroslaw Kupczak, O.P., *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II* [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 2000]), "Quite simply, he's a Thomist!" With this almost flippant assessment of Wojtyla's thought, one would be led to believe that Kupczak's contribution to Wojtyla studies rests in the discovery that, contrary to all appearances, Wojtyla really has nothing original to say.
deepen our philosophical insight, and lead to new and original thought. To ignore those questions, furthermore, is to ignore the inner longing within the hearts of those who ask them; but it is for these souls too that the Church is charged to preach the Gospel, and to whom the Church is called to minister unfailingly. New philosophical insights, and even new philosophical problems, require theologians to look ever afresh at the constant teaching and Tradition of the Church—¬not because that teaching and Tradition is rendered uncertain, but because even a problem can point to a truth; and by engaging that truth we can penetrate ever more fully the mysteries of the Gospel the Church is charged to preach and live. Wojtyla threw himself into this endeavor with all his intellectual might, retrieving from the Tradition the central and unchangeable truths of the faith, while at the same time acknowledging the fact that new problems demand new language, and new insight. In this chapter, we explored his attempt to do this, in particular, as his efforts come to bear upon the question of the human person as a true agent of responsibility, even in the order of grace. Our work in this chapter is not intended to have been exhaustive, but preparatory. Our purpose was to point out that the thought of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II on the question of participation is much more than a merely philosophical affair, but pervades the whole of his work, even in the theological dimension. With that, we are now prepared to turn our attention with a more concentrated focus to a specific case in the theological arena—that of Mariology. How does John Paul II conceive of Mary in light of his thought about the acting person, and the participatory action in which we fully realize our transcendence as personal subjects? We will turn to this question in our next chapter.

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Mariologists are broadly familiar with Karl Rahner’s characterization of Mary, along Scotistic lines, as, “the perfectly redeemed person”. Yet, for the most part, little attention has been paid to the precise point of intersection this description evokes. Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II has brought to the forefront of

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616 Cf. Karl Rahner, “The Fundamental Principle of Marian Theology,” *Maria: A Journal of Marian Studies* (Sheffield Academic Press, 2000): 86–122. Rahner articulates the fundamental principle of Marian theology as the affirmation that Mary is, “the fulfilled type of humanity redeemed in the most perfect manner possible” (105), and “She who has received the fullness of grace and has been perfectly redeemed” (105). Rahner articulates this principle in a variety ways throughout this article, but he does not associate this concept with Scotus, explicitly, even though Rahner’s wording is nearly identical to that employed by the Subtle Doctor in his *Ordinatio*, where he writes, “a most perfect mediator has a most perfect act of mediation possible with respect to some person for whom he intercedes,—therefore, Christ had the most perfect degree of mediation possible in regard to some person with respect to whom he was mediator; but with respect to no person did he have a more excellent degree than as regards Mary; therefore etc. But this would only be because he merited to preserve her from original sin” (III, dist. 3, q. 1, *contra primum*, taken from, John Duns Scotus, *Four Questions on Mary*, Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M., trans. [Saint Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2000]). In the same place, Scotus says, again, “a more perfect mediator merits the removal of all punishment from the person whom he reconciles; but original sin is a greater punishment than the loss of divine vision, . . . since sin is the greatest punishment an intellectual nature can suffer; therefore if Christ has reconciled us most perfectly to God, he has merited this most grave punishment itself be taken from someone—but only in regard to his mother. . .” (III, dist. 3, q. 1, *contra primum*). Still again, he writes, “It is commonly assumed, however, that he [Christ] was so perfect a mediator for some person—say Mary—that he preserved her from all actual sin. Why then should perfect mediation not be from original sin as well?” (III, dist. 3, q. 1, *contra primum*).
our concerns, in Catholic philosophical and theological discourse, the problem of the person. What is it, really, to be a person, as opposed to a thing—an I or a thou, as opposed to an it? As we have already seen in the present study, the problem of the person as a thou is the subject of much of Wojtyla's pre-papal work, including The Acting Person, and a number of subsequent essays in which he continues that analysis. In these works, Karol Wojtyla elaborates upon the meaning and implications of personhood, bringing into dialogue the for-its-own-sakeness of the person, and the person's inherently communal orientation. To do this, he develops the idea of participation along lines that move far beyond the classical metaphysical sense of derivative being or action. For Wojtyla, "participation corresponds to the person's transcendence and integration in the action because ... it allows man, when he acts together with other men, to realize thereby and at once the authentically personalistic value—the performance of the action and the fulfillment of himself in the action." He explains that, "[a]cting 'together with others' thus corresponds to the person's transcendence and integration in the action, when man chooses what is chosen by others or even because it is chosen by others—he then identifies the object of his choice with a value that he sees as in some way or another homogeneous with his own." For Wojtyla, this understanding of participation is not simply some fact about the human person, but, "is a distinct feature of the person—a property of the . . . concrete person in his dynamic


619 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 7.3 (270).

620 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 7.3 (270).

621 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 7.3 (271) My emphasis.
correlation with the action." 622 If this is so, can our understanding of Mary as "the perfectly redeemed person" be enriched by Wojtyła's analysis of the concept of participation, and of his idea, in general, of the acting person who is able to "fulfill himself or herself through his or her actions"? 623 Does Wojtyła's development of these concepts open up new vistas for understanding Mary's role in the process of redemption? We contend that these questions should be answered in the affirmative, and that in this affirmation rests the foundation of John Paul II's thinking about Mary as reflected in his encyclical letter, Redemptoris Mater, 624 and in portions of his so-called "Marian Catechesis". 625 This decidedly personalist paradigm can help theologians articulate the perennial mystery of Mary to the contemporary world in new, unexpected, and truly compelling terms.

In this chapter, we will begin the process of formulating that new articulation through an application of Wojtyła's philosophical anthropology to his—that is to say, to John Paul II's—Mariological considerations. Considering the question of continuity in development, then, we must attempt, at least in a preliminary way, to place John Paul II's magisterial work—in this case, we mean, specifically that subset of his magisterial work that pertains to Mariology—in the context of Ratzinger's theological complementarity. We do this because, Ratzinger was an important cooperator with John Paul II in the context of the latter's papacy, and because he is also the immediate successor of John Paul II as Pope Benedict XVI.

We must insist, of course, that, in placing these two figures in dialogue with one another in this chapter, we in no way intend to


623 Cf. Wojtyła, The Acting Person, 7.6 (282).


4.1.0: Part I:
John Paul II’s Presentation of Mary as the Preeminent “Acting Person”

Given the mystery of the human person, what does the Church’s insight on Mary imply? What, in turn, does the mystery of the human person illuminate in the mystery of Mary? This two part question rests at the heart of our reading of Redemptoris Mater in light of John Paul II’s pre-papal work in The Acting Person and related texts. The present work, however, is not the first and only place in which this question has been asked. The present dissertation may represent the most thorough and focused analysis of this question to date, resting, as it does, upon an explicit exposition of Wojtyla’s work in The Acting Person in light of his reading of Scheler, Aquinas, and the problem of Kantian formalism. But other authors have touched on the broad line of inquiry here, at least to a limited extent, and in greater or lesser depth. Even the present dissertation has its own internal history, in fact. It traces to a paper entitled, “The Acting Person in the Order of Grace: An Analysis of Wojtyla’s Selective Synthesis of Aquinas and Scheler with Implications for the Question of Human Participation in the Process of Salvation,” submitted to Rita Maria Isabell Naumann, for a course covering Mary in the Contemporary period at the International Marian Research Institute in the Summer of 2003. After further development, my research into this question led to a conference paper for the Annual Meeting of the Mariological Society of America in 2008, under the title, “The Perfectly Redeemed Acting Person: Toward a Mariology of Proredemption.” Upon subsequent revision, it was submitted to Marian Studies, where it will be published in the 2008 issue, still forthcoming at the time of our writing. Those studies marked only the first stages of my own development of these themes, but they set the course for a more complete study of Wojtyla’s mind and context as the setting in which that initial line of inquiry could take its final shape. Before turning, however, to that project, directly, we should consider, by way of a brief survey, a selection of literature in which these themes are at least tentatively represented, pointing, along the way, to their limitations with respect to the specific scope and focus of our own concern in these pages.
4.1.1: *A Survey of Select Literature Relating to John Paul II's Mariology:*

Coming to completion at that time I delivered "The Perfectly Redeemed Acting Person," was another study undertaken by Danielle M. Peters. A dissertation for the International Marian Research Institute, eventually approved on 1 January 2009, this study deals only indirectly with the question at hand for us here, but the author does undertake to provide a summary of the major themes addressed in *The Acting Person,* and she does offer a brief presentation of the thesis that Mary represents the "acting person" in *Redemptoris Mater.* Nonetheless, entitled, *Ecce Educatrix Tua: The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary for a Pedagogy of Holiness in the Thought of John Paul II and Father Joseph Kentenich,* 627 this dissertation is primarily concerned with the pastoral and spiritual implications of John Paul II's Mariological perspective in contrast to, and in complementarity with, the pastoral and spiritual implications of the Mariological perspective of Fr. Joseph Kentenich, who was the founder of the Schoenstatt Movement. What can be learned about the structure of personal holiness in this context, and how can it become the subject of action in our pilgrimage into the heart of the Church? These are the central questions at the heart of Sr. Peters' study.

Still, as we have said, Peters does develop the idea of Mary as the "acting person" in that study, 628 touching upon similar points to those developed more fully here. In the present dissertation, we offer a thorough analysis of John Paul II's philosophical concerns in their broader context, drawing out in detail the dialogue in which Wojtyla had been engaged as he developed his position on the "acting person". Peters treats these matters in less detail than we do here, although she does present a summary of the content of *The Acting Person* 629 and an overview of John Paul II's theological anthropology. 630 Still, she does not delve into the dialogue in

627 This dissertation was published as: Danielle M. Peters, *Ecce Educatrix Tua: The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary for a Pedagogy of Holiness in the Thought of John Paul II and Father Joseph Kentenich* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010).


which Wojtyla had developed his own position. For that reson, these portions of her study do not take us as far in an understanding of the inner logic of Wojtyla’s thought on these matters at an anthropologic-ethical level as our own study, in which we make a distinct contribution to an understanding of Wojtyla’s Mariological thinking precisely in the regard. Our own concern here is more one of doctrinal development than pastoral application, more one of “systematic” or “constructive” theology than pastoral theology, so our analysis of Wojtyla’s philosophical context, and our treatment of the doctrinal consequences of its application to his thought on Mary appears here in fuller relief, in the form of what one might characterize as a “philosophical theology”. But there can be no question that Peters’ study, from within the scope of interest she defines for herself, does move in a similar direction.

Prior to Peters’ study, we also saw the work of Antoine Nachef, *Mary’s Pope: John Paul II, Mary, and the Church since Vatican II.* 631 Nachef, too, treats many of the same themes we address in our own analysis, but, once again, without establishing in detail the philosophical presuppositions in the context of which we here seek to understand them. Nachef is certainly aware that such presuppositions lie at the foundation of John Paul II’s presentation of Mary, in particular, in *Redemptoris Mater*, but he provides very little treatment of them in his own work. 632

Working backward in time, we find Marie-Van Meurice’s volume, *Voici ta Mère: Un itinéraire théologique et spirituel avec Jean-Paul II.* 633 The author takes up, in this text, the question of Mary’s cooperation in the divine action, 634 and offers a sketch of the movement within and since the Second Vatican Council to embrace the term “cooperator” as a descriptor of Mary, rather than to ratify the largely pre-conciliar tendency to refer to Mary increasingly by the term “coredeptrix”. 635 He traces, briefly, the

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632 His discussion of the philosophical presuppositions upon which John Paul II constructs his Mariology occurs on 79–82.


familiar lines in *Redemptoris Mater*, through which the scenes of the gospel play out as moments for meditation upon the place and role of Mary in the work of Christ, and then spends roughly half the book exploring those moments in depth. In Chapter 7, Meurice addresses the issue of Mary’s participation in the “drama” of Redemption, but this drama is played out, in this chapter, specifically around the Cross, and John Paul II’s own view of the matter is only one aspect of his analysis, which really treats, in summary form, the whole breadth of the Tradition around this issue. We do not find, in this text, an in-depth analysis of Wojtyla’s own view of what “participation” really means, philosophically, in his own anthropology and ethics, and, so, we do not have the opportunity, in these pages, to consider the matter of the application of this precise concept as it comes to bear upon the line of thought John Paul II traces out in *Redemptoris Mater*.

Adrian Attard considers the figure of “the Woman” in the thought of John Paul II in his book, *Maria: icona della donna in Giovanni Paulo II*. He does provide a treatment of John Paul II’s anthropology in Chapter 1 of this text, but his central focus is specifically on the aspect of the feminine, which he goes on to develop in greater depth in Chapter 2, where he considers the place of the feminine in magisterial teaching in general, and not just in the teaching of John Paul II. The most interesting dimension of Attard’s thought, in our assessment, comes in his description of Mary as “the new human person.” He is not, of course, describing her as “the New Adam”—a title which belongs exclusively to Christ, but, instead, the “renewal” of humanity in the reality of the Immaculate Conception. Here, he continues the trajectory of thought that runs from Scotus through Rahner, in which Mary appears as “the perfectly-redeemed person.” He does not, however, develop, in depth, the implications of this dimension of the Marian mystery for an understanding of the uniqueness and exemplarity of her agency in the order of salvation.

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Salvatore M. Perrella, offers a study of John Paul II’s thought on Mary, situated in the contemporary context of the Church in the modern world, entitled, *Ecco Tua Madre: La Madre di Gesù nel magistero di Giovanni Paolo II e nell’oggi della Chiesa e del mondo.* He treats *Redemptoris Mater* in this text, but he does not, as far as we can discern, consider the encyclical in light of *The Acting Person,* which he does not mention at all. Even in his subheading, “Maria, mediatrice ‘ne’ Mediatore (cfr. *RM* 38–50),” he does not develop the concept of “participation” as Wojtyła understands the term.

In his article, “‘Corredemptrix-Corredentrice’ e il magistero di Giovanni Paolo II,” Waclaw Siwak offers a presentation of some of the essential points he finds in John Paul II’s Mariology. Roughly half of the article is devoted to outlining the occurrences in John Paul II’s various addresses of the term “corredemptrix”—an excercise we do not undertake here—and considering the implications for the possibility of a dogmatic definition. More importantly, however, Siwak offers at least some theological analysis of the conceptual content he understands to be represented by the term. Most relevant to our own analysis, Siwak notes, that, for John Paul II, Mary is an “active collaborator” in the Incarnation, that Mary enjoyed “liberty of consent,” and that, “God does not impose salvation against the human will, but always respects the free will of the human being as an ‘I’.” In this way, Mary must provide her “yes” to the incarnation, and collaborates in the mystery in precisely that way. She is not moved to act in a merely passive way, or dissociated from the power of her own will;

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644 Perella, *Ecco Tua Madre,* 156–166.
rather, "her *fiat* is a testimony to an interior freedom."\(^{648}\) In her *fiat*, Mary is, "totally free and conscious of what is happening in her, and in which she participates."\(^{649}\) She is conscious, then, precisely of the proposal to accept motherhood and, in and through that act, to participate in the mystery of redemption.\(^{650}\)

Salvatore Perrella offers a truly expansive tome on Mary in the mind of the Church in the contemporary period, entitled, *La Madre di Gesù nella conscienza ecclesiale contemporanea*.\(^{651}\) This text traces the Mariological teaching of the Church from John XXIII through John Paul II. While Perrella here offers two distinct treatments of *Redemptoris Mater*,\(^{652}\) and repeatedly returns to the question of the "Corredemptrix",\(^{653}\) he nowhere draws into this discussion Wojtyla’s work in *The Acting Person*, nor in any of his other related studies. Nonetheless, he contextualizes the problem of the "Corredemptrix" in helpful terms for those interested in that precise issue—that is to say, the issue of declaring a fifth Marian dogma—even placing the problem in the context of ecumenical dialogue, with all its complexities.\(^{654}\) For our own part, however, we have intentionally attempted to remain aloof from that question in the present study, in which our concern remains, not to argue for or against any declaration, but to analyze the thought of John Paul II on Mary in light of his previous work. Arguments for or against a dogmatic definition of a term would serve only to introduce a distraction from this purpose, and to subordinate the central

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\(^{648}\) Siwak, ""Corredemptrix-Corredentrice’ e il magistero di Giovanni Paulo II,"" 285. My translation.

\(^{649}\) Siwak, ""Corredemptrix-Corredentrice’ e il magistero di Giovanni Paulo II,"" 285. My translation.

\(^{650}\) Siwak, ""Corredemptrix-Corredentrice’ e il magistero di Giovanni Paulo II,"" 285.


\(^{652}\) Perrella, *La Madre di Gesù nella conscienza ecclesiale contemporanea*, 187–201, and 466–488.

\(^{653}\) Perrella, *La Madre di Gesù nella conscienza ecclesiale contemporanea*, 409–466 and 569–573, to name only two of the more thorough discussions of the topic.

\(^{654}\) Perrella, *La Madre di Gesù nella conscienza ecclesiale contemporanea*, 569–583.
question of our study to a partisan agenda. Perrella, of course, is able to present this debate in his own study without succumbing to that threat, since his goal is really to offer an exposition of the state of the question—a task he accomplishes with astonishing thoroughness. But what he reveals, in the process, is that the precise analysis at the center of this study does not appear as a major consideration as of 2005. Still, Perrella’s treatment of the issue of the “Corredemptrix” returns, again and again, to the central themes addressed in Redemptoris Mater in its broad outline—that is to say, to the episodes in the life of Mary in which she finds herself present to the work of Christ. This fact leads us, again, to the central question in our own study, where we wish to understand the underlying presuppositions in John Paul II’s thought on Mary as an active participant in the life and work of Christ.

Cettina Militello, in her book, Maria con occhi di donna, also offers a very brief overview of Redemptoris Mater and considers the question of Mary’s participation in the work of Christ. Her study, however, comes from within a specifically feminist—or perhaps it would be better to say “femina-normative” perspective, for lack of a better descriptor—presenting a picture of the figure of Mary from within the context of the concerns of feminine point of reference. She is not, from this point of view, really focused upon the central concern of our own study; but her discussion of the issue of participation does place her, at least in a tentative way, into proximity with the centrality of the issue of self-determination. She explains, “The woman participates in the fruits of the Christ-event. It [i.e., the feminine event] is, at heart, the same event [as the masculine]. But otherwise from the masculine one [i.e., event], the [event at] foot of the cross does not find adequate space to be recognized in its identita in the human person, [as the act] of free and autonomous subject.” We think this analysis is inaccurate, at least as far as John Paul II presents the matter in Redemptoris Mater; but, at the same time, we would suggest that our own analysis of this issue in the present study would make explicit the evidence Militello might want to find for a presentation of the figure of Mary, and thus, of the dignity of the

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655 Cettina Militello, Maria con occhi di donna, (Casale Monferrato: Edizioni Piemme, 1999).

656 Militello, Maria con occhi di donna, 20–23.

657 Militello, Maria con occhi di donna, 164–168.

658 Militello, Maria con occhi di donna, 164. My translation.
feminine participation in the divine action, in the teaching of the Church. In the present study, however, the femina-normative question is not our focus, but, instead, the more generally anthropological one. Perhaps Militello might find encouragement, however, in the idea that the central issue at the heart of this anthropological analysis is the particular "free and autonomous" act of a feminine subject.

In 1999, Rita Maria Isabell Naumann published her dissertation for the International Marian Research Institute entitled, *Cum Maria ad Altare: Toward an Integration of Mariology and Ecclesiology: The Interrelations between Mary and the Church in the Works of Father J. Kentenich with Special Attention Given to his Sermons at St. Michael's, Milwaukee, U.S.A., from October 1964 to January 1965*. Sr. Nauman's study does not address John Paul II in a direct way; as the title makes clear, her concern is with the thought of Shoenstatt founder, Fr. Joseph Kentenich. But what does strike the reader in this work is the extent to which Fr. Kentenich's work is highly personalistic and focused upon a rich sense of human agency. It suggests, by helping to form converging lines of evidence, that our own intuition about what is essential to a fully Catholic Mariology does, indeed, rest in the anthropologico-ethical dimension.

A collection of essays published shortly after the initial promulgation of *Redemptoris Mater*, entitled, "*Redemptoris Mater" de Juan Pablo II: Algunos temas fundamentales" takes us through a few of the now-familiar elements of the encyclical. Two articles featured in the text center upon the biblical passages treated in the encyclical. The first, Por José M. Ferreira's, "*Maria en la Peregrinación de la Fe,"* follows the scenes treated in the encyclical, while the second, Por Gumersindo Pérez's, "El

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659 Rita Maria Isabell Naumann, *Cum Maria ad Altare: Toward an Integration of Mariology and Ecclesiology: The Interrelations between Mary and the Church in the Works of Father J. Kentenich with Special Attention Given to his Sermons at St. Michael's, Milwaukee, U.S.A., from October 1964 to January 1965*, (Waukesha, WI: published by the author, 1999).


661 Por José M. Ferreira, O.C.D., "*Maria en la Peregrinación de la Fe,*," in, "*Redemptoris Mater" de Juan Pablo II, 11–22."
Misterio de María a la Luz de la Doctrina de San Pablo, offers a close look at the Pauline elements in the Mariological teaching of the Church, inclusive of Lumen gentium and Redemptoris Mater. Neither of these texts serves to advance our own thesis in a direct way, but we would like to point out the special merits of the second of these two articles for its own sake. Without digressing into technical exegetical analysis, the author offers a sensitive biblical theology—or, more precisely, a “biblical Mariology”—that demonstrates precisely the sort of task to which the Second Vatical Council appears to recall us. Still, neither article—in fact, no article—in this collection touches in any way upon the application of John Paul II’s prepalal work to his Mariology. Only in Por Ana Mª López Díaz-Otazu’s, “María y la Iglesia Desde La Clave de la Maternidad,” do we even find a discussion of the issue of participation in Redemptoris Mater, but, even here, the author does not begin to consider the special significance attached to that concept in John Paul II’s prepalal work.

In the same year, however, Franco Cecchin published Alla ricerca di Maria: Commento esistenziale all’enciclica “Redemptoris Mater”. While Cecchin does treat the anthropological dimensions of the question of Mary’s mediation in the work of Christ, not even he relates Redemptoris Mater to John Paul II’s prepalal work, directly. His reflections, however, show a tremendous sympathy with some of Wojtyla’s own driving concerns. Cecchin emphasizes, for example, the reciprocal character of the divine–human dynamic of salvation, which must be characterized not simply by the one-sided “doing” of God, but by the interpersonal “giving and receiving” of the spousal relationship presented in the biblical typologies. He explains, in language sensitive to Wojtyla’s personalist anthropology, that, “The human person, both [individually and] corporately, has a concrete need to express reciprocity and [to enter into]


664 Franco Cecchin, Alla ricerca di Maria: Commento esistenziale all’enciclica “Redemptoris Mater”, (Milano: Editrice Ancora Milano, 1988).

665 Cecchin, Alla ricerca di Maria, Cf. 75–86, especially 81–82.
interpersonal relationship." Mary, for Cecchin, enters into this very dynamic, and does so, therefore, precisely as human, and for humanity. He goes on to explain this dynamic further, in terms of the basic human need to be related-to and bound-up-with others. He explains that, "Persons have an immediate and primal need for relationships: [it is a] fundamental [need] in our human nature [for us] to be known and to know, to be welcomed and to welcome, to be loved and to be loved." Cecchin's analysis, however, focuses upon a different dimension of the issue at hand than those directly under our own consideration in the present dissertation. His concern rests with the existential implications, for the human person, of a rightly-ordered Marian devotion, rather than with the anthropological question of what, precisely, Mary's "active participation" in the work of Christ means. When Cecchin says, for example, "Devotion to Mary goes to the root of the human person," he does not stop to consider the question of how we think about the human person in relationship to the divine in the order of grace, but, instead, leaps immediately to the concerns of today's existential crises. He writes, "The current existential crisis—the loss of meaning in life, and suicide, especially among the youth—are the emblematic sign of a general disequilibrium; [for these people,] the recovery of Marian piety may lead to the recovery of their identity." While Cecchin's reflections on these points are profoundly important—especially in the eyes of this author—they are not germane to the general focus of the study we have undertaken here.

Also appearing in 1988, was a contribution made by the Central Committee for the Marian Year. Their "proceedings", entitled, Redemptoris Mater: Contenuti e Prospettive Dottrinali e Pastorali includes a serious of articles by some of the preeminent scholars in the field of Mariology. A direct attempt at a reception of Redemptoris Mater, these articles offer approaches to the text from a number of angles, including the biblical and

666 Cecchin, Alla ricerca di Maria, 76. My translation.
667 Cecchin, Alla ricerca di Maria, 77. My translation.
668 Cecchin, Alla ricerca di Maria, 79. My translation.
669 Cecchin, Alla ricerca di Maria, 79. My translation.
patristic, the spiritual, the historical, the ecumenical, the femina-normative, and the doctrinal. Our interest lies predominantly with the doctrinal. Here, three articles, in particular, appear most significant.

First, Salvatore Meo offers, “La ‘Mediazione materna’ di Maria nell’Enciclica ‘Redemptoris Mater’,” which is mostly expository in nature. He locates the terminology in Redemptoris Mater in the context of Lumen gentium. In our own survey of the literature, this approach appears as a common starting point, especially in the earlier treatments of the encyclical. It is understandable, of course, since Lumen gentium is the reference point for the Church’s Mariological teaching in the present age; Redemptoris Mater can only be inserted into the dialogue in continuity with Lumen

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gentium. In any event, Meo binds his whole reading of the document—at least, that is to say, within the context of this article—to the terminology as it is used in *Lumen gentium*. This means that he does not attempt to take us further, suggesting, as we do here, that *Redemptoris Mater* retrieves something of John Paul II’s ethico-anthropological analysis in his preapal writings. There can be no question that *Redemptoris Mater* does come to us in continuity with *Lumen gentium*, and it is not at all our intention here to call that analysis into question. We wish only to suggest that this continuity also involves an advancement—and an advancement undertaken along the lines of Wojtyla’s preapal work.

Second among the articles in, *Redemptoris Mater; Contenuti e Prospettive Dottrinali e Pastorali*, is Franz Courth’s “La tensione ecumenical della ‘Redemptoris Mater’.” In our own study, we have not undertaken to resolve any ecumenical debates, but we cannot help but be concerned about the ecumenical implications of our findings. Indeed, no one can study Mariology with any seriousness without being aware that a study of Mary is always a study of ecumenical tensions, roadblocks, and advancements. We find, then, in Courth’s article, substantial attention given to the very theme central to our own study—namely that of “participation.” Nonetheless, he does not advance the discussion into the domain of John Paul II’s own philosophical presuppositions in the use of this language, and concerns himself only with the ecumenical question that touches upon the issue of the “Corredemptrix”. He is careful to remind us that Mary’s mediation is presented in *Redemptoris Mater* as subordinate to that of Christ, just as it is in *Lumen gentium*, and that it moves in the plane of intercession. How, exactly, we are finally to understand the inner dynamics of that intercession is another matter. Of course he acknowledges the maternal character of this intercession, but he offers no detailed analysis of the dynamics of the human act as it applies in this case.

Finally, from *Redemptoris Mater; Contenuti e Prospettive Dottrinali e Pastorali*, we would like to mention Cettina Militello’s

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article, “Maria e il feminile nella ‘Redemptoris Mater’. “ Once again, Militello approaches Redemptoris Mater from a femin-normative perspective in this article, just as she had in her book, Maria con occhi di donna. In this article, however, her study bears more closely upon some of the themes we will address in our own analysis of Redemptoris Mater. She focuses intently on the issue of male–female reciprocity, suggesting that the figure of Mary represents a concrete instantiation of the entrance of humanity into the internal dynamism of the Holy Trinity in the life of grace. Mary does this precisely through her spousal response to God, by which she is able to place herself at the disposal of the divine kēnōsис (kenosis). On this level, Militello’s analysis appears to cut to the real heart of the matter in a way that we attempt to illustrate in our own analysis. Although Militello does not address John Paul II’s prepapal works at all, she does, on this point, already intuit what lies at the heart of our own assertion that Mary is “the perfectly-redeemed acting person.”

Now, going back, then, to the very first appearance of the encyclical, we have the Joseph Ratzinger’s reading of Redemptoris Mater, which we have already mentioned, and the “Commentary” on Redemptoris Mater offered by Hans Urs von Balthasar, and published as an appendix to the encyclical in a volume entitled, Mary: God’s Yes to Man: John Paul II’s Encyclical Redemptoris Mater. Ratzinger’s reading of the encyclical will be given its own treatment in the present chapter, at the end of Part II, but we will consider Balthasar’s commentary now.

There can be no doubt, of course, that Balthasar provides a decisively important window into the Mariological thought of John Paul II in his “Commentary.” For Balthasar, all the threads traced out in Redemptoris Mater ultimately lead to the radical purity of Mary. Mary is able to mediate the incarnation precisely because she lacks all duplicity, but is, instead, utterly simple in grace. This, for Balthasar, seems to be the heart of the idea of the Immaculate Conception. Balthasar sees the main strands of the text to proceed along lines that pass through the meaning of Mary’s faith, the

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meaning of Mary as "prototype," and the meaning of the exaltation, "the fruit of thy womb."

On the matter of the meaning of Mary's faith, Balthasar sees the encyclical to take us directly into a conversation with Martin Luther, who understood faith as a total self-surrender to God, and who saw in Mary, through the Magnificat, a radical example of faith. Once again, the total self-surrender of Mary—the perfection of faith in her—is traceable to the Immaculate Conception, such that placing the figure of Mary at the center of the act of faith means, in the end, raising this question and taking a stand in its regard. But it also means understanding faith in the context of an act involving the human person as an agent of responsibility. Faith involves more than mere knowledge, which works at the level of an intellective activation—as something that happens-in the human person, but not as something done by the human person. "Obedience to God in faith," says Balthasar, "involves a person more intimately than mere knowledge does."

It is on this basis, then, that Mary can be seen as "prototype". On this point, Balthasar insists that John Paul II has moved beyond Lumen gentium, even as he does so in continuity with it. If Lumen gentium is cautiously minimalist in its assertions, Redemptoris Mater exhibits a similar caution, but draws conclusions that the Council Fathers had left for others. Mary's faith is the faith in which the Church is constituted, because it is her perfect belief in the promise that finally opens the way to its actual realization—opens the way to "gift" through "receptivity"—

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685 Balthasar, "Commentary," 163–165. Balthasar does not use the phrase "Immaculate Conception" in this discussion, but he describes Mary as having been "pre-redeemed" (163), and "totally free from guile, 'simple' in the sense of the gospel, the perfect example of the Beatitudes' 'poor in spirit' (165).
687 Balthasar, "Commentary," 166.
in history. It is precisely through Mary’s faith, in other words, that the fullness of the promise of Emmanuel becomes something concrete, personal, and Incarnate in our world. Living this faith throughout the whole of her earthly life, even through the Cross-event and the event of Pentecost, Mary bequeathes to the Church the very substance of her own faith, and the Church comes to be born of her, concretely, once again, in every believer who receives her faith from the Church. For this reason, for Balthasar, the picture painted by John Paul II in Redemptoris Mater is a picture of a woman who genuinely and actively cooperates in the work of Christ, concretely, through an “abundantly effective faith,” that opens up to the divine maternity. Although this event is rooted in history, its result reaches beyond the limits of the mere history. “Mary’s timeless creative and generative cooperation in the baptismal birth and Christian development of each Christian . . . effects a personal relationship between each Christian’s faith and Mary’s motherhood.” Balthasar insists that this, “motherhood is immensely real, tangible, [and] a matter of factual experience. . . .”

It is this dimension of the mystery of Mary, then, that stands at the center of the exultation, “Blessed is the fruit of thy womb!” For Balthasar, Redemptoris Mater opens out to the whole dimension of the Church in the Communion of Saints; and Mary’s initial act of pure faith grows, in the end, into the Church, understood in an organismic sense. The “fruit of her womb” is not simply the man Jesus, nor even the God-man the Church sought to indicate in the Chalcedonian formulation, but the New Adam, who, in himself, takes up the whole, and who, thus, already calls forth the Church into being by his very presence in

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697 Luke 1:42.
the world. We ourselves, as members of the Church, are implicitly "the fruit of her womb" as the "Body of Christ"; and it is for this reason that, "from this day forward all generations will call her blessed."\textsuperscript{700} Once again, however, Mary is able to stand at the center of this reality precisely in the simplicity of her pure act of faith, whereby she stands as "woman,"\textsuperscript{701} receptive to God’s generative initiative, and, therefore, wholly and completely human before God.\textsuperscript{702}

It must be admitted that Balthasar does not make any reference to John Paul II’s prepapal writings, and, thus, that we cannot say that his commentary advances our own thesis in that respect. Nonetheless, Balthasar’s reading of the content of “active faith” grounded in the inner integrity of the person in the form of the Immaculate Conception, and effective in the order of salvation through a choice for receptivity is consistent with our own reading of the text. Furthermore, his affirmation that the Communion of Saints is itself a consequence or outgrowth of Mary’s action speaks to the very concept of “participation” as Wojtyla had defined it in his prepapal work. We contend, then, that Balthasar has intuited in his own reading of \textit{Redemptoris Mater} the same content we intend explicate in light of Wojtyla’s \textit{The Acting Person} and related essays.

\textbf{4.1.2: Some Initial Considerations for Expounding a Fully Catholic Mariology:}

As we begin, then, we must be careful to stress that, again, central to Karol Wojtyla’s thinking as a philosopher is the idea of participation, understood as a fundamental dimension of personal existence. The concept of participation, for Wojtyla, is bound up, not only with being, but with acting. It is precisely in participation that the value of acting as a moral reality fundamentally takes its shape—for the human act necessarily entails a relationship


\textsuperscript{701} Balthasar, “Commentary,” 178.

\textsuperscript{702} Balthasar, “Commentary,” 179.
between the Self who performs the action, and the world of persons affected, directly or indirectly, by the act. In the human act, the reality of the person as *existing together with others* comes to light as our actions either affirm or deny participation in the common good. For Wojtyla, in other words, participation is more than the mere fact that human beings are ontologically bound-up with others and dependent upon some reality greater than ourselves. Participation is the *affirmation of this reality in terms of deliberate action*. Thus, participation is *acting together with others*, not simply as an accidental characteristic of the act we undertake, but as an essential component of it.\(^{703}\) When we *participate* we act, quite deliberately, *together with others*, and affirm, in our acting, our mutual interdependence.\(^{704}\) The implications of this concept of participation are really quite profound. We *choose interdependence*, and bring it into full realization. We, therefore, affirm as a good for our own self-actualization, the common value of the community in which we seek our own belonging—the common value of our interdependence with others—and work for its realization, precisely through that which we, for our own part, are able to provide from within ourselves.

This understanding of participation as something fundamental to our notion of the human act—as that which confirms and completes the human act—must, for Wojtyla, carry with it implications in the arena of theology, particularly with respect to the question of human participatory agency and Mariology. If what we have said so far is true, we should expect that Mary will emerge, within John Paul II’s magisterial treatment of her in his encyclical letter *Redemptoris mater*, as a case in point—a case in point that purifies and explicates the thesis on the whole. Mary, in other words, as the “perfectly redeemed person,” will emerge, for John Paul II, as the “perfectly redeemed acting person,” and thus, as the “perfectly redeemed participant.”

But what will this mean? First, we must accept the fact that the Incarnation event represents a fundamental change in the entire arena of human activity. John Paul II says this clearly when he asserts that the *fullness of time*, which concurs, somehow, with the *fiat* of Mary, brings about the sanctification of time itself in the

\(^{703}\) Wojtyla, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 237.

Incarnation of God in the human world.\textsuperscript{705} Thus, Mary’s \textit{fiat} changes, not only the present in which she, herself, as an individual human person, performs a human act, but also moves out from her in all directions across time and space. Her \textit{fiat} somehow comes to touch all human beings—not only her contemporaries, but her ancestors and “generations yet unborn.”\textsuperscript{706} Mary’s motherhood, therefore—her motherhood of all those who live in Christ, her Son—extends even into the past, to those who “awaited Christ,”\textsuperscript{707} and “placed their hopes in Christ before he came.”\textsuperscript{708} John Paul II writes:

From the Cross, that is to say from the very heart of the mystery of Redemption, there radiates and spreads out the prospect of that blessing of faith. It goes right back to “the beginning,” and as a sharing in the sacrifice of Christ—the new Adam—it becomes in a certain sense, the \textit{counterpoise to the disobedience and disbelief} embodied in the sin of our first parents.\textsuperscript{709}

How can this be? Within the scope of theology proper, we can say that, as the author of the book of Hebrews makes clear, salvific time is not purely linear in its trajectory. The figure of Melchizedek is a \textit{type} of Christ,\textsuperscript{710} and thus, appears on the scene as a foreshadowing of Christ. Christ is not an image of Melchizedek, but the other way around. “Before Abraham was,” Christ says, for example, “I AM.”\textsuperscript{711} The transfiguration narratives,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{705} John Paul II, encyclical letter, \textit{Redemptoris Mater}, 25 March 1987, § 1.
\item \textsuperscript{706} Cf. Psalm 22:31; Luke 1:48.
\item \textsuperscript{707} Cf., \textit{Catechismus Catholicae Ecclesiae}, § 633.
\item \textsuperscript{708} Ephesians 1:12. We use, here, \textit{The Jerusalem Bible}, Reader’s Edition, Alexander Jones, ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1968). While not always the most literal translation available, \textit{The Jerusalem Bible} succeeds in capturing the Hebraic sense of the Scriptures in a way that most translations do not, and thus, often achieves a more accurate reading, in terms of \textit{meaning}, than a purely literal translation is able to achieve, given the hermeneutical presuppositions of contemporary English grammar and phraseology.
\item \textsuperscript{709} \textit{Redemptoris Mater}, § 19.
\item \textsuperscript{710} Hebrews 4:14–8:13.
\item \textsuperscript{711} John 8:58.
\end{itemize}
also, appeal, quite clearly, to a non-linear conception of time.\textsuperscript{712} Here, we see Moses and Elijah, who embody the Law and the Prophets, appearing in the presence of Christ with glorified bodies. There is far too much theological matter here to discuss in any great depth, so we will provide no actual analysis of this passage, other than to point out its presupposition of a non-linear conception of the interrelatedness of temporal causes. Moses and Elijah appear in glorified bodies, along with Christ, who, in that theophany, also appears in his post-resurrectional form, but in a scene universally situated prior to the historical resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is, somehow, already present to Moses and Elijah, who now live in Christ-Ascending, even as linear time has not yet entered upon that moment. But if that is so, then Moses and Elijah are, in a very real sense, born of Mary in Christ, because the resurrection presupposes the Incarnation, which comes to us through Mary’s divine maternity. If, therefore, Mary’s divine maternity comes on account of her fiat, then the fiat of Mary has effects that extend even to the transmutation of the past, and the reshaping of its inner architecture of grace. To the extent that grace is genuinely and efficaciously present in the Old Covenant, and not simply indicated by way of a promise made to a people of future times, it is present there and then on account of the Incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, which the human race receives through Mary’s fiat.\textsuperscript{713}

\textsuperscript{712} It is well-known that assumption traditions were wide-spread at the time of Christ and before, with even the Old Testament itself clearly depicting Enoch as having been “taken up,” without tasting even physical death, and Elijah boarding a fiery chariot for heaven, in which, like the burning bush, the earthly creature enters the pure flame of the divine Life without harm. Other traditions, like The Assumption of Moses, based upon the enigmatic statement in the book of Deuteronomy that “No one has ever found his body, because God himself laid him to rest” (cf. Deut. 34:5–6), and the Assumption of Jeremiah, who had been “filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb” (cf. Jer. 1:5), all go on to set the stage for the transfiguration scene in the New Testament.

\textsuperscript{713} This is the intuition of Gregory of Nyssa, who interprets Moses’ desire to draw nearer to the burning bush as a desire to draw nearer in time, rather than in space, to an event of the future he saw in faith already to be taking place (On the Birth of Christ, PG 46, 1133D–1136B; this passage comes to our attention through Luigi Gambero, S.M., Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Mary in Patristic Thought, Thomas Buffer, trans. [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999], 155–156).
4.1.3: *Understanding Mary’s Fiat as a Human Act:*

Here, Mary’s *fiat* can be analyzed according to the two dimensions of human activity that come together to form the basis of participation in Wojtyla’s schema. The first is the *intransitive* dimension of the act, and the second is the *transitive* dimension.\(^{714}\) For Wojtyla, as he explains, clearly, in *The Acting Person*, the *intransitive* dimension of the act is the first moment of the human act. It is the point at which the human person decides, inwardly, to affirm the value of the object chosen, and becomes conformed to it—to say, “I am one who would do this thing, and affirm this value over all competing values.” In this moment, whether or not the act is fully realized in the external forum—even if the act fails to yield any measurable external, *material* effect—the agent chooses to be defined by the willing of the moral object in question. This, we contend, is what Christ means when he speaks of the interiority of personal holiness and cleanliness. It is not that the external has no relevance, but that it does not simply exist or not exist on its own; it proceeds from the heart.\(^{715}\) Thus, “if a man so much as looks at a woman with lust in his eyes, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”\(^{716}\) When Mary says, “Let it be to me according to your word,”\(^{717}\) she says, “I am one who says, ‘yes’ to God.” With this in mind, it becomes clear why her *fiat* must be preceded, immediately, by her proclamation, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord!”\(^{718}\) Our reading, here, finds confirmation in the exultation of Elizabeth, who declares, “Blessed is she who believed that the promise made to her by the Lord would be fulfilled.”\(^{719}\) Mary, *she who believed God*, says “yes” to him, out of that faithfulness, and in realization of it in terms of concrete action. John Paul II writes, along these very lines:


\(^{715}\) Matthew 15:11.

\(^{716}\) Matthew 5:28.

\(^{717}\) Luke 1:38.

\(^{718}\) Luke 1:38.

\(^{719}\) Luke 1:45.
“The Father of mercies willed that the consent of the predestined mother should precede the Incarnation.” And Mary gives this consent, after she has heard everything the messenger has to say. She says: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Lk. 1:38). This fiat of Mary—"let it be to me"—was decisive, on the human level, for the accomplishment of the divine mystery. There is a complete harmony with the words of the Son, who, according to the Letter to the Hebrews, says to the Father as he comes into the world: "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me. . . . Lo, I have come to do your will, O God" (Heb. 10:5–7). The mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished when Mary uttered her fiat: "Let it be to me according to your word," which made possible, as far as it depended upon her in the divine plan, the granting of her Son’s desire.

Mary uttered her fiat in faith. In faith she entrusted herself to God without reserve and "devoted herself totally as the handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son." And—as the Fathers of the Church teach—she conceived this Son in her mind before she conceived him in her womb: precisely in faith! Rightly therefore does Elizabeth praise Mary: "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

In this passage, it becomes clear that John Paul II is concerned, deeply, with the interior movement of the will, which Mary’s fiat represents in verbal form. By virtue of this interior movement, the intransitive dimension of the act is realized, and Mary definitively confirms her personal conformity to the moral object of value. In doing so, she opens herself as a person, disposing herself to work for the further realization of the transitive dimension of the moral act in question. John Paul II writes:

Now, while Mary was with the Apostles in the Upper Room in Jerusalem at the dawn of the Church, her faith, born from the

720 Document’s note: Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen gentium, § 56.

721 Document’s note: Lumen gentium, § 56.

722 Document’s note: Cf. Ibid., 53; Saint Augustine, De Sancta Virginitate, III, 3: PL 40, 398; Sermo 215, 4; PL 38, 1074; Sermo 196, I: PL 38, 1019; De peccatorum meritis et remissione, I, 29, 57: PL 44, 142; Sermo 25, 7: PL 46, 937–938; Saint Leo the Great, Tractatus 21, de natale Domini, I: CCL 138, 86.

723 Redemptoris Mater, § 13.
words of the Annunciation, found confirmation. The angel had said to her then: “You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great . . . and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”\footnote{Footnote mine: Luke 1:31–33.} The recent events on Calvary had shrouded that promise in darkness, yet not even beneath the Cross did Mary’s faith fail. She had still remained the one who, like Abraham, “in hope believed against hope” (Rom. 4:18). But it is only after the Resurrection that hope had shown its true face and the promise had begun to be transformed into reality.\footnote{Redemptoris Mater, § 26. Document’s emphasis and ellipsis.}

The intransitive-transitive dynamic comes poignantly into view in this brief passage. Again, the intransitive dimension of the act is prior to the transitive, having an interior effect upon the person even in the absence of the transitive, exterior effect. John Paul II alludes to this fact when he says, “The recent events on Calvary had shrouded that promise in darkness, yet not even beneath the Cross did Mary’s faith fail. She had still remained the one who, like Abraham, “in hope believed against hope.”\footnote{Redemptoris Mater, § 26. My emphasis.} Now, again, the transitive dimension is that dimension of the act whereby the act effects a change in the external state of affairs; and it comes about in two ways: physically or materially,\footnote{Wojtyla, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 238.} and interpersonally, socially, or communally.\footnote{Wojtyla, “The Person: Subject and Community,” 246.} Again, John Paul II alludes to both these modes in the passage cited here. Mary will, concretely, give birth to a male child. But that effect is both a material and a communal effect; for the child is another person, who will enter into relationship with her and with others, giving shape, through this interpenetration of persons, to the community as a whole. John Paul II makes this point as he references the quote from Luke’s Gospel, where the angel exclaims, “You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great . . . and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.”\footnote{Redemptoris Mater § 26, quoting Luke 1:31–33.} 

While, in our normal experience, the material effect of an act is usually obvious—the grass becomes shorter by my mowing it, or
the dishes become clean by my washing them—the communal effect of the act is much more subtle. It is also more profound, however. We must note, first, that the communal effect of an act is prior to the merely material effect, because the communal effect will occur, even if the material effect does not. Joseph Ratzinger even goes so far as to suggest that the communal effect of a human act forms the real substance of the mystery of original sin. We cannot explore this thesis in any depth here, of course, except to say that, if, in the intransitive moment of the act, the agent confirms or changes the sort of person he or she is, then, ipso facto, the agent confirms or changes his or her relationships with other human beings. In the end, this is why certain acts can lead to estrangement, while others can create a climate of friendship, even when the precise act is not directly perceived by other people. The development of interior virtue or vice will yield relational effects—effects that extend beyond the interiority of the person, to the sphere of self-transcendence, where the Self and the other necessarily implicate one another in constructive or destructive ways.

A thorough analysis of this issue would lie beyond the scope of the present study, of course, but it should be noted that we speak, here, merely of the immediate experience of the material and communal effects of the act. It is clear that there are exceptions to this statement. There are many acts, from which the material effects are the less obvious, at least at first, while the communal effect is much more obvious. The immediate physical effect of sexual intercourse, once physical virginity has been lost, endures only as long as the act itself, while communal consequences may appear more obvious after the fact. These communal consequences, however, also have a physical or physiological component, however, at least in women, who, as a result of the excretion of the hormone oxytocin, experience an enduring affection toward the person proximate to the event in which the hormone had been produced. Further, the physical effects of the act may include the transmission of disease, which, at first, may go entirely unnoticed.

Pope Benedict XVI/Joseph Ratzinger, In the Beginning, 71–74. This is obviously a pre-papal text, of course—a point that it is only fair to mention. However, the text, which is based upon a series of homilies he gave in 1981, prior to his appointment to the Prefecture of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, was revised by after his appointment, and finally published, originally, in 1985.

This approach to the problem of original sin would allow for an alternative to the thesis of monogenism (that all human beings are descended from a single set of first parents: a historical Adam and a historical Eve), at least as far as the thesis of original sin itself extends.
4.1.4: Framing the Problem of the Universal Influence of Mary's Fiat:

Here, we can begin to see how and why Mary's fiat has universal influence. On Wojtyla's model, it is unthinkable that any human act be purely private—for a human act is, by nature, transcendent of the person's mere individuality. In fact, he says, "transcendence is as if another name for the person." A human act always involves others, even if it does so by excluding or alienating them. Indeed, in this sense, the word private, as a descriptor of the quality of a human act, is apropos; for it indicates what makes the act evil in its interpersonal dimension, namely, the fact that it lacks some positive quality required for its perfection. An inwardly-turned act—a selfish or self-enclosed act—is an act in which one resists participation, and thus, affirms alienation as a master value.

Now, with all of this said, we can ask, what it is, precisely, that makes Mary's fiat different from ours. If an interpersonal reach is always a dimension of a human act, Mary's fiat does not really differ from our own in this respect, as such. On the other hand, the peculiarity of the object of choice—the Incarnation of Christ in the historicity of her own womb—does not appear to be the central

Pius XII defended monogenism against polygenism (a thesis favored by many paleo-anthropologists) on the grounds that the state of the question of the mystery of original sin did not allow for any coherent account of original sin on the polygenic model (Pius XII, encyclical letter, Humani Generis, 12 August 1950, § 37). Ratzinger's approach avoids this difficulty, while also avoiding the overly biologistic trappings of the common doctrine of the West. Those trappings account for the resistance of Eastern Christians to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, even as the Eastern Fathers appear to supply the foundation for it in the Tradition of the Church. Still, the thesis of polygenism itself may comport other difficulties with respect to the faith, in particular as concerns the unicity of the Church as the participation in the New Creation, with its rebirth from above through the New Adam and the New Eve. There can only be one way to this New Creation, just as there had only been one way to the first creation. This is Paul's thesis, where he says, "Just as through one man, sin entered in, so through one man righteousness" (cf. Rom. 5:12–21). Monogenism may not be required to account for original sin, but it may still be required to account, according to the "divine pedagogy", for regeneration through baptism and Eucharistic communion.

issue either, if we mean by this, the simple historical and physical fact that she became a mother of a boy, who happened to be the Son of God.

The first of these theses—that is to say, that Mary enjoys the power to produce a uniquely interpersonal effect in her action—would place Mary on a different metaphysical plane, even in her earthly life, from that in which other human beings find themselves. This is the sort of thing to which Protestant objections against the perceived Mariological sensibilities of apostolic Christianity typically speak. It is the reason why the term co-redemptress is misunderstood to place Mary at the level of Christ, as if she were a fourth divine person who completes the Incarnation event by assuming humanity in its feminine expression.

The second of these theses—that the universality of Mary’s fiat is rooted entirely in the material effect of her divine maternity, which is universal only on account of Christ’s universality—also falls short of the mark, as we have said, but this time, in the typically Protestant direction. But what is the problem with this assertion? After all, it would be completely unacceptable to suggest that, somehow, the efficacy of Mary’s fiat could be separated from the grace of Christ’s Incarnation, death, and resurrection, as if it were a completely distinct event, the meaning and force of which emerged exclusively from Mary’s agency. That would be a form of Pelagianism, and would take us back, directly, to the Scholastic debates over the thesis of the Immaculate Conception, once regarded by the preponderance of Western theologians as an improbable, or even impious, opinion. The

734 St. Bernard of Clairvaux is, perhaps, most notable here, being more emphatic in his opposition to the thesis of the Immaculate Conception than others who share his general opinion, such as St. Anselm, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas Aquinas. Luigi Gambero states, rather bluntly, that, “Bernard’s attitude toward this Marian dogma appears to be completely negative” (Luigi Gambero, S.M., Mary in the Middle Ages: The Blessed Virgin Mary in the Thought of Medieval Latin Theologians, Thomas Buffer, trans. [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005], 137). Gambero summarizes Bernard’s Epistula 174, written to the canons of the cathedral at Lyons upon news that they continued to celebrate the Feast of the Conception of Mary after its suppression. For Bernard, he writes, “the celebration is not part of the ancient tradition of the Church; it is unknown to the Church universal of his time; and it is not in conformity with the criteria of reason.” Gambero goes on to say that Bernard, “considered this custom to be the result of an excess of zeal on the part of people who
typically Protestant objection falls short, not because it rightly insists upon the inseparability of Mary's act from Christ's act, but because it relies too heavily upon a purely naturalist, rather than personalist understanding of participation, and ends by reducing Mary to a kind of by-stander, who simply happens to be the vessel, or conduit, through which God effected the Incarnation.\textsuperscript{735} The idea of Marian intercession has no meaningful place in this dynamic, because Mary is not admitted as an agent in the process of the Incarnation at all. She is the pure passus over against God's actus.

4.1.5: Toward a Solution, through a Point of Departure between Personalism and Scholasticism:

Among the issues that come, immediately, to the fore in this moment of the discussion, is the fact that, in the Scholastic framework, active potency and passive potency are the only metaphysical categories available within which to frame this discussion. We need not parse out the many variant schools of Scholasticism as we offer this comment, for it is a nearly universal characteristic among them\textsuperscript{736}—although Duns Scotus does begin claimed to be honoring the Mother of the Lord but went beyond what was legitimate and fitting."

\textsuperscript{735} Even John Mcquarrie, in his article, "Mary Corredemptrix" (in Mary for All Christians [Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1990], 98–115), presents a view of Marian mediation that rests entirely upon a past event—namely, the event of her bearing Christ, historically, in her womb. Even as he acknowledges the importance of her active agreement to do this, Mcquarrie still does not provide any apparatus for a meaningful account of Marian mediation as a continuing activity across time.

\textsuperscript{736} This metaphysical dichotomy is the problem, ultimately, at the root of the debates about predestination and election in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We can speak of so-called secondary causes, but, depending upon how we structure our account, doing so does not necessarily resolve the difficulty. If, in the end, the secondary cause only acts within the scope of activity to which the primary cause gives rise, each and every detail of history in all its particularity unfolds, inescapably, in accord with a predetermined plan, and the final destiny of each—
the long process of opening the door to an expanded set of concepts here. With personalism, however, a third category is introduced into the discussion—that of receptivity—which constitutes an active opening of the Self to the Other.

What this finally means, of course, is difficult to explain in scholastic terms, precisely because within the scholastic frame, we must rely upon only active and passive language. Receptivity—or, perhaps it is better to say, at this point in the discussion, reciprocity—is a sort of unification theory, in which the whole metaphysical dynamic, rooted in the inner life of the Triune God, is brought together as a whole. Aquinas’ first way opts for the separation of the two poles of reciprocity in terms of the active and heaven, hell, or limbo—will infallibly absorb its occupants as God unilaterally decrees from all eternity, assuming no risk at all in his choice to create the human person.

Duns Scotus’ third “volitional posture,” according to which the human being is conceived of as, somehow, able to remain unmoved by a perceived good, and unrepulsed by a perceived evil, called philosophers over subsequent centuries to consider alternative possibilities to the strict dichotomy between active and passive language, since the will could no longer be conceived as something merely moved, but as a spontaneous, if nonetheless responsive agency proper to personal being. Scotus himself already begins to push along this developing horizon in his treatise on act and potency in Book IX of his Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle, especially QQ. 14–15, where he seems to argue, not first from a set of preconceived metaphysical postulates, but from his observations of the power of free will in human agency. Upon this evidence, he finds himself prepared to rethink the whole problematic along lines that fundamentally alter the parameters of dialogue on the question of the philosophy of freedom. Even his treatment of the question of God already begins to move away from a strictly Aristotelian metaphysical model, though it would certainly be wrong to suggest that his thought, here, was not essentially scholastic. For Scotus’ treatise, see, John Duns Scotus, A Treatise on Potency and Act: Questions on the Metaphysics of Aristotle, Book IX [Latin and English Translation], Allan B. Wolter, O. F. M., trans. (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 2000). See, also, Richard H. Bulzacchelli, “Duns Scotus’s Third ‘Volitional Posture’, and a Critique of the Problem of Moral Indifference in Our Time,” Franciscan Studies, Vol. 58 (2000): 77–109.

We have elaborated upon this theme in another venue: Richard H. Bulzacchelli, “Opening the Self to the Other: A Personalist Response to Contemporary Challenges to Catholic Sexual Ethics,” Ethical issues in Sex and Marriage, Spring 2008 Institute of Bioethics Conference, Franciscan University of Steubenville, Steubenville, OH (March 2008).
the passive, in accord with an Aristotelian metaphysic that originally conceived God as a part of the cosmos, rather than concluding that the hylomorphic constitution of the created order points to a reality wholly transcendent, from which these two poles emerge as from an Exemplar: an eternal dynamism of giving and receiving. In his Introduction to Christianity, Joseph Ratzinger

739 See Aristotle's reasoning in Physics VIII (250b10–267b26), resulting in his arguments for the eternal first mover in Chapter 6 (258b10–260a19). Aristotle argues that all cosmic motion must reduce to a first and unmoved mover, lest there be an infinite regression of causes. This is essentially the same argument Aquinas offers in his first way (Summa Theologiae I.2.iii), but with a few striking differences. For Aristotle, this conclusion leads to the idea of an eternal cosmic motion based in the eternity of the first mover, who moves eternally. For Aquinas, however, it leads only to the eternity of God's creative intention, or "predestination" (Summa Theologiae I.23). Aquinas removes God from the universe according to the requirements of his Christian faith, but he maintains the essential Aristotelian content, and does not avoid its resultant philosophical difficulties. Of relevance, here, also, is Pseudo-Aristotle's On the Universe, 6–7 (397b10–401b29). While a spurious work, its bold resemblance to Aquinas' treatise on Providence in Summa Theologiae I.22 is striking, as it seems to weave a conceptual thread through the Aristotelian heritage on the philosophy of God.

740 Here, Plato's intuition is especially relevant, even if he finds himself still only grasping at the reality we come to see from the Biblical perspective. In his Republic, he speaks of the Good as wholly transcendent of the created order, even of the act of objective being (ἐπεξεύθη τῆς οὐσίας). It would be disingenuous to appeal, at this point, to the concept of Being-as-such—the abstract ὄντος—suggesting that the Good (αὐτὸς) transcends objective being (οὐσία) precisely as sheer existence (ὄντος), because Plato says very clearly that both οὐσία and ὄντος derive from αὐτός. In his thinking about the Good, at least as far as this point goes, Plato is grasping at something close, metaphysically speaking, to what we are suggesting concerning the Biblical concept of God.

741 In this sense, the Aristotelian-Thomistic characterization of God as Pure Act and Unmoved Mover, appears as inadequate, not because the argument leading to this conclusion is internally flawed, but because it reaches to the very origin of the reality upon which the argument is based, but fails to draw the dynamic together in its cause. Let the arguments stand as far as they go. But if we do not allow the full dynamic to find itself, intact, in the First Cause, whole dimensions of the very reality of the created order will be seen to exist only—and Aquinas, for example, is quite clear about this—as negations, rather than as positive expressions of the divine cause. This failure lies at the root of Aquinas' insistence—again, in conformity with Aristotle—that women are ontologically inferior
writes at length concerning this issue. Especially helpful for us, at this point, is the following passage in which he discusses the content of the dogma of the Triunity of God. He writes:

"Father" is purely a concept of relationship. Only in being-for the other is he Father; in his own being-in-himself he is simply God. Person is the pure relation of being related, nothing else. Relationship is not something extra added to the person, as it is with us; it only exists at all as relatedness.

Expressed in the imagery of Christian tradition, this means that the First Person does not beget the Son in the sense of the act of begetting coming on top of the finished Person; it is the act of begetting, of giving oneself, of streaming forth. It is identical with the act of giving. Only as this act is it person, and therefore it is not the giver but the act of giving, "wave" not "corpuscle" . . . In this idea of relativity in word and love, independent of the concept of substance and not to be classified among the "accidents", Christian thought discovered the kernel of the concept of person, which describes something other and infinitely more than the mere idea of the "individual" . . . relation is discovered as an equally valid primordial mode of reality . . . a new plane of being comes into view.\(^{742}\)

Although we cannot, here, examine that issue in any real depth, let us suggest that it may be possible to demonstrate, not Pure Act and Unmoved Mover at the end of the first way, but Pure Reciprocity and the Prime Lover, as Joseph Ratzinger, for example, seems confidently and consistently to suggest.\(^{743}\) On this model, the dynamic of reciprocity is that unified whole in the inner life of God, which, in the act of creation, comes to find expression to men, thus leading to their metaphysically "passive" role in the generation of offspring.


\(^{743}\) See, for example, Benedict XVI, encyclical letter, Deus cartas est, 25 December 2005, in which he describes God's love for the human person in terms of Eros (§§ 3-15), and uses phrases like, "God's passionate love for his people—for humanity" (§ 10, Cf. also, § 9) and makes statements like, "In the foregoing reflections, we have been able to focus our attention on the Pierced one (cf. Jn 19:37, Zech 12:10), recognizing the plan of the Father who, moved by love (cf. Jn 3:16), sent his only-begotten Son into the world to redeem man" (§ 19). We use, here, the Vatican Translation. There seems no honest way to reconcile these turns of phrase with the metaphysical category of Actus Purus.
in the hylomorphic relations of act and potency. It is only once the creative exitus occurs, in other words, that the dual principles of active and passive potency emerge. Thus, at the heart of these relations is something fundamentally one; and the more noble the being, the more its own inner dynamism comes to reflect this fundamental unity, and to inform the metaphysical constitution of the being in terms of relatedness and reciprocity, or what Wojtyła, at one point calls, reflexivity. In any event, when all is said and done, there has emerged within the created order as well, a third term, which is neither merely active, nor merely passive, but as we have said, receptive. With this so-called active receptivity, which must be regarded as a positive, rather than a negative, ontic moment, the full content of the eternal reciprocity of God can finally be represented in our metaphysical analysis of the created order. With this new category at our disposal, we can see how the gradation of being must, in the end, lead to the emergence of an increasingly profound reciprocity, until we arrive, finally, at the human person, and discover that, "it is [simply] not good that the man should be alone."

What, then, is the answer to the Marian question, in light of everything we have just said? We cannot hold that Mary is pure passivity—nothing more than a vessel; nor can we hold that she is, somehow, independent of any relational term external to herself, as if she were a divine person, whose alter-terminus is contained within the reciprocity of her own essence. Rather, if we remember that it is only in the creative exitus that the categories of active and passive potency emerge, then the gradation of being becomes an indication of the reditus to God; and it is in this context that the Marian question can be answered, through the third category of receptivity. Here, Mary appears, not as something wholly other than human beings, nor as something no different at all from the rest of us, but, instead, as someone who lives the life toward which creation tends. This is what it means to say that Mary is, "vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra salve"—"our life, our sweetness, and hope of our salvation."

But again, one might object, have we not simply replaced Christ himself with Mary, thus rendering the Incarnation event wholly superfluous? Why do we need Christ—what does he do for us—if

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744 Karol Wojtyła, "The Person: Subject and Community," (242).

745 Genesis 2:18.

746 Salve Regina.
Mary has already reached this summit of human existence? There can be no question that scholastic objections to the concept of the Immaculate Conception, still represented in Protestant theology, are bound up with these questions. But here, it is crucial that we remember that the entire meaning of Mary’s fiat lies in its reciprocal dimension. It represents the response of humanity to God’s creative act of self-gift. The stakes, here, are quite high, indeed; and to understand them, we must again return to the idea of our third metaphysical category of receptivity, by which, “in Mary’s faith, first at the Annunciation and then fully at the foot of the Cross, an interior space was reopened within humanity which the eternal Father can fill with every spiritual blessing.”

John Paul II is indeed quite clear about this point, as he goes on, in this passage, to say:

It is the space “of a new and eternal Covenant,” and it continues to exist in the Church, which in Christ is “a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind.”

In the faith which Mary professed at the Annunciation as the “handmaid of the Lord” and in which she constantly “precedes” the pilgrim People of God throughout the earth, the Church

747 The dominant line of thought among those theologians of the Mediaeval West who objected to the Immaculate Conception, involved the claim that the Immaculate Conception would, somehow, exempt Mary from the necessity of Christ’s salvific intervention. This would make Mary herself the culmination of humanity, or the ἐσχάτος Ἄδωνις (eschatos Adam), lending a theologically perverse meaning to the common devotional declarations about Mary in praise, prayer, and hymnody. Read in this light, the Salve Regina becomes idolatry, and we have forged a direct link with the contemporary Evangelical perspective.

748 Redemptoris Mater, § 28. The reader should note carefully that the emphasis in this quote is original to the document. John Paul II is intent upon stating the matter boldly.

749 Redemptoris Mater, § 28.


“strives energetically and constantly to bring all humanity . . . back to Christ its Head in the unity of his Spirit.”

John Paul II’s language, in this passage, is emphatically personalistic, drawing attention to the receptive dimension of personal subjectivity, that gives rise to the dimension of inter-subjectivity, or the fact that persons, as subjects of action, can interpenetrate one another's “interior space”, accepting the implications of the other's personal value. This requires, once again, an understanding of the relationship between the intransitive and the transitive dimensions of the personal act, as they come to bear, especially, upon the communio personarum. When John Paul II says that Mary, “as the ‘handmaid of the Lord’ . . . constantly ‘precedes’ the pilgrim People of God throughout the earth,” as we go on to work, as a body, “to bring all humanity . . . back to Christ . . . in the unity of the Spirit,” we are reminded of the priority of Mary’s interior act—the intransitive dimension of the act—to the act’s external, transitive dimension, in response to which we are able to elicit our own act. John Paul II draws attention to this fact earlier in the encyclical, where he writes:

The Council expresses this when it states in another passage that Mary “has gone before,” becoming “a model of the Church in the matter of faith, charity, and perfect union with Christ.” This “going before” as a figure or model is in reference to the intimate mystery of the Church, as she actuates and accomplishes her own saving mission by uniting in herself—as Mary did—the qualities of mother and virgin. She is a virgin who “keeps whole and pure the fidelity she has pledged to her Spouse” and “becomes herself a mother,” for “she brings forth to new and immortal life children who are conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of God.”

All this is accomplished in a great historical process, comparable “to a journey.” The pilgrimage of faith indicates the interior history, that is, the story of souls. But it is also the story of all human beings, subject here on earth to transitoriness, and part of the historical dimension. . . . Here there opens up a broad

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752 Emphasis is original to the document. Document’s note: Lumen gentium, § 13.


754 Document’s note: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen gentium, 64.
prospect, within which the *Blessed Virgin Mary continues to* "go before" the People of God. Her exceptional pilgrimage of faith represents a constant point of reference for the Church, for individuals and for communities, for peoples and nations and, in a sense, for all humanity.\footnote{Redemptoris Mater, § 6. Emphasis is original to the document.}

Once the Incarnation occurs, we cannot continue to look upon God in terms that leave him wholly unaffected. As Ratzinger says, "He is not the unfeeling geometry of the universe, neutral justice standing above things undisturbed by a heart and its emotions."\footnote{Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 100.}—for to do this would be to deny that the Person-\Logos (\Logos), "became flesh and dwelt among us,"\footnote{John 1:14.} entering into the historicity of the human community. It is one thing to argue that he does this in and through the human nature he assumes from the body of the Virgin Mary, but we cannot say this in some tacitly Nestorian sense, as if to suggest that this human nature somehow stands on its own, apart from the divine Person who becomes Incarnate thereby. If we forget that the whole point of the Chalcedonian confession is to say that the human nature of Jesus of Nazareth is none other than that belonging to the divine Person-\Logos, such that it is the Person-\Logos who suffers, we unwittingly retreat to the very problem we had, at first, sought to avoid.

That said, once again, it would seem that *active* and *passive* potency are really elements of the *created* order, while the divine wholly transcends this dichotomy. Now, we are reminded of the fact that, from within an Aristotelian frame of reference, the fact of creation presents an unanswerable conundrum. St. Thomas cannot explain how, or why, a God who knows all things only through his own self-contemplation would ever think to create a being other than himself. He thinks, in the end, only *in and through himself*, never with any external referent,\footnote{Aristotle, *De Anima* 3.5 (430a14–26), *Metaphysics* 12.9 (1074b15–1075a10); Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I.14.ii–vii, xi.} since that would mean, on the Aristotelian model, limited as it is to only the active and passive dimensions, that God was dependent for his knowledge, and thus for his perfection, on the creature.\footnote{Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I.14.iv.} An assertion such as this
would take us back, directly, to the old κατὰ φύσις (kata physis) heresy. The contrary would mean, however, that God would think, from eternity, only of eternity—i.e., only of himself, as Aristotle clearly states in his famous passage at De Anima 3.5, with which, as far as this point goes, Aquinas appears to agree. This is why the problem is unanswerable from within a Thomistic frame of reference. For if the appeal to the ratio of love is finally to mean anything at all, it must represent an appeal, precisely, to God's other-centeredness—to the eternal dynamism whereby he is, in himself, one who goes out to the other, and is, thus, able and willing to think of the other, and to intend the other. In this context alone does the fact of creation make any sort of metaphysical sense. Thus, when God finally gives rise to a being who is able to respond in kind to God's outward movement, the movement of creation reaches its final term—no longer, that is, only to be other-than God, but finally to become one-with him, entering into the very reciprocity of the First Cause of the creature's own becoming.

The κατὰ φύσις (kata physis) heresy consists in the assertion, as the term implies, that God is dependent upon the creature for some perfection of his own. This assertion is heretical in that it requires an alteration of the Judeo-Christian conception of God; the meaning of the name Yahweh involves the proposition that he cannot be controlled in any way, by anyone other than himself. The κατὰ φύσις heresy only makes sense, metaphysically, either on a pantheistic model, according to which God becomes increasingly perfected as the universe becomes increasingly perfected (e.g. process theology), or else on the demiurgic model, according to which God is conceptualized, not as the foundation of all being, but as himself a derivative of Being, subject to conditions that also proscribe his "creatures," which he brings about, not ex nihilo, but by manipulating the prime matter already given along with his own existence.

While Aquinas reads Aristotle differently on this point in his Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima (X.728–745), he holds, as we have already seen, the same view of the divine intellect (Summa Theologiae I.14.ii–vii, xi).

This theme runs through the whole of Ratzinger's work, but it may be seen in representative form in Introduction to Christianity, 198–199.

Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 175–182.
4.1.6: Approaching Mariology through an Integration of the Concepts of Receptivity and Participation:

For Joseph Ratzinger, who follows Theilhard de Chardin on this point, reciprocity between humanity and divinity is precisely the meaning of the ἐγγαντος Ἀδὰμ in Pauline and Johannine theology. But again, how do we distinguish, in all of this, between what Christ is doing, and what Mary is doing—or what we are doing? This is where an appeal to the metaphysical priority of God becomes essential. Christ is that precise moment in which God's yes to creation, and most of all to humanity as the personal embodiment of creation, reaches its fullness in a final re-reception by the Prime Lover. Here, Christ emerges as the man who is so fully man-for-God as to be Man for God, and to be God. The significance of Mary, in all of this, is her decisive and irreplaceable role as the one who says yes to God in his choice to bring creation to precisely this fullness. Here the divine reciprocity calls forth, in the created order, the category of receptivity, which, again, is, and must be, contained, pre-eminently within the divine reciprocity itself. Receptivity thus emerges, as we have already said, as a third category within the created order—a category according to which the mode of being of the creature is neither merely active nor merely passive, but actively-opened-out to the other, as God is in his eternal reciprocity. This fundamentally relational reality, most fully exhibited in the realm of the interpersonal, is, perhaps, indeed, the most perfect manifestation of the image of God within the created order. Mary is the one who, in and through her own

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765 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 175–182. Our reference to Pauline theology includes the theological perspective at the foundation of the letter to the Hebrews. While we do not intend, in this statement, to defend Pauline authorship of Hebrews, there can be no question that, as far as the relevant points here take us, the author of Hebrews and Paul present a similar theological perspective.


767 This reciprocity is most evident and foundational in the relation “man­woman”, which must be understood to carry a fullness of meaning that exceeds the merely biological content of the relation “male-female,” represented in beasts, and even in vegetation. Cf. John Paul II, Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body, Michael Waldstein, trans. (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 163–164. In this passage, delivered November 14, 1979, John Paul II not only suggests that the
act of receptivity to God's initiative, opens creation to its eschatological fulfillment in Jesus Christ, and, thereby enters into the divine reciprocity. 768

The distinct significance of this moment becomes apparent as we return, once more, to Wojtyla's concept of participation. For Wojtyla, "the concept of participation basically serves to express the property by virtue of which we as persons exist and act together with others, while not ceasing to be ourselves or to fulfill ourselves in action, in our own acts." 769 Wojtyla's next comment is important, here, if we wish to avoid the tendency to equate Wojtyla's thought with that of St. Thomas, thereby overlooking or even refusing to accept what is truly new and challenging in it. He insists that, "[i]t serves instead to specify and express what it is that safeguards us as we exist and act together with others in different systems of social life. That is precisely what I mean by participation in Osoba i czyn, namely, the ability to exist and act together with others in such a way that in this existing and acting we remain ourselves and actualize ourselves, which means our own Ps. 771

We can hear an echo of this very passage in Redemptoris Mater, 772 as John Paul II goes on to say, of Mary, that, "She responded, therefore, with all her human and feminine 'I,' and this response of faith included both perfect cooperation with 'the grace of God that precedes and assists' and perfect openness to the action

creation of the human being as "male and female" does present us with an image of God in and through sexual differentiation, but that, in fact, this relational dimension of the divine image, "constitutes perhaps the deepest theological aspect of everything we can say about man" (164). The view expressed by John Paul II, here, borrows very closely from the Trinitarian model discussed by St. Augustine in his De Trinitate XII.5—a view Aquinas had come to dismiss as "manifestly absurd" (Summa Theologiae, I.93.vi. ad 2).

768 Redemptoris Mater, §§ 6, 28.
769 Wojtyla, "Participation or Alienation", 200.
770 Wojtyla, "Participation or Alienation", 200.
771 Wojtyla, "Participation or Alienation", 200.
772 Redemptoris Mater, § 13. Emphasis is original to the document.
of the Holy Spirit, who ‘constantly brings faith to completion by his gifts.’”

Here, again, the idea of participation must take us beyond the sheer fact of our creatureliness—beyond the sheer fact that we do not exist of ourselves, but come to exist, and are held in existence as the beings that we are, through the agency of the one who exists of himself. For Wojtyla, participation really means the ontic power of agency, which he sees as proper to the person as person, such that true self-determination is possible in a quite radical way. At the same time, however, it also means, in Wojtyla’s usage, that fundamentally public and communal dimension of human existence and action, which requires the power of receptivity. For Wojtyla, participation means that the person can be—and, indeed, ought to be—one with others in action, while remaining personally distinct in that action, and becoming, in that action—taken-together-with-others, most fully personal and subjective. It means that, precisely as this person, this person makes his or her agency over to the public and common good—a good which the person affirms as bound-up with his or her own self-actualization—thereby receiving as a dimension of his or her own personal fulfillment, the implications of the other’s personal value. John Paul II writes:

*Through this faith Mary is perfectly united with Christ in his self-emptying.* For “Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men”: precisely on Golgotha “humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (cf. Phil. 2:5–8). At the foot of the Cross Mary shares through faith in the shocking mystery of this self-emptying. This is perhaps the deepest “*kenosis*” of faith in human history. Through faith the Mother shares in the death of her Son, in his redeeming death; but in contrast with the faith of the disciples who fled, hers was far more enlightened. On Golgotha, Jesus through the Cross definitively confirmed that he was the “sign of contradiction” foretold by Simeon. At the same time, there were also fulfilled on Golgotha the words which Simeon had addressed to Mary: “and a sword will pierce through your own soul also.”

If as “full of grace” she has been eternally present in the mystery of Christ, through faith she became a sharer in that mystery in every extension of her earthly journey. She “advanced

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In her pilgrimage of faith and at the same time, in a discreet yet direct and effective way, she made present to humanity the mystery of Christ. And she still continues to do so. Through the mystery of Christ, she too is present within mankind. Thus through the mystery of the Son the mystery of the Mother is also made clear.\footnote{Redemptoris Mater, §§ 18–19. My [insertion]. Emphasis is original to the document.}

In this passage, it becomes clear that John Paul II sees Mary as somehow efficaciously active in the making-present of the mystery of Christ. This is a profound and far-reaching truth; for it tells us that, as a created person, she nonetheless cooperates, through an active receptivity, in God’s own kenotic self-outpouring, through which, in becoming Incarnate, he “reveals man to himself,”\footnote{Cf. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et spes (7 December 1965), § 22.} such that “the mystery of man takes on light.”\footnote{Gaudium et spes, § 22.} Indeed, John Paul II goes on to say, later in the encyclical, that Mary draws attention to this very fact concerning the dignity of humanity—a dignity which he sees as distinctly feminine, even as it is universally accessible to all. He writes:

\begin{quote}
[T]he figure of Mary of Nazareth sheds light on womanhood as such by the very fact that God, in the sublime event of the Incarnation of his Son, entrusted himself to the ministry, the free and active ministry of a woman. It can thus be said that women, by looking to Mary, find in her the secret of living their femininity with dignity and of achieving their own true advancement. In light of Mary, the Church sees in the face of women the reflection of a beauty which mirrors the loftiest sentiments of which the human heart is capable: the self-offering totality of love; the strength that is capable of bearing the greatest sorrows; limitless fidelity and tireless devotion to work; the ability to combine penetrating intuition with words of support and encouragement.\footnote{Redemptoris Mater, § 46.}
\end{quote}

John Paul II makes clear that this “self-offering totality of love”, which reflects a dignity that places femininity at the very center of the question of human dignity, allows women to find in Mary “the secret of living their own femininity with dignity and of achieving their own true advancement.” It is to be found, in other words, on the Marian paradigm, just as on the paradigm of the acting person,
that precisely insofar as we, in affirming the personal value of others, and the value of personal interdependence, "exist and act together with others," we not only remain ourselves, but even "fulfill ourselves in action, in our own acts." 

Of relevance here, are the passages from *Gaudium et spes* that speak of the dignity of the human person as a for-its-own-sake being, and, at the same time, as one who can only fully find himself or herself through a "disinterested" act of self-donation. Wojtyła sees these two statements as fundamentally tied together. He writes:

[In] the experience of self-determination the human person stands revealed before us as a distinctive structure of self-possession and self-governance. Neither the one nor the other, however, implies being closed in on oneself. On the contrary, both self-possession and self-governance imply a special disposition to make a "gift of oneself," and this a "disinterested" gift. Only if one possesses oneself can one give oneself and do this in a disinterested way. And only if one governs oneself can one make a gift of oneself, and this again a disinterested gift.

He goes on:

Only if one can determine oneself ... can one also become a gift for others. The Council’s statement that "the human being ... cannot fully find himself or herself except through a disinterested gift of himself or herself" allows us to conclude that it is precisely when one becomes a gift for others that one most fully becomes oneself. This "law of the gift," if it may be so designated, is

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778 Wojtyła, “Participation or Alienation”, 200.
779 Wojtyła, “Participation or Alienation”, 200.
780 *Gaudium et spes*, § 24.
781 Cf., *Gaudium et spes*, § 24. The Vatican translation reads, “a sincere gift of himself,” while the Latin reads, "sincerum sui ipsius donum." The English and the Latin appear to agree, but Wojtyła focuses upon the meaning “disinterested,” which, though not strictly accurate as a translation, appears to reflect the theological meaning of “sincerity” in this context, and may reflect an earlier choice of wording in the original discussions of Schema XIII at the Council itself. It can hardly be contested that Wojtyła’s interpretation should be taken as authoritative, given his role in the drafting of this document at the Council, according to which he would certainly have understood the original intention.
inscribed deep within the dynamic structure of the person. . . . One could say that this is a portrait in which the person is depicted as being willed by God "for itself" and, at the same time, as a being turned "toward" others.\footnote{Wojtyla, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," 194.}

Now, it is precisely in this orientation toward the other—in this "law of the gift"—that the relationship between participation and the common good begins to take shape. A key concept, at this point, however, which neither the Council text nor Wojtyla in his commentary here goes on to develop, is that of disinterestedness. What, exactly, does this mean? Clearly, Wojtyla does not imagine anything like a Kantian duty-ethic at this point, even if he does take, from Kant, the idea of duty as a critical element in the moral dynamic.\footnote{Karol Wojtyla, "The Problem of the Theory of Morality," in Person and Community, 129–161 (150–151).} He does not imagine that "just showing up" because I ought can be sufficient, but insists upon personal presence in the context of the duty performed.\footnote{John Paul II speaks about the moral import of personal self-donation in the moral act, which, thereby, must always be construed as an interpersonal encounter (even if the other person in the encounter is God), in his pastoral book, His Holiness John Paul II, Crossing the Threshold of Hope, Vittorio Messori, ed., Jenny McPhee and Martha McPhee, trans. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 202–203. There, he mentions the efforts of Kant, Scheler, and other unnamed thinkers, to articulate the moral necessity of making a gift of oneself, while declaring that, "a complete expression of all this is already found in the Gospel" (203). Neither Kant nor Scheler succeed, according to Wojtyla, in articulating a "complete expression" of this, "truth that Christ taught us by his life, and that the tradition of Christian morality, no less than the tradition of the saints and of the many heroes of love of neighbor, took up and lived out in the course of history" (202). Kant, for his part, focuses exclusively upon the role of duty that he fails to capture the personal and inter-subjective dimension of love, while Scheler, as Wojtyla reads him, focuses so intently upon the role of subjectivity and emotion that he fails to capture the active dimension of love—that is to say, love as the fullness of the human act.}

In other words, one does little good for an ailing parent merely to visit in the hospital for the sake of duty followed in some sort of unfeeling way. Rather, the genuinely dutiful son must be present in the gift as person—thus manifesting a desire to be given over: a desire to be there, to be with, and to be for. In what sense, then, is this disinterestedness?
The dutiful son gains the loving company of his ailing parent—he finds himself in his act of self-donation, and gains his soul, and his moral goodness. Here stands, indeed, a great paradox which Ratzinger develops at length in the whole of his work, articulating it concisely in his treatment of what he calls the principle of “For”. In his treatment of this paradox, he goes on to explain that:

[The] basic Christian decision signifies the assent to being a Christian, the abandonment of self-centeredness and accession to Jesus Christ’s existence with its concentration on the whole. . . . [All] man’s own efforts to step outside himself can never suffice. He who only wants to give and is not ready to receive, he who only wants to exist for others and is unwilling to recognize that he for his part too lives on the unexpected, unprovokable gift of others’ “For”, fails to recognize the basic mode of human existence and is thus bound to destroy the true meaning of living “for one another”. To be fruitful, all self-sacrifices demand acceptance by others and in the last analysis by the other who is the truly “other” of all mankind and at the same time completely one with it: the God-man Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{786}

As Ratzinger makes clear in his characteristically paradoxical way, true other-centeredness means that we are prepared to make a gift of ourselves to the other, aware of the other’s personal autonomy, which can only mean that our self-gift may occasion our falling to the ground in death\textsuperscript{787} if the other refuses to assume a posture of receptivity before our kenotic self-outpouring. Only when the other becomes receptive can the circular movement of reciprocity or reflexivity finally emerge to fulfill the person in his or her essential communal dimension, bringing into full relief the image of God in the created person. It is in this context that the mysteries of the Incarnation and of the Cross take on new light, and with them, the mystery of the Annunciation with its connection to the Immaculate Conception.\textsuperscript{788}

In the end, this is what Wojtyla’s notion of participation is ultimately about, as it bridges the gap between the I and the thou—the thou who, in being perceived as such, is perceived as another I over against my own. It gives rise, not simply to the fact that human beings, as individuals, act in unison, but to the fact of our

\textsuperscript{786} Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 190–191.

\textsuperscript{787} Cf., John 12:24.

\textsuperscript{788} Cf. Redemptoris Mater, § 9–10.
acting in pursuit of a good truly common to all—that is, the good of our being-in-common as persons, each in the fullness of personal dignity: i.e., to community. He writes, "Participation thus understood conditions the whole authenticity of the human we, a we that develops objectively on the basis of a relation to the common good but that also—on the basis of this same relation—tends toward the development of the true subjectivity of all who enter into the social community." Only when this moment is finally reached is the common good fully realized, and not simply, as it will always be this side of the parousia, merely approximated. Thus, though Wojtyla develops his concept of participation as a philosophical category, with fundamentally philosophical concerns before him, there can be no question that, in the end, it carries profound implications for the theological horizon, especially in the dimensions of soteriology and eschatology. Indeed, as he says, rather pregnantly, as if anticipating this very trajectory:

The fully authentic human being, the human being as a person, the one whose personal identity is disclosed through I-thou relationships to the extent that those relationships have the profile of a genuine communio personarum, is the one who is and must be permanently inscribed in the true meaning of the common good if that good is to conform to its definition and essence.

Indeed, as we read in Gaudium et spes, and a condensed quotation in John Paul II's first encyclical letter, Redemptor hominis:

[Only] in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. . . . For . . . Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling. . . . He who is the "image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), is himself the perfect man who has restored in the children of Adam

791 Cf., Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 243–278.
792 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 254.
that likeness to God which had been disfigured ever since the first sin. Human nature, by the very fact that it was assumed, not absorbed, in him, has been raised in us also to a dignity beyond compare. For, by his Incarnation, he, the son of God, in a certain way united himself with each man. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will, and with a human heart he loved. Born of the Virgin Mary, he has truly been made one of us, like to us in all things except sin. 794

Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, is that "fully authentic human being, whose personal identity is disclosed through I-thou relationships to the extent that those relationships have the profile of a genuine communio personarum, and who, thus, is and must be permanently inscribed in the true meaning of the common good." For, as John Paul II insists:

Of the essence of motherhood is the fact that it concerns the person. Motherhood always establishes a unique and unrepeatable relationship between two people: between mother and child and between child and mother. . . . For each child is generated in a unique and unrepeatable way, and this is true both for the mother and for the child. Each child is surrounded in the same way by that maternal love on which are based the child's development and coming to maturity as a human being. 795

4.1.7: Proredemption:

It is at this precise moment—in the contemplation of this mystery, that the full significance of Mary finally emerges, and can be expressed in what we might call proredemption. We have coined this original term to express the moment of active receptivity in which Mary, as the pre-eminent person of faith, who responds "with all her human and feminine I," 796 as the Fathers had said, "conceives Christ in her heart," 797 making room for that return—

794 Redemptor hominis, § 9.
795 Redemptoris Mater, § 45.
796 Redemptoris Mater, § 13.
797 Augustine, Sermo 25.7: PL 38, 937.
that reflexivity—in which the image of the inter-personal God in the human person reaches the point of total retitus to him, and finds, in that return, her own fulfillment. John Paul II writes:

Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it. This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer “fully reveals man to himself”. If we may use the expression, this is the human dimension of the mystery of the Redemption. In this dimension man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity. 798

This, personal and cosmic retitus, in other words—this union of humanity with Jesus Christ, who “unites himself with every human being,”799 affirming our personal value, and the value of being-in-common with us—is the common good, which is constantly breaking in upon us until, “all things come together under him.”800 But Mary plays the definitive role in this process—in the process of the created person’s reception of the ἐσχατον (eschaton). For she gives her assent to the creative and redemptive plan of God in a way that definitively unites the two dimensions: the dimensions of nature and grace. John Paul II tells us that Mary’s maternal mediation for the Church and the world, which must always be understood as a subordinate, but no less real participation in the universal mediation of Christ:

... flows from her divine motherhood, and can be understood and lived in faith only on the basis of the full truth of this motherhood. Since by virtue of divine election Mary is the earthly Mother of the Father’s consubstantial Son and his “generous companion” in the work of redemption “she is a mother to us in the order of grace.” This role constitutes a real dimension of her presence in the saving mystery of Christ and the Church.801

798 Redemptor hominis, § 10.
799 Cf., Gaudium et spes, § 22.
801 Redemptoris Mater, § 38.
Again, John Paul II crystallizes the various threads of what we have here called *proredemption*, as a participatory mode of intercession, when he writes:

Her election to the supreme office and dignity of Mother of the Son of God refers, on the ontological level, to the very reality of the union of the two natures in the person of the Word (*hypostatic union*). This basic fact of being the Mother of the Son of God is from the very beginning a complete openness to the person of Christ, to his whole work, to his whole mission. The words “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord” testify to Mary’s openness of spirit: she perfectly unites in herself the love proper to virginity and the love characteristic of motherhood, which are joined and, as it were, fused together. . . .

As I have already said, she advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and in this pilgrimage to the foot of the Cross there was simultaneously accomplished her maternal cooperation with the Savior’s whole mission through her actions and sufferings. Along the path of this collaboration with the whole work of her Son, the Redeemer, Mary’s motherhood itself underwent a singular transformation, becoming ever more imbued with “burning charity” towards all those to whom Christ’s mission was directed.\(^{802}\)

Now, the term *procreation* is already familiar to us; but it would be helpful to understand the term in light of Wojtyla’s notion of participation, because, if Mary’s cooperation in the work of redemption flows from “the full truth of her divine maternity,”\(^{803}\) what we have termed, here, *proredemption* must be understood in the same context, but precisely insofar as it comes to intersect with the order of grace, specifically. Indeed, John Paul II states, quite explicitly, that, “motherhood ‘in the order of grace’ preserves the analogy with what ‘in the order of nature’ characterizes the union between mother and child.”\(^{804}\) For Wojtyla, therefore, *procreation* means the conscious and active participation of human persons, in transcending the *I* and the *thou* to form a communally-acting *we*, in which mutual *kenosis* and *reception* come to image, and to imitate the divine reciprocity, which now enters into this community, through the somatic reciprocity of the *man-woman* relation, so as

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\(^{802}\) *Redemptoris Mater*, § 39.

\(^{803}\) Cf. *Redemptoris Mater*, § 38.

\(^{804}\) *Redemptoris Mater*, § 45.
to give rise to personal life, in the context of this decidedly interpersonal encounter—the total interpenetration of persons. While God can, and apparently does, at times, give rise to personal life on the basis solely of the biological act, without the full personal-making-presence of husband and wife in the total self-offering of spousal love, this represents something unworthy of the human person, precisely insofar as it is a failure to participate. For Wojtyla, “every man [i.e., every human person] must learn to integrate himself into the activity of God and respond to his love.” Human beings are called to be active participants—persons taken up into the dynamic of reciprocity, obedient to “the law of the gift.”

By nature, therefore, human beings are able to enter into this sort of participatory action, in which God and community cooperate in the common project of bringing forth new life at the natural level. In doing so, we become bound to one another and to the new person, as well as to the whole of the human community which is now called upon to make room for the new person, to affirm his or her personal value, and thus to allow ourselves to be affected by his or her contribution as a person, and as a subject of action. In the moment of proredemption, however, Mary participates, not simply in an interpersonal encounter that gives rise to a new human being,—this time with God directly, rather than with a human co-participant—but in an encounter that, at one and the same time, and precisely for this reason, gives rise to the Eschatological fulfillment of humanity in the order of grace. Mary’s radical personal openness before God comes to mean that Life itself—God’s Life—enters into the human sphere through her, inviting the whole of humanity to welcome him into our midst, and to accept the implications of his personal value. When this


808 Cf. Redemptoris Mater, § 37. Here, there can be no question that the biblical theme of the anawim (or וָּאָנָּאָב = anav)—the poor, the afflicted, the downtrodden, the lost, and the abandoned—is a central hermeneutic for the theological significance of the Incarnation. Indeed, this becomes the very sign by which the shepherds of Christmas morning will recognize the Savior of the world (Luke 2:1–20).
occurs, Mary’s relationship with God is definitively assumed into his eternal election to become one with his creation in the Incarnation.\textsuperscript{809} Mary enters into the whole history of creation and redemption, becoming, not merely the new Eve, but the true Eve\textsuperscript{810}—the Eve over against the ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ (eschatos Adam), to whom she offers the whole of her humanity on behalf of the human race.\textsuperscript{811} Mary, thus, participates directly in, and becomes essentially linked-with, the realization of the only truly common good. Her intercession comes to encompass the whole of the temporal trajectory of creation and redemption, not simply as a static fact, but as a participatory action of receptivity, in which the reditus of humanity to God can now come, continuously, to ever-fuller realization.\textsuperscript{812} Mary, having been, as it were, assumed into this mode of participation, in the whole of her psychosomatic unity—"the whole of her personal and feminine ‘I’"\textsuperscript{813}—remains ever engaged in it, always saying ‘yes’ to God for humanity, always receiving him into creation, always offering him back to God on our behalf, always being assumed by him, and, in this way, always experiencing the fullness of glory to which the human person is called by God—that of intimate, personal, participation in the inner life of God himself. In this thoroughly personalist articulation of the mystery of Marian intercession, the Mother of the Redeemer thus emerges before us as the Proredemptress—"the most perfect image of freedom and of the liberation of humanity and of the universe,"\textsuperscript{814} she is the perfectly-redeemed acting person.

\textsuperscript{809} Redemptoris Mater, §§ 8–9.

\textsuperscript{810} Redemptoris Mater, §§ 23–24, 37.

\textsuperscript{811} Cf. Redemptoris Mater, § 39.

\textsuperscript{812} Redemptoris Mater, § 28.

\textsuperscript{813} Redemptoris Mater, § 13.

\textsuperscript{814} Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation (22 March 1986), § 97. This passage is quoted in Redemptoris Mater (§ 37).
4.1.8: Mary as the Acting Person in Wojtyla's Marian Catechesis:

While, in this study, we are primarily interested in John Paul II's presentation of Mary in his encyclical letter Redemptoris Mater, in light of his prepapal reflections on the idea of the acting person, a broader context for that dimension of his thought can be provided by considering, briefly, another treatment other major treatment of Mary provided by John Paul II. John Paul II had delivered a series of "Wednesday audiences" on the figure of Mary, which have come to be known, collectively, as his Marian Catechesis. These audiences were delivered roughly ten years after the publication of Redemptoris Mater,\(^\text{815}\) and, therefore, can be seen as representing a certain continuity with the Mariology presented in the encyclical. In these meditations, John Paul II provides a broad view of Mary's role in the mystery of salvation. In addition to the usual and universally attested base-points (the perpetual virginity,\(^\text{816}\) the divine maternity,\(^\text{817}\) the Immaculate Conception,\(^\text{818}\) the Assumption,\(^\text{819}\) and the Fiat at the Annunciation,\(^\text{820}\) John Paul II considers a number of pious attestations concerning Mary. He explains the common aphorisms that to honor Mary is to move toward Christ,\(^\text{821}\) that Mary is the model of silent perseverance,\(^\text{822}\)

\(^{815}\) While Redemptoris Mater was published on 25 March 1987, Pope John Paul II delivered this catechesis in his General Audiences between 6 September 1995 and 12 November 1997.


\(^{819}\) Pope John Paul II, General Audience (2 July 1997).


\(^{821}\) Pope John Paul II, General Audience (15 November 1995).

\(^{822}\) Pope John Paul II, General Audience (22 November 1995).
that she is the model of the feminine,\textsuperscript{823} that she is the model of service,\textsuperscript{824} that she is the example of perfect love,\textsuperscript{825} and that she is the exemplary mother\textsuperscript{826} and the exemplar of motherhood itself and Mother of the Church\textsuperscript{827} whose motherhood is Universal to humanity in the spiritual dimension.\textsuperscript{828}

In these texts, John Paul II treats some of the same themes we will see treated by Ratzinger. Pope John Paul II emphasizes, strongly, what Ratzinger calls, "the feminine line in the Bible," and he places a great deal of emphasis upon the role of Mary as "daughter of Zion," who finally appears for Israel and for humanity as "She who believed that the promise made to her by God would be fulfilled."\textsuperscript{829} There is a subtle difference between the way in which John Paul II treats this image and the way it is treated in Ratzinger. For Ratzinger, the figure in question is simply "Daughter Zion"—that is to say, "Zion as daughter" in the personal concretization of Mary. For John Paul II, however, Mary emerges as the heir of Zion, who, for her own part, appears as Mary's progenitor. Mary is "Zion's daughter."

In any event, the two themes of "the feminine line in the Bible"\textsuperscript{830} and the image of the "Daughter" are clearly related, since


\textsuperscript{824}Pope John Paul II, General Audience (4 September 1996).

\textsuperscript{825}Pope John Paul II, General Audience (4 December 1996).

\textsuperscript{826}Pope John Paul II, General Audience (29 January 1997).


\textsuperscript{828}Pope John Paul II, General Audience (24 September 1997).

\textsuperscript{829}Cf. Luke 1:45.

“Daughter Zion” itself is a feminine image, who appears as Bride over against God’s masculine typologies of Father and Bridegroom, and, for that reason, can only be understood in light of the whole of the “feminine line.” With that issue in mind, and before returning to an analysis of the image of the “Daughter” in his teaching, we should turn to John Paul II’s overview of the “feminine line in the Bible” as it appears in summary in his General Audience of 27 March 1996.

There, Pope John Paul II presents an outline of pivotal appearances of the feminine in the history of salvation leading up to the figure of Mary in the New Testament. Individual woman, concretely, show, in the course of salvific history, that the woman of Israel, “impelled by the Spirit of God, share in the struggles and triumphs of Israel or contribute to its salvation.” What is more, John Paul II insists that, “Their presence in the history of the people is neither marginal nor passive: they appear as true protagonists of salvation history.” Without offering a complete exposition of this address, we should say that John Paul II’s litany of the most pivotal women of the Old Testament begins, interestingly, with the figure of Miriam who, acting as a “prophetess”, led the women of Israel in responsorial refrain during the canticle initiated by “Moses and the sons of Israel” after the crossing of the Red Sea. Pope John Paul II considers only the narrative of the Old Testament, and does not explore the issue of a parallelism between the name of Aaron’s sister and the name of Jesus’ mother. We should note, however, that such a parallel can strengthen John Paul II’s point in mentioning this figure. The name Μαριάμ (Mariam), which is the identical name form as that indicated for the Mother of Jesus in the Greek of the New Testament. Although he does not draw attention to the

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831 John Paul II, General Audience (27 March 1996), § 1.
832 John Paul II, General Audience (27 March 1996), § 1.
833 Exodus 15:20–21.
834 Exodus 15:1.
835 Exodus 15:1–21.
parallelism between the Μαρία of the Old Testament and the Μαρία of the New Testament at the level of their names, John Paul II does note of the Old Testament Mary, that, "This mention of feminine enterprise in the context of a celebration stresses not only the importance of woman's role, but also her particular ability for praising and thanking God." In parallel, the attentive reader cannot but call to mind the Canticle of the New Testament Mary in the Gospel of Luke.

John Paul II then points to the prophetess Deborah and Jael, who, together, participated directly in securing a blessing of forty years of peace for Israel through the defeat of the army of Jabin, King of Canaan. This violent narrative revolves around Deborah's discernment that the time of liberation is at hand for Israel, and that an engagement with the Commander, Sisera, would be successful. But the Israelite, Barak, who was to lead the engagement, understood that he did not possess the spiritual art of discernment whereby he could read the signs of the times, and so, called upon Deborah to come with him, saying, "If you come with me, I will go; if you will not come, I will not go, for I do not know

836 The name מירם (Miryam) represents a paradox in its application to these pivotal figures, especially to the figure of the Virgin of Nazareth. It means, "rebellious one," and thus calls to mind, once again, the idea of a collective personality. The figure of Mary somehow holds within herself the whole rebellious people of Israel—the whole of the people who, but for their own rebellion, would realize the full salvific power of the Covenant into which God seeks to draw them completely (Cf. Psalm 95:7–11, Hebrews 3:7–4). Only in the figure of Mary does this people cease to rebel and, instead, become "the handmaid of the Lord" (Luke 1:38); and, thus, only in Mary Immaculate does the Covenantal promise finally come to be realized in its fullness on behalf of, and to the benefit of, the rest of us, who, "little of faith" (Cf. Matthew 8:26, 16:8, 17:20), find ourselves constantly drawing back in resistance to the "fullness of grace" (Cf. Luke 1:28).

837 John Paul II, General Audience (27 March 1996), § 1.

838 Luke 1:46–56. The so-called "Magnificat" of Mary appears as the exemplary Canticle of the Church herself, in which God vanquishes the powerful precisely in his own self-emptying, by which the lowliest among us are found to resemble God most fully.


how to choose the day when the angel of Yahweh will grant me success." 842 Deborah's response is intriguing. She agrees to go, but also admonishes Barak, explaining that his own course is not the course to success, but that, "Yahweh will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman," 843 Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, who will kill Sisera in his sleep, by driving a tent peg through his temple, "right through to the ground." 844 While this scene seems little to resemble the New Testament, with its overwhelming emphasis upon non-violence in the interest of total cosmic reconciliation, the important theme here, for our current purposes, is the active and essential mediation of women in the divine movement. Without the prophetess, Barak would not have known even to mount an offensive, much less how, where, and when. And without Jael, the Commander of the Canaanite army would have escaped, enabling him to raise new forces and to continue aggressions against the Israelites. So, in Deborah's canticle upon the liberation of Israel, she mentions the role of Jael in terms that foreshadow those Elizabeth employs in her own praise of Mary at the Visitation scene. 845 She sings:

Blessed be Jael among women
 (the wife of Heber the Kenite);
 among all women that dwell in tents may she be blessed. 846

John Paul II also spends a good deal of time considering the figures of Judith and Esther. In considering Judith's slaying of Holofernes in another extraordinarily violent narrative of the Old Testament, he places emphasis upon the courage of Judith's faith convictions, as she appears, foreshadowing Mary, as the one who believed in the fidelity and nearness of God, 847 and, so, wins God's favor for herself 848 and the never-ending praise of Israel, 849 who,

842 Judges 4:8.
843 Judges 4:9.
845 Cf. Luke 1:42
through her, finds liberation at the hands of the Almighty. He writes:

Here too, as in the case of David and Goliath, the Lord used weakness to triumph over strength. On this occasion, however, it was a woman who brought victory: Judith, without being held back by the cowardice and unbelief of the people’s rulers, goes to Holofernes and kills him, earning the gratitude and praise of the High Priest and the elders of Jerusalem. The latter exclaimed to the woman who had defeated the enemy: “You are the exaltation of Jerusalem, you are the great glory of Israel, you are the great pride of our nation! You have done all this single-handed; you have done great good to Israel, and God is well pleased with it. May the Almighty Lord bless you for ever!” (Jdt 15:9-10).

In the figure of Esther, John Paul II sees an antithetical parallel to the figure of Judith. Both must confront a threat against the security of Israel, but while Judith defeats her enemy through violence, Esther is remembered for triumphing through her intercession. In the Esther narrative, Haman, superintendent of the King of Persia, had decreed that the Jews should be exterminated. Esther risks her life by approaching the King of her own accord, an offense punishable by death, and persuades him to rescind the decree, sparing the Jews, and preserving their lines of descent. “Judith and Esther,” explains John Paul II, “both risk their lives to win the salvation of their people. The two interventions, however, are quite different: Esther does not kill the enemy but, by playing the role of mediator, intercedes for those who are threatened with destruction.”

Returning, then, to the image of “Daughter”, where John Paul II sees Mary as “daughter of Zion”, John Paul II again stresses the dimension of agency in our understanding the figure of Mary. He writes:

The account of the Annunciation allows us to recognize in Mary the new “daughter of Zion”, invited by God to deep joy. It expresses her extraordinary role as mother of the Messiah, indeed, as mother of the Son of God. The Virgin accepts the message on behalf of the people of David, but we can say that she accepts it on

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behalf of all humanity, because the Old Testament extended the role of the Davidic Messiah to all nations (cf. Ps 2:8; 71 [72]:8). In the divine intention, the announcement addressed to her looks to universal salvation.

To confirm this universal perspective of God’s plan, we can recall several Old and New Testament texts which compare salvation to a great feast for all peoples on Mount Zion (cf. Is 25:6f.) and which announce the final banquet of God’s kingdom (cf. Mt 22:1-10).

As “daughter of Zion”, Mary is the Virgin of the Covenant which God establishes with all humanity. Mary’s representational role in this event is clear. And it is significant that it is a woman who carries out this function.

As the new “daughter of Zion”, Mary in fact is particularly suited to entering into the spousal Covenant with God. More and better than any member of the Chosen People, she can offer the Lord the true heart of a Bride.

With Mary, “daughter of Zion” is not merely a collective subject, but a person who represents humanity and, at the moment of the Annunciation, she responds to the proposal of divine love with her own spousal love. Thus she welcomes in a quite special way the joy foretold by the prophecies, a joy which reaches its peak here in the fulfillment of God’s plan. 853

Like Ratzinger, John Paul II sees Mary’s faith as central to her active cooperation with God’s salvific plan. In his General Audience on 3 July 1996, John Paul II sets out to illustrate Mary’s free cooperation in the divine action by contrasting Mary’s faith-assent at the Annunciation of the Incarnation to Zechariah’s doubt at the annunciation of John the Forerunner. Central to Mary’s participation in the divine action is Mary’s act of faith. Faith, in this context, thus appears not as a passive affect in relation to God’s unilateral action, but as an act in its own right, given as a dialogical response. John Paul II writes, on this matter:

In meeting the heavenly messenger, one’s attention is focused on the meaning of his words, which demand of Mary intense listening and a pure faith.

This last consideration allows us to appreciate the greatness of Mary’s faith, especially in comparison with the tendency, then as now, to ask insistently for sensible signs in order to believe. In

contrast, the Virgin's assent to the divine will is motivated only by her love of God.\footnote{854}{John Paul II, General Audience (3 July 1996), § 2, in L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly Edition in English (10 July 1996):11.}

He goes on, stressing the active dimension of Mary's faith, saying:

Mary is asked to assent to a truth never expressed before. She accepts it with a simple yet daring heart. With the question: "How can this be?", she expresses her faith in the divine power to make virginity compatible with her exceptional and unique motherhood.

By replying: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Lk 1:35), the angel offers God's ineffable solution to the question Mary asked. Virginity, which seemed an obstacle, becomes the concrete context in which the Holy Spirit will accomplish in her the conception of the incarnate Son of God. The angel's response opens the way to the Virgin's co-operation with the Holy Spirit in the begetting of Jesus.\footnote{855}{John Paul II, General Audience (3 July 1996), § 3.}

John Paul II, thus stresses Mary's \textit{active cooperation} in the divine action, through her faith assent. Faith itself is an \textit{act} on this account, and not a mere passive affect. He explains, "The free co-operation of the human person is realized in carrying out the divine plan. By believing in the Lord's word, Mary co-operates in fulfilling the motherhood announced to her."\footnote{856}{John Paul II, General Audience (3 July 1996), § 4.}

We should stress, however, that for John Paul II, we see a continuum throughout Mary's whole life, rooted in her \textit{act of faith}. This act of faith lies at the heart of her \textit{fiat}, thus casting the \textit{fiat} as an event of central importance. While Mary's \textit{fiat} at the Annunciation appears as central to John Paul II's considerations, however, it is not the exclusive focus of his concerns, even as he constructs a portrait of her the exemplary \textit{acting person}. Mary's \textit{fiat} is, indeed, the \textit{central} issue, but it is not a \textit{separate} issue from Mary's participation in other historical moments throughout her life with Christ, beyond the event of the Annunciation. Rather, once the \textit{fiat} is given, Mary reaffirms that posture over and over again, in and through her concrete acts. Recalling Wojtyła's work in \textit{The Acting Person}, we can see rather clearly why the interpenetration of the \textit{fiat} as an event that occurs, not only at the Annunciation, but also, by extension, at every other significant
moment of Mary's life, is essential for his presentation of Mary as the exemplary acting person. The fiat itself realizes Mary's faith in a concrete act, and, in so doing, binds Mary to a perpetual re-invitation to from God to repeat that affirmation in terms of concrete action throughout her life. In accepting the invitation to become the Mother of God, Mary binds herself to all the obligations of motherhood, and, thus, must repeat her fiat continuously over the whole course of her life with her Son, who, for his own part, appears as the eschatological fulfillment of God's creative and redemptive plan. John Paul II explains that, "For Mary, dedication to the person and work of Jesus means intimate union with her Son, motherly involvement in nurturing his human growth and co-operation with his work of salvation." While recognizing the subordinate and contingent character of Mary's creaturely cooperation with the divine action, John Paul II insists that this cooperation is properly active, and not merely passive in relation to God. He writes:

Mary carries out this last aspect of her dedication to Jesus "under him", that is, in a condition of subordination, which is the fruit of grace. However this is true co-operation, because it is realized "with him" and, beginning with the Annunciation, it involves active participation in the work of redemption. "Rightly, therefore", the Second Vatican Council observes, "the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of man's salvation through faith and obedience."

Mary's free cooperation, however, carries with it implications that extend beyond herself, and even beyond her own particular maternity, because, in this case, she is mother, not only to this person, but to the one who "completely fills the whole of reality." In this way, Mary's motherhood has implications for the whole in an entirely unique way—namely, in making her the

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859 Cf. Ephesians 4:10. The Greek reads, “... πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα (pleirosei ta panta)".
wellspring of the divine life for humanity. "Mary," explains John Paul II, "associated with Christ's victory over the sin of our first parents, appears as the true 'mother of the living'. Her motherhood, freely accepted in obedience to the divine plan, becomes a source of life for all humanity."

Once again, John Paul II draws our attention to Mary's fiat, but does so in a way that, at once, orients our gaze outward from that moment to the whole of her life in its total soteriological significance. He writes:

In stating her total "yes" to the divine plan, Mary is completely free before God. At the same time, she feels personally responsible for humanity, whose future was linked with her reply.

God puts the destiny of all mankind in a young woman's hands. Mary's "yes" is the premise for fulfilling the plan which God in his love had prepared for the world's salvation.

Thus, Mary stands as a concrete instantiation of God's call to women, in and through the unique competence of maternity, to share in the saving work of Christ in a distinctly feminine way. In a meditation on the significance of the presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple, John Paul II casts the issue in terms of the woman's role as a keeper of hope. In God's plan, the feminine personality experiences more immediately than the masculine the reality of the dynamism of giving and receiving—the dynamism of reciprocity—that stands at the heart of the divine logic of Love. Here, perceiving oneself as, by nature, poised over-against the other as one who receives what is given, the figure of the woman appears as one called answer gift with gift, and love with love. Again, returning to the theme of the "daughter of Zion," John Paul II explains:

The words of the aged Simeon, announcing to Mary her sharing in the Messiah's saving mission, shed light on woman's role in the mystery of Redemption.

Indeed, Mary is not only an individual person, but she is also the "daughter of Zion", the new woman standing at the Redeemer's side in order to share his Passion and to give birth in the Spirit to the children of God. This reality is expressed by the popular depiction of the "seven swords" that pierce Mary's heart: this image highlights the deep link between the mother, who is

identified with the daughter of Zion and with the Church, and the sorrowful destiny of the Incarnate Word.

Giving back her Son, whom she had just received from God, to consecrate him for his saving mission, Mary also gives herself to this mission. It is an act of interior sharing that is not only the fruit of natural maternal affection, but above all expresses the consent of the new woman to Christ’s redemptive work.  

Once again, we can see that Mary’s *fiat*, like the *fiat* of every person who utters a “yes” before God, places her in relation to the whole work of her life from that point forward; for every moment of choice now requires a renewed affirmation of her initial “yes.” Especially in the case of a parent, and most of all in the case of a mother, the first “yes” sets her on a trajectory from which no retraction or hesitancy is morally permissible. This is the inner logic operative in John Paul II’s conclusion about Mary’s active participation in Christ’s mission as it presents itself in his meditation on the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple. He writes:

Luke’s words teach us how Mary lives this truly unusual episode in the depths of her being. She “kept all these things in her heart” (Lk 2:51). The Mother of Jesus associates these events with the mystery of her Son, revealed to her at the Annunciation, and ponders them in the silence of contemplation, offering her co-operation in the spirit of a renewed “fiat”.

In this way the first link is forged in a chain of events that will gradually lead Mary beyond the natural role deriving from her motherhood, to put herself at the service of her divine Son’s mission.

At the temple in Jerusalem, in this prelude to his saving mission, Jesus associates his Mother with himself; no longer is she merely the One who gave him birth, but the Woman who, through her own obedience to the Father’s plan, can co-operate in the mystery of Redemption.

Thus keeping in her heart an event so charged with meaning, Mary attains a new dimension of her co-operation in salvation.  

Mary’s intercession at the Wedding in Cana once again represents a dramatic reaffirmation of her initial *fiat* in terms of

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concrete action. John Paul II notes that, in prompting Christ to resolve disaster in a miracle that, in the end, will result in the manifestation of his glory, Mary chooses a course of action that can only hasten the day of the Cross—a day that, for herself as a mother, as well as for her Son, will represent a moment of extraordinary suffering. Yet, *this moment, here and now*, calls for a response. John Paul II explains:

> In the text cited, the Council uses the expression “moved with pity,” letting it be understood that Mary was prompted by her merciful heart. Having sensed the eventual disappointment of the newly married couple and guests because of the lack of wine, the Blessed Virgin compassionately suggests to Jesus that he intervene with his messianic power.

To some, Mary’s request may appear excessive, since it subordinates the beginning of the Messiah’s miracles to an act of filial devotion. Jesus himself dealt with this difficulty when, by assenting to his mother’s request, he shows the Lord’s superabundance in responding to human expectations, manifesting also what a mother’s love can do.  

John Paul II goes on to explain that, “By emphasizing Mary’s initiative in the first miracle and then recalling her presence on Calvary at the foot of the Cross, the Evangelist helps us understand how Mary’s co-operation is extended to the whole of Christ’s work. The Blessed Virgin’s request is placed within the divine plan of salvation.” This history, however, is the history of humanity itself, and of creation, and has reference points both in the Old Testament and in the life of the Church in her post-resurrectional reality. Thus, by calling upon Christ to perform a “sign” in response to concrete human anxiety, Mary invites Christ to an act of self-disclosure that calls forth a world of meaning that utterly transcends the concrete moment in which it is contained, and connects that moment to whole of God’s saving work in Jesus Christ. John Paul II’s explanation of the significance of this event involves precisely this sort of consideration, according to which the particularity and historicity of the event extends beyond itself,

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864 The reference is to, *Lumen gentium*, § 58.


866 John Paul II, General Audience (5 March 1997), § 2.
and Christ's concern for the individual person interpenetrates his concern for the whole Church and the whole world of man. He explains:

In the first "sign" performed by Jesus, the Fathers of the Church glimpsed an important symbolic dimension, seeing the transformation of the water into wine as the announcement of the passage from the Old to the New Covenant. At Cana it is precisely the water in the jars, destined for the purification of the Jews and the fulfillment of the legal prescriptions (cf. Mk 7:1-15), which becomes the new wine of the wedding feast, a symbol of the definitive union between God and humanity.

The context of a wedding banquet, chosen by Jesus for his first miracle, refers to the marriage symbolism used frequently in the Old Testament to indicate the Covenant between God and his People (cf. Hos 2:21; Jer 2:1-8; Ps 44; etc.), and in the New Testament to signify Christ's union with the Church (cf. Jn 3:28-30; Eph 5:25-32; Rv 21:1-2, etc.).

Jesus' presence at Cana is also a sign of God's saving plan for marriage. In this perspective, the lack of wine can be interpreted as an allusion to the lack of love that unfortunately often threatens marital unions. Mary asks Jesus to intervene on behalf of all married couples, who can only be freed from the dangers of infidelity, misunderstanding and division by a love which is based on God. The grace of the sacrament offers the couple this superior strength of love, which can reinforce their commitment to fidelity even in difficult circumstances.

According to the interpretation of Christian authors, the miracle at Cana also has a deep Eucharistic meaning. Performing this miracle near the time of the Jewish feast Passover (cf. Jn 2:13), Jesus, as he did in multiplying the loaves (cf. Jn 6:4), shows his intention to prepare the true paschal banquet, the Eucharist. His desire at the wedding in Cana seems to be emphasized further by the presence of wine, which alludes to the blood of the New Covenant, and by the context of a banquet.

In this way, after being the reason for Jesus' presence at the celebration, Mary obtains the miracle of the new wine which prefigures the Eucharist, the supreme sign of the presence of her risen Son among the disciples.\footnote{John Paul II, General Audience (5 March 1997), § 2–3.}

Once again, returning to the central issue of Mary's \textit{ fiat} at the Annunciation, John Paul II draws that moment out of any pretense of isolation from the rest of her life of action. Again, he
emphasizes that Mary’s *fiat* is a perpetually significant moment, to which she finds herself recalled, again and again. He writes:

In accepting with complete availability the words of the Angel Gabriel, who announced to her that she would become the Mother of the Messiah, Mary began her participation in the drama of Redemption. Her involvement in her Son’s sacrifice, revealed by Simeon during the presentation in the Temple, continues not only in the episode of the losing and finding of the 12-year-old Jesus, but also throughout his public life.

However, the Blessed Virgin’s association with Christ’s mission reaches its culmination in Jerusalem, at the time of the Redeemer’s Passion and Death. As the Fourth Gospel testifies, she was in the Holy City at the time, probably for the celebration of the Jewish feast of Passover.  

Mary makes the suffering of Christ on the Cross her own, and enters into his sacrifice from her own personal center of efficacious action. In this way, Mary does what all Christians are called upon to do, but she does so in the exemplarity of her divine maternity. John Paul II explains:

Let us return again, but now in the perspective of the Resurrection, to the foot of the Cross where the Mother endured “with her only-begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associated herself with his sacrifice in her mother’s heart, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this victim which was born of her.”  

With these words, the Council reminds us of “Mary’s compassion”; in her heart reverberates all that Jesus suffers in body and soul, emphasizing her willingness to share in her Son’s redeeming sacrifice and to join her own maternal suffering to his priestly offering.

The Council text also stresses that her consent to Jesus’ immolation is not passive acceptance but a genuine act of love, by which she offers her Son as a “victim” of expiation for the sins of all humanity.

John Paul II goes on to explain, again referencing Mary’s first *fiat*, that this moment has, for her, a perpetual significance in her life, and for us, an eternal significance, by which we, ourselves, are

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869 Note original to document: *Lumen gentium*, § 58.

870 John Paul II, General Audience (2 April 1997), § 2.
bound to her own invitation to participate in God’s will for creation, and to respond to God with a positive act of Love. He writes:

Mary’s supreme “yes” is radiant with trusting hope in the mysterious future, begun with the death of her crucified Son. The words in which Jesus taught the disciples on his way to Jerusalem “that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again” re-echo in her heart at the dramatic hour of Calvary, awakening expectation of and yearning for the Resurrection.

Mary’s hope at the foot of the Cross contains a light stronger than the darkness that reigns in many hearts: in the presence of the redeeming Sacrifice, the hope of the Church and of humanity is born in Mary.871

Nonetheless, as much as Mary’s cooperation with the divine action stands as the exemplar of our own, hers is an entirely unique participation, because her place as Mother of God is unrepeatable, and, in its particularity, incommunicable to another. Only Mary can actually bear Christ in her womb and nurse him at her breast. Only she will nurture him and guide him through her maternal care through his infancy. Only she can have that unique and unrepeatable relationship with him in the concreteness of history and biology; and only she can, from precisely that point of departure, share in his mission in the way that she does. It is true that all Christians must cooperate with Christ in his saving mission. “However,” John Paul II explains, “applied to Mary, the term ‘co-operator’ acquires a specific meaning.”872 He goes on, saying:

The collaboration of Christians in salvation takes place after the Calvary event, whose fruits they endeavour to spread by prayer and sacrifice. Mary, instead, co-operated during the event itself and in the role of mother; thus her co-operation embraces the whole of Christ’s saving work. She alone was associated in this way with the redemptive sacrifice that merited the salvation of all mankind. In union with Christ and in submission to him, she collaborated in obtaining the grace of salvation for all humanity.

The Blessed Virgin’s role as co-operator has its source in her divine motherhood. By giving birth to the One who was destined

to achieve man's redemption, by nourishing him, presenting him in the temple and suffering with him as he died on the Cross, "in a wholly singular way she co-operated ... in the work of the Saviour."\(^\text{873}\) Although God's call to co-operate in the work of salvation concerns every human being, the participation of the Saviour's Mother in humanity's Redemption is a unique and unrepeatable fact.\(^\text{874}\)

For John Paul II, Mary's Motherhood of Christ stands at the center of her significance, even as her Motherhood itself comes to her through her initial fiat. Her cooperation with God's saving work is bound to her divine maternity, through which she and God work, each in their own way—God, precisely as God, and only as God can, and Mary, precisely as creature, and as only this creature can—to restore the world, through a new form of generation, to the purity God had intended for us from the beginning. He writes:

> Despite the uniqueness of her condition, Mary is also the recipient of salvation. She is the first to be saved, redeemed by Christ "in the most sublime way" in her Immaculate Conception (cf. Bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, in Pius IX, *Acta*, 1, 605) and filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

> This assertion now leads to the question: what is the meaning of Mary's unique co-operation in the plan of salvation? It should be sought in God's particular intention for the Mother of the Redeemer, whom on two solemn occasions, that is, at Cana and beneath the Cross, Jesus addresses as "Woman" (cf. Jn 2, 4; 19, 26). Mary is associated as a woman in the work of salvation. Having created man "male and female" (cf. Gn 1:27), the Lord also wants to place the New Eve beside the New Adam in the Redemption. Our first parents had chosen the way of sin as a couple; a new pair, the Son of God with his Mother's co-operation, would re-establish the human race in its original dignity.

> Mary, the New Eve, thus becomes a perfect icon of the Church. In the divine plan, at the foot of the Cross, she represents redeemed humanity which, in need of salvation, is enabled to make a contribution to the unfolding of the saving work.\(^\text{875}\)

> There can be no question that this assertion—however traditional it finally is—remains astounding from the point of view of humanity. It amounts to a "hard saying" that many find

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\(^{873}\) Note original to document: *Lumen gentium*, § 61.

\(^{874}\) John Paul II, General Audience (9 April 1997), § 2.

\(^{875}\) John Paul II, General Audience (9 April 1997), § 2–3.
scandalous and cannot accept. But it stands, for us, as essential to the Catholic and Orthodox perspective on the question of Mary, who appears, in the thought of Pope John Paul II, as the *acting person*, with reference to his actual articulation of the idea of “participation” as he had developed it in his prepapal writings, inclusive of *The Acting Person* and related essays.
4.2.0: Part II:

Joseph Ratzinger’s
Theological Perspective and
the Situation of Mariology in that Context

In what we have already considered in the course of this dissertation, certain points of convergence between Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II and Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) should already be apparent. Both approach Christianity along personalist lines, both see a fundamental interpenetration, rather than a sharp line of demarcation, between the orders of nature and grace, both see a God who is outwardly turned, and both appear to deny a fixed predestinarianism by which the divine will eternally separates humanity into the categories of “election” and “reprobation.” Both thinkers, therefore, see human self-determination as, somehow, central to our understanding of God’s encounter with humanity, and personal integrity—that is to say, “the integration of the person in action”—as a fundamental theme in the personal response to God. John Paul II and Ratzinger both construct their Mariological visions along these lines. While John Paul II, however, draws out the anthropological import of the Church’s teaching on Mary, Ratzinger focuses more intently upon the typological significations in biblical theology. While, of course, Ratzinger is not the actual focus of the present study, taking the opportunity to understand his approach can help us prepare, intellectually, for what may emerge in any further Mariological contributions yet to come in the teaching of Pope Benedict XVI, who, for his own part, reminds the Church that a proper theological methodology always rests upon a hermeneutic of continuity.

Much of what we present in this section appeared in print prior to Redemptoris Mater, and some of it, long before the papacy of John Paul II had begun. Ratzinger was well known to Karol Wojtyla, however, by the time the latter had taken his place as Pope John Paul II. And while we can point to no evidence that the two had become acquainted with one another directly at the Second Vatican Council, Ratzinger does recount what he thinks the initial point of contact between the two figures might have been. Some
time after his own accession to the papacy Benedict XVI, he came to reflect upon his place in the papacy of John Paul II. Benedict XVI candidly admits that his immediate predecessor had seen him as indispensable; and responding to a question about John Paul II’s refusal to permit him to retire, at the usual age, from his position as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he recalls:

He did want to keep me in office; that is well known. As my seventy-fifth birthday approached, which is the age limit when one submits one’s resignation, he said to me, “You do not have to write a letter at all, for I want to have you to the end.” That was the great and undeserved benevolence he showed me from the very beginning. He had read my Introduction to Christianity. Evidently it was an important book for him. As soon as he became Pope he had made up his mind to call me to Rome as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He had placed a great, very cordial, and profound trust in me. As the guarantee, so to speak, that he would travel the right course in the faith. 876

At this stage in history, then, seeing Ratzinger/Benedict XVI in complementarity and continuity with John Paul II will help us to understand and appreciate the continuing trajectory of Magisterial teaching on the question of Mary as it continues to develop in the future. After considering Ratzinger on his own terms as he presents his own point of view, therefore, we will return our focus, once again, to the principal protagonist in our study, and consider Ratzinger’s reading of John Paul II’s encyclical on Mary, Redemptoris Mater.

4.2.1: Ratzinger’s “Organic” Theology:

Ratzinger’s theological approach can be described as thoroughly “organic”—that is to say, as one resistant to the tendency toward fragmentation characteristic of the scholastic and neo-scholastic periods. Following upon St. Anselm’s Cur Deus homo, Western

theologians began to think of the Christological, soteriological, and eschatological dimensions of theological inquiry as essentially separate, or, at least, separable problems. Ratzinger sees this development as a direct result of Anselm’s approach in *Cur Deus homo*, and as a serious distortion for western theology in the second millennium. For Ratzinger, the question of *why God became a human being* is not a separate question at all from that of *how he brings us to salvation*, nor is either of these questions separate from that of *what God intends for us*. Instead, Ratzinger sees these questions as properly integrated with one another, because, in fact, "they can only be understood when considered together." He explains that, with his so-called "satisfaction theory of atonement", founded upon the intellectual exercise of fracturing the person of Christ from the work he comes to undertake, "Anselm distorts the perspectives... [of the gospel, and makes] the image of God appear in a sinister light." Emphasizing his organic approach, he explains that:

> ... things immediately look different when, in place of the division of Jesus into work and person, it becomes clear that with Jesus Christ it is not a question of a piece of work separate from himself, of a feat which God must demand because he himself is under an obligation to the concept of order; that with him it is not a question—to use Gabriel Marcel’s terminology—of having humanity, but of being human. And how different things look further on when one picks up the Pauline key, which teaches us to understand Christ as the “last man” (ἐσχισμὸς Ἀδάμ: 1 Cor. 15:45)—the final man, who takes man into his future, which consists of his being not just man but one with God.

Understanding this element of Ratzinger's theological perspective is a central key to following the logic of his theological approach. His theological perspective is both organic in the way in which we have already defined this term, and, as a direct result of this approach, Christocentric. Placing Christ at the center of his theological perspective has the clear advantage of providing precisely the means of perceiving the reality of God as he stands over-against humanity, while at the same time perceiving humanity

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878 Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 172.


as we stand over-against God. It will be possible, in the end, to work out a meaningful Mariological approach from this point of departure. To arrive at that moment, however, we must first consider more closely the broad contours of Ratzinger’s organic Christocentric theology.

4.2.2: Ratzinger’s Christocentric Orientation:

For Ratzinger, Scripture provides a rather obvious response to the question of why God became man; but it does so on the foundation of the prevenient experience of covenantal love, which provides the narrative context within which the event of the Incarnation finds its real meaning.\(^{881}\) Ratzinger is consistent on this point through the whole of his career.\(^{882}\) He sees this soteriological

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\(^{882}\) See, for example, Joseph Ratzinger, *In the Beginning*. The original project undertaken here dates to 1981, when Ratzinger delivered a catechesis on creation over the course of four Lenten homilies he had prepared for the community at the Cathedral of Munich, the Liebfrauenkirche (Preface, ix). This was shortly before his appointment to the Prefecture of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith which took place on 25 November 1981. His preface to the publication is given some years later, on the Feast of St. Augustine (28 August), 1985. Much more recently, in 2000, he published a second edition of his seminal compendium, *Einfuhrung in das Christentum*, or *Introduction to Christianity*. This later appeared in English as Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI, *Introduction to Christianity*, 2nd ed., Michael J. Miller, trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004). In the preface to the new edition, Ratzinger confirmed the basic trajectory of the original project. He writes, there, “If I had this *Introduction to Christianity* to write over again today, all of the experiences of the last thirty years would have to go into the text, which would then also have to include the context of interreligious discussions to a much greater degree than seemed fitting at the time. But I believe that I was not mistaken as to the fundamental approach, in that I put the question of God and the question about Christ in the very center, which then leads to a ‘narrative Christology’ and demonstrates that the place for faith is in the Church. This basic orientation, I think, was correct. That is why I venture to place this book once more in the hands of the reader today.” Our quote is taken from, *Introduction to Christianity*:
question as fundamentally both eschatological and Christological in nature. For him, not only is it a mistake to separate soteriology from Christology as Anselm does, it is also a mistake to separate either of them from eschatology. For while each discipline asks the question of the logic of revelation in a slightly different way, the answer is the same in every case. Ratzinger sees theology as fundamentally unified—not, according the scholastic model, as a system of thought, but as a mode and method of understanding who God reveals himself to be, and thus, what he wants for us. This characteristic of Ratzinger's thought comes to light rather clearly in his book, In the Beginning, where he asks the more primal question of, why God created the universe. With almost shocking simplicity, he answers this question unambiguously, in precisely the way he has answered it from the very start of his career. He writes, "God created the universe in order to be able to become a human being and pour out his love upon us and to invite us to love him in return." 883

With this statement, which Ratzinger clearly holds to be the proper and most authentically patristic reading of the New Testament, he interweaves eschatology, soteriology, and Christology together, as the assorted threads of a uniform fabric. The answer to one question is the answer to them all. The purpose and trajectory of creation is for God "to become a human being and pour out his love upon us and to invite us to love him in return." Christ is the realization of God's plan "to become a human being and pour out his love upon us and to invite us to love him in return." And the reason why God became a human being is that he might "pour out his love upon us and invite us to love him in return."

Scholars of mediaeval theology might recognize that, following Anselm's unfortunate severance of Christology and soteriology, this whole fabric of Christology-soteriology-eschatology became hopelessly unraveled for the scholastics, who now posed as a live question, whether God would have become incarnate even had there not been sin. This question rests upon a failure to understand that Christ's purpose is not, first of all, to respond to sin, but to

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883 Ratzinger, In the Beginning, 30.
unite himself in love with human beings. Christ does not unite himself in love with human beings so as to free us from sin, simply, as if, had we not sinned, he would not have loved us. Rather, he frees us from sin on account of his love for us, by which he seeks to unite himself with us. This can only mean that, for Ratzinger, sin does not bring Christ to us, as such, but as healer. From the fact, in other words, that, in Christ’s coming, he appears as the Redeemer of Man, we cannot validly conclude that he comes only on account of sin. Indeed, for Ratzinger, it is clear that he comes in spite of it, such that the logic of redemption must now be worked out, first, through healing.

The term redemption comes from the Latin, redemptio. This word comes from the prefix re- (again) and the root verb emere (to take, to buy, to gain, to procure). Without importing other theological presuppositions, this term does not, in itself, presuppose fallenness or sin. Rather, it refers, first of all, to the reditus or return of creation to God, and emphasizes in that concept the fact that this return depends upon the divine action. We do not simply go back to God on our own, but, instead, are taken back to him. This concept, then, trades upon the spousal imagery of election in the Bible, which comes to be radicalized in the New Testament. The Greek etymology is more difficult than the Latin, and appears, at least at first glance, to require sin as its predicate condition. Autp6oai (lutroomai) derives from the verb, λύω (luo), which has a number of possible meanings ranging from allow to destroy. It is easy to understand the term with a specific reference to sin and imprisonment to death. Admittedly, this is the usual context in which the term is employed in the New Testament. But it is not the only possible meaning, and, therefore, leaves open the more patristic reading of the subtext of the Bible still favored by many representatives of the Western tradition from Scotus to Ratzinger.

Failure to understand this point has led to a rather odd interpretation of the felix culpa featured in the Exultet of the Easter Vigil in the Latin Rite. We can only leave a more thorough exposition of this concept for a later time, but we ought to provide, here, at least a few indications of the direction such a study will have to take. For many of us, the “happy fault of Adam” is happy because without it, Christ would not have become a human being. We are happy that Adam sinned, because we are happy that God became a human being. But this is not the only way to understand this prayer; indeed, from a Ratzingerian perspective, it does not even appear to be the best way. If we accept Ratzinger’s view that God’s desire to become a human being is the raison d’etre of creation itself, Adam’s sin is happy, not because it gained Christ for the world, but because it opened the window to his heart. It exposed the infinite expanse of the horizon of Christ’s love for us; for he loved us “to the end” (John 13:1)—that is, to the very limits of creation and beyond: from the depths of hell to the right
If we recognize, in other words, that the Christological question, the soteriological question, and the eschatological question all amount, in the end, to the same fundamental problem—namely, the revelatory meaning of the Incarnation—we come to understand very quickly that Christ comes, not simply to restore the eschatological trajectory to fallen humanity, but to realize the ἐσχάτον (eschaton) in himself. For Ratzinger, God is able to, “... alter retroactively what he planned ‘before’ eternity,” and thus, somehow, to reconstruct his own course of action to find new avenues to the ἐσχάτον, even as we contrive, in our sins, to close them off, one after another, in our inward-turning flight from the love of a God who will not be undone. This God is the Sun of Justice, who comes forth to visit us as if a bridegroom from his chamber, even in our unhappy egress from primordial Eden, he always seeks a way to “pour out his love upon us and invite us to love him in return.”

Indeed, it was Duns Scotus, in the Middle Ages, who made this point most forcefully at a time when it had become a minority view in the West. God would have become a human being even had there not been sin, he insisted, or else the Incarnation is an afterthought, and God appears to need evil in order to realize his eschatological plan for creation (Ordinatio III, dist. 7, q. 3). Ratzinger seems to hold essentially the same thesis.

Indeed, the compartmentalization of Christology, soteriology, and eschatology leads directly to the generally Protestant problem of reducing Christ to a superhuman moral example we can never really follow, redemption to a purely juridical decree, and salvation to an effect upon the mind, through the reception of faith understood as a mental actuation: i.e., the affirmation of a set of specific propositions.


Cf. Psalm 19:4–6; Malachi 3:20; Luke 1:78. This theme also runs throughout the whole of the Johannine corpus.

In his characteristically unsystematic way, Ratzinger insists that the God of the Bible is not a static metaphysical principle, but an infinitely agile, and even affectively receptive mystery of infinitely expansive love. This is a God who could not allow himself to be dissuaded from his eternal election to join himself in spousal union with the human race of created persons—with each and every man and woman. Given the fact of our fallenness, it is, thus, paradoxically, in the face of sin itself—Adam’s sin, and my sin—that the true depth of the Sacred Heart of Jesus comes clearly to light; for, in this context, it is the lancehead of human sin that
This fact about God stands at the foundation of Ratzinger’s conception of the meaning of sacrifice. At the foot of the Cross, we face the judgment, not of a vengeful tyrant who would make his creature pay, but of his own overflowing mercy, as we see in stark relief how inexhaustibly and unrelentingly the Creator of the universe still “pours out his love upon us and invites us,” stony-hearted as we are,891 “to love him in return.” For Ratzinger, the concept of sacrifice is fundamentally the concept of reciprocity rather than restitution. Its first motivation in the eschatological plan of God is self-offering to the other, on the basis of our being made in the image of the Ultimate Other whom Ratzinger describes as “pure relation.”892 In illustration of this point, Ratzinger suggests that the nearly universal intuition of the world’s natural religions, that the whole cosmos was born of a primordial sacrifice, cuts to a real truth, for indeed, the world, he says, “lives on sacrifice.”893 Now, the natural religions tend to imagine this primordial sacrifice in terms of the opposition of good and evil. Ratzinger, however, seems to insist that evil is not the cause of

opens Christ’s side on the Cross to expose the heart of God as pure Light before our dim-seeing eyes, and as the clear way to our own salvation. Of critical importance on this point is Ratzinger’s article, “The Mystery of Easter: Substance and Foundation of Devotion to the Sacred Heart,” in Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Behold the Pierced One, Graham Harrison, trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 47–69. Originally, Ratzinger had presented this paper at a conference sponsored by the Sacred Heart Congress in Toulouse, 24–28 July, 1981 (again, just months before his appointment as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of Pius XII’s encyclical letter, Haurietis aquas (15 May 1956). His own encyclical, Deus caritas est, seems to carry these themes forward, with language clearly indicative of the sort of divine affectivity he appears to have endorsed in his 1981 conference paper. See especially, in Deus caritas est, §§ 9, 10, and 19.

891 Cf. Ezekiel 36:26. Psalm 51, also clearly addresses this movement. The reference to Ezekiel 36:26 seems, furthermore, to supply the meaning behind the proclamation of John the Baptist at Matthew 3:9 and Luke 3:8, in its context, prior to the Temptation scene (Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13), where Jesus is tempted by Satan to turn stones into bread to satisfy his own hunger, but instead declares that man, until now stone-dead in his sinfulness, must come to feed on the Word of God (Matthew 4:2–4; Luke 4:2–4).

892 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 131.

893 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 191.
sacrifice, nor the necessitating precondition of sacrifice, but, quite paradoxically to our usual way of thinking about things, the refusal of sacrifice: the refusal to become sacrifice, and the refusal to receive it at the hands of others. This position manifests itself in what Ratzinger describes as the principle of "For", which he maintains to be fundamental to the whole mystery of revelation. This principle finally comes to be crystallized in terms of Christ's enigmatic aphorism, "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." When read in its proper light, this aphorism can have nothing at all to do with masochism, but with the fact that, being made to find ourselves in our vulnerability before the other, any retreat into the self—any fearful self-protectionism—quickly becomes the most self-destructive posture the human person is able to assume at the level of the heart. It is spiritual suicide for the one who is called upon to step beyond himself in love.

Thus, for Ratzinger, openness to the other is the real substance of sacrifice—but that means that true sacrifice can never be reduced to a mere stop-gap measure or a form of damage control. It is never merely an ad hoc and ex post facto obligation on account of sin, for it is, first of all, the creative posture of God toward man, by which the whole cosmic order emerges as other than God and yet, for that very reason, radically dependent upon him, and directed back to him again. As long as the act of sacrifice remains, on the part of the human race, only a reluctant compromise—a kind of cosmic plea-bargain—it will always fall short of its task of reconciling us with God; for God gives himself to man in the absolutely uncompromising gift of his only-begotten Son. This is the central truth at the heart of the story of Abraham.

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896 There can be no question that the language of prayer in the Roman Eucharistic liturgy is thoroughly juridical in its orientation. We seem to offer Christ to the Father as satisfaction for the debt of our sins, in wholesale contradiction to the thinking of Ratzinger on this point. Leaving this question to a future study, we can provide, here, a brief indication of the direction we think necessary here. To reject Ratzinger's view is not simply to affirm a Western theological tendency in opposition to one prominent theologian (who happens to have been elected to the papacy), but to reject the preponderant position of the Fathers, in favor of a historically conditioned thesis not fully endorsed by the Saint who
and Isaac as the foundational act of faith before a God who, in the end, comes to light as the One who has made Abraham the recipient of a blessing so over-abundant that it cannot remain forever confined to his own biological line of descent. Indeed, the author of the letter to the Hebrews seems to make precisely this sort of point as he explains why it is that the sacrifices of the Old Covenant could never, once and for all, realize their ultimate purpose, while the Sacrifice of the New Covenant abides as sufficient for all, and all at once. In the New Covenant, the Eternal High Priest makes a gift, not of some good belonging to Man, but

proposed it, in a context essentially foreign to liturgy. That said, it would be wrong to suggest that the whole language of Western liturgy is post-Anselmian. Rather, the point is that the liturgy represents the movement of God's salvific intervention in our lives, and thus, meets us where we tend to begin, given our fallenness. In the West, there can be no question that this tends to mean lapsing back into a hyper-juridical mode of thought about God. The liturgy begins here, but draws us beyond the limitations implicit in this culturally-conditioned and purely human way of thinking, into the reality of pure Covenant. It would be unacceptable to dispense with such language, as the original translators of the Roman Missal had attempted to do, because this would mean denying the fact of human sinfulness and the very real way in which it does tend to distort our way of thinking. If we cannot live through and beyond that distortion in the context of the liturgy, the liturgy tends to finds itself cleaved off from the actual experience of life before God in a fallen world, and bracketed as a kind of irrelevant daydream of blissful, but ultimately innocuous images ill-suited to the kerygmatic project of "the renewal our minds" (Cf. Romans 12:2). To be sure, the liturgy must involve leaving behind our fallen preconceptions about the realm of the sacred in favor of God's self-revelation as Absolute Love; but this will only be meaningful, in the end, if liturgy itself allows that movement to take place, rather than presuming that it already has. Now, of course, in each Rite of the Church, this starting-point in fallenness exhibits its own unique texture, but all liturgy must involve this essential movement.

Galatians 3:6-7. This concept, and thus the whole meaning of the Eucharist, is, therefore, clearly bound up with the mystery of the presentation of Christ at the Temple. This is an abundant mystery, of course, and worthy, again, of its own, more thorough treatment. The broad outlines of such a study, however, can be traced, briefly, here. Mary—a pure creature—and the only one who could perform precisely this gesture, offers back to God in the name of humanity the gift of their common Son, whom God had promised to the human race from the dawn of time. Only in giving him back again was she able, finally, to receive him on behalf of all, so that, on behalf of the one who is above all, he could receive the human race as All-in-All (1 Corinthians 15:28).
of himself as man, to God, on behalf of man. But while “Abraham had faith, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” Abraham, though his faith emerges as the Faith of a whole people, was, in himself, only this man, not The Man—or the Son of Man. The Eternal High Priest is able to make a truly sufficient sacrifice—a truly sufficient self-offering to God—because he is, first of all, the gift of God himself to man. As such, he transcends all limitation, even as he takes it up, and breaks down the barrier between God and all human beings. For Ratzinger, who here follows Theilhard de Chardin in his reading of Paul, this is the ἐσχατον.

Thus, it is the purity of the sacrifice—the unreserved character of the human being’s self-donation to God—that makes the sacrifice of Christ finally worthy, but it becomes sufficient for all, and not just for himself, because, as the Infinite One who has condescended to take his place among us, he has given over to us his own unbounded Person, and opened up a space within himself for us, giving over for-us his own super-abundant Life, that we might, in turn, give ourselves to the Father in him. With this, the Christian is able to see that the foundational faith of Abraham is not now, nor has it ever been, merely the faith of one man—of one pure creature—and the same must be said of the faith of Mary at the Annunciation. Rather, in every case in which the Faith of Israel—the Faith of the Church—finds itself distilled in the lived experience of one individual who comes to stand for the whole, we know that this occurs because, first of all, these individuals have come to stand in Christ who, as the ἐσχατος άδαμ (Eschatos Adam), draws all human beings to himself, until he is All-in-

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900 Hebrews 1:1–14.
901 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 175–182. Of course, we do not intend, in this statement, to defend Pauline authorship of Hebrews. But there can be no question that, as far as the points we have made here take us, the author of Hebrews and Paul present a similar theological perspective.
902 Psalms 50 and 51.
All, making the fulfillment of humanity realizable for everyone. Ratzinger writes:

It is openness to the whole, to the infinite, that makes man complete. Man is man by reaching out infinitely beyond himself and he is consequently more of a man the less enclosed he is in himself, the less "limited" he is. For—let me repeat—that man is most man, indeed the true man, who is most unlimited, who not only has contact with the infinite—the infinite being!—but is one with him: Jesus Christ. In him "hominization" has truly reached its goal. . . . But if Jesus is the exemplary man, in whom the true figure of man, God's intention for him, comes fully to light, then he cannot be destined to be merely an absolute exception, a curiosity, in which God demonstrates to us just what is possible. His existence concerns all mankind. The New Testament makes this perceptible by calling him an "Adam"; in the Bible this word expresses the unity of the whole creature "man", so that one can speak of the Biblical idea of a "corporate personality". So, if Jesus is called "Adam" this implies that he is intended to gather the whole creature 'Adam' in himself. But this means that the reality which Paul calls, in a way that is largely incomprehensible to us today, the "body of Christ" is an intrinsic postulate of this existence, which cannot remain an exception but must "draw to itself" the whole of mankind (cf. John 12.32).  

There can be no question that the Church stands at the very heart of this reality, as the manifestation of its coming-to-be—what the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council referred to as "an eschatological sign", for the Church is Christ's gathering-together of humanity in himself. Ratzinger writes:

From here onwards faith in Christ will see the beginning of a movement in which dismembered humanity is gathered together more and more into being of one single Adam, one single body—the man to come. It will see in him the movement to that future of man in which he is completely "socialized", incorporated into one

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904 1 Corinthians 15:28.
905 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 176.
906 Cf. Lumen gentium (21 November 1964). The document does not feature this precise phrase in the actual text, but, throughout, the document very clearly bears this ecclesiological emphasis.
single being, but in such a way that the separate individual is not extinguished but brought completely to himself.  

Even, however, if Ratzinger appears to conceptualize sacrifice without any per se necessary reference to sin, he has certainly not overlooked our sinfulness, with its pain-inducing characteristic reluctance to undertake the demand of sacrificial self-offering to the Other. For Ratzinger, as for the Fathers, the image of the Cross becomes an image of the orantes—of the man in prayer—who stands open and vulnerable before God. But it also indicates the prevenient openness of God toward humanity, who, somehow, makes himself vulnerable to us, subjecting himself to the possibility of rejection. All of this, again, rests in Ratzinger’s understanding of the principle of “For”—that the very heart of reality is not some impersonal metaphysical principle, but relationship, reciprocity, and life-giving Love. There can be no way around it; even without sin—indeed, to the extent that we can entertain the thought, even without creation—God is One-who-gives-himself; and we, who are made in his image, will come to ourselves only by going out beyond our self-enclosure, into the sphere of the Other’s self-outpouring. Indeed, this great Pasch, or Exodus from the self, is the very heart of spiritual freedom and redemption.

If that is so, however, it means that reciprocity is a two-sided street—a double-edged sword. The one who wishes to become a gift for the other must also be ready to receive from the other in turn—for giving to the other means making a space within ourselves that the other might come out beyond the confines of his or her own self-enclosure. Ratzinger offers a stern warning, here, in the form of a strange paradox that takes us back, directly, to the reality of grace, and our all-pervasive dependency upon God’s gratuitous choice to give himself over in love. He writes:

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907 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 179.
908 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 189–190.
909 See, on this point, Ratzinger’s discussion concerning the transformation that the “God of the philosophers” had to undergo at the hands of the Fathers (Introduction to Christianity, 99–103).
910 Genesis 1:26–27.
911 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 180.
It must be stated that all man’s efforts to step outside himself can never suffice. He who only wants to give and is not ready to receive, he who only wants to exist for others and is unwilling to recognize that he for his part too lives on the unexpected, unprovokable gift of others’ “For”, fails to recognize the basic mode of human existence and is thus bound to destroy the true meaning of living “for one another”. To be fruitful, all self-sacrifices demand acceptance by others and in the last analysis by the other who is the truly “other” of all mankind and at the same time completely one with it: the God-man Jesus Christ.912

It should be immediately evident, here, that Ratzinger’s principle of “For” leads us straight to the heart of the Eucharist. It is the foundational concept for his whole understanding of sacrifice in its most elemental aspect. There can be no question that the Eucharist must be understood in terms of sacrifice, but Ratzinger’s understanding of sacrifice has been purified of the overly juridical constructs characteristic of Anselm’s “satisfaction theory”, so that we are able, now, to see, in the Eucharistic mystery, the transformation of the human person in and through Christ’s own opening out before us.913 From what we have said so far, it should be clear that Ratzinger’s approach can be characterized as thoroughly personalistic.

Returning, again, to the heart of this issue as it appears before us in the form of the Εὐχαριστία Προσκύνημα we can see that it can never be

912 Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 191.

913 To be sure, the Mass looks the way it does because of the Cross, and Christ bore the Cross, as such, on account of sin; but in the very movement of the liturgy, we come face to face, again and again, with the challenge to see past mere retribution—“what we truly deserve” (Translation as found in The Sacramentary, Approved for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America [New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1985], Eucharistic Prayer I [Roman Canon], 547) on account of our sins—to the deeper meaning of the Cross in the unguarded heart of the One who hangs upon it as the very openness between God and humanity. This is the real path to our “full and actual participation” in the liturgy (Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum concilium [4 December 1963], § 14 [my translation]); for the Eucharist opens wide the door to the Εὐχαριστία, that we might go by way of the Άνθρωπος into the presence of his Father, as we ask him who comes to take us to himself (Cf. John 14:3), to make us like himself (Cf. 1 John 3:2), and bear us in himself (Cf. John 15:1–9; 17:21–26), as an everlasting gift (Sacramentary, Eucharistic Prayer III, 554) in spirit and in truth (Sacramentary, Eucharistic Prayer I, 544).
enough, according to Ratzinger, merely to assert that Christ *leads* the cosmos to its end; we must insist, instead, that *in and through Christ*, the cosmos does what the cosmos is intended to do—it becomes what it is intended to become. Ratzinger explicitly credits Teilhard de Chardin with, "a fundamentally correct reading of St. Paul, even if a bit, overly biological in its emphasis." According to this view, Christ is understood, not as a mere superaddition to a cosmos understandable on purely natural terms, but as the one in whom the cosmos finally reaches its true goal. Those familiar with the bitter conflict between Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. and Henri de Lubac, S.J. will recognize, immediately, on which side of this divide Ratzinger stands. "[I]n the last analysis," he writes:

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914 We paraphrase. Cf. Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 177, 178–179. He writes, "It must be regarded as an important service of Teilhard de Chardin's that he re-thought these ideas from the angle of the modern view of the world and, in spite of a not entirely unobjectionable tendency towards the biological approach, nevertheless on the whole grasped them correctly and in any case made them accessible once again" (177). Again, he writes, "One can safely say that here [in Teilhard's thesis] the tendency of Pauline Christianity is in essentials correctly grasped from the modern angle and rendered comprehensible again, even if the vocabulary employed is certainly rather too biological" (178–179).

915 For an extensive account of this matter from the point of view of de Lubac, himself, see, Henri de Lubac, *At the Service of the Church: Henri de Lubac Reflects on the Circumstances that Occasioned His Writings* (San Francisco: Communio Books/Ignatius Press, 1993). The conflict between Henri de Lubac and Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange amounted to a profound disagreement over the conceptualization of grace in relation to the human person, and thus, over the human person as such. Lagrange was a strict Thomist of the "classical" variety, whose views could be reduced, for all intents and purposes, to those of Domingo Báñez (1528–1604), who sought to follow St. Thomas in every detail of his thought, and promoted a thesis of "pure nature," according to which human beings could be understood sufficiently without reference to grace. Lagrange held the same view, with all its far-reaching consequences, including a rather strong predestinarianism according to which the human population is divided, from eternity, into the "elect" and the "reprobate," and the "reprobate" exist for the sake of the "elect." For Lagrange's position, here, see, Rev. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Predestination*, Dom Bede Rose, O.S.B., D.D., trans. (St. Louis MO: B Herder Book Co., 1944). The so-called "new theologians" of the *ressourcement* tended to hold a different view of grace, and thus, of the human person. In the former view held by the classical Thomists, human beings were made for the sake of the cosmic perfection, but in the latter view, held by the *ressourcement* theologians, the cosmos was made for the sake of the human person. While some
one cannot make a clear distinction between "natural" and "supernatural": the basic dialogue which first makes man into man moves over without a break into the dialogue of grace known as Jesus Christ. How could it be otherwise if Christ actually is the "second Adam", the real fulfillment of that infinite longing which ascends from the first Adam—from man in general?

With the human person, a creature has emerged from within the cosmic frame, capable of thinking the thought of God, and thus, responding to God—of turning back to him again. But, with Christ, finally, there appears a human being who is so totally the human for God as to be man for God, and, thus, to be God as man. This event is the central content of the eschatological promise that now becomes the new reference point for the whole cosmic reality. The return of creation to God occurs in and through this one man—the ἔσχατος Άδám (Eschatos Adam)—Jesus Christ. This eschatological promise is predicated on love, and not dominance, and the task that lies before the human person must be shaped by this recognition if the dignity of the human person is to be safeguarded.


Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity. 275.
4.2.3: Revealed Religion vs. Natural Religion:

For Ratzinger, the great peril driving the Second Vatican Council was a kind of *amnesia*, according to which the Church had faced the quiet threat of forgetting her own inner heart and purpose in the ossification of increasingly institutionalized, bureaucratic forms. 917 Thus, the Council’s great achievement was realized in an act of remembering—of recovering the corporate memory of the Church’s driving charism—her foundational kerygma: the invitation to divine Love. But what is at stake in the opposing fault?

Among the main themes running through the remarkably consistent writings of Joseph Ratzinger, one finds the distinction between “revealed religion” and “natural religion.” 918 Ratzinger notes that all human beings across all cultures recognize that their lives are not entirely within the bounds of their own control. We see that the world is stricken by tragedy, and that suffering and death do not discriminate, but plague every human life without exception, and with no easy correlation to personal blame. This

917 Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, The Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle in the State of New York, trans. (New York: Paulist Press, 2009), 51–53. Ratzinger is strongly critical of the curialism that had existed prior to the council. He does not suggest that the curia had to be abolished—indeed, as a matter of historical fact, it remains even today under the papacy of the very same man who had criticized its prior form—but he opposed the tendency of the curia to stand as a filter between the whole Church and the bishop of Rome, creating the distorted sense, even among bishops in the global Catholic Church, that “the Church” was coterminous with the pope and his curia. Thus, the events of the first session of the Council, for Ratzinger, had led to the incommensurable achievement of curial reform, and the restoration of the sense of the Church as a reality fully inclusive of the genuine magisterial authority shared by the bishops in apostolic succession. This achievement represented, for Ratzinger, a reawakening of the Church’s consciousness of her true self.

918 Ratzinger addresses this issue frequently, but we might cite, by way of illustration, two texts sufficient to found our claim: Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 67–104, where he provides a lengthy and highly-developed examination of the problem; and his very recent, and much more concise, catechesis on the meaning of prayer, Pope Benedict XVI, *General Audience* (11 May 2011). In the later text, he does not employ this terminology, but the concepts are clearly at issue.
fact about human existence demands an account, and the history of religions represents the history of our collective, cultural attempts to respond to that demand—for any explanation, no matter how cold or dark or terrifying, is easier to bear than pure, irrational chaos.

For the practitioners of the so-called “natural religions”—those whom the ancient Hebrew people called “gentiles” and Christians have generally called “pagans”—this awareness that we stood before some radically transcendent force was generally experienced as “darkness”—that is to say, as the sense of something foreboding and unapproachable. However we understood this realm of transcendent power, certain defining similarities seemed to cross all cultural boundaries. God, or the gods, or the spirits, were cold and distant. They remained within their own circles, largely unconcerned with human well-being. In some cases, they were thought hostile to us, who, for our own part, were regarded as embodiments of some primordial evil. For

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919 We might, at this point, consider the basic profile of pagan temples in comparison to the ancient Hebrew Temple, noting that pagan temples were intentionally difficult to reach, with steps unnaturally sized, while the Hebrew Temple was situated in a way that invited approach. It even featured a “court of the gentiles,” as if to suggest that even those outside the covenantal framework of Judaism were not wholly alien to the God of Abram, Isaac, and Jacob. Pagan sacrifices, which tended to occur outside the temple walls, were conceived in terms of appeasement, while the real essence of the Jewish sacrifices, which occurred within the Temple walls, was the response of the human person to draw near to God in love.

920 The Hebrew people directly confront this problem in the book of Genesis, where, in the first creation account, the “seven days” of creation contrast the “seven eons” of the Babylonian narrative about Tiamat and Marduk in the Enuma Elish. The Babylonian account begins with a metaphysical dualism weighted in favor of the power of darkness, associated with materiality and femininity, and ends with the emergence of the physical universe of our experience as a consequence of chaos and violence. Evil precipitates from the sphere of the gods and forms the universe, as Marduk tears his mother Tiamat limb from limb, until, in some especially pessimistic accounts, her life blood takes the shape of human beings, and, most of all, of woman. The gods must reign in this self-propagating evil, and so, enslave us, ushering in the seventh eon, in which the gods may take their rest. For one version of the Enuma Elish, which admits of variants representing a diversity of traditions, see, Stephanie Dalley, trans., Myths of Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others, OxfordWorld’s Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 230–277.
these ancient pagans, as with the people of our own time, we seemed to live in a world framed by fear—a world ruled by gods, or by some impersonal force, to whom our cries for mercy rise up in vain.

This asymmetry between human beings and the gods represented the experience of our vulnerability to death in the face of our inability to peel away the veil behind which our destiny was shrouded. The Hebrew people, however, had a different experience—what Ratzinger calls, "revealed religion." This "revealed religion" is what we know that the pagans do not; it is what alerts us to the true dignity and value of the human person, and sets us free to live lives of generous and unhesitating service to God and to our fellow human beings, and to escape, finally, that self-enclosure that casts human life in terms of hostility and rivalry, and the triviality of being "merely ourselves."

Revealed religion is characterized not simply by our knowledge that God exists, but, more precisely, by our knowledge of who God is. The boundary that separates the human person from the realm of the radically transcendent has been breached by a divine initiative, and we come to see what has escaped the eyes of others. If, for the gentile cultures who surrounded the ancient Hebrew people, the foundational reality was something cold, dark, hostile, chaotic, or evil, for the Hebrew people the foundational reality was Love. The single, intentional, orderly source of all being—the

921 This insight becomes explicit in the Johannine literature, most notably in his aphorism, "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 4:16). But the insight is clearly central to the whole history of God's self-revelation. God is seen, in Scripture, more under the aspect of love than of cause (though this is not to say that he is not cause); and there is no clear scriptural affirmation of anything like an actus purus, much less an "unmoved mover," which, in contrast to the anthropomorphisms of Scripture seems a wholly foreign concept. Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, for one, does not appear to accept this concept at all. See, on this point, his lengthy passage in, Joseph Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, under the heading, "The Transformation of the God of the Philosophers" (99–103), his essay written just before he was named Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Joseph Ratzinger, "The Paschal Mystery as Core and Foundation of Devotion to the Sacred Heart," in, Mario Luigi Ciappi, et al., Towards a Civilization of Love: A Symposium on the Scriptural and Theological Foundations of The Devotion to the Heart of Jesus, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 145–165 (especially 153–155), and Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter, Deus caritas est, especially where he uses phrases like, "God's passionate love for his people—for humanity" (§ 10), and "recognizing the plan of the Father who, moved by love (cf. Jn
underlying logic of the universe—was the Personal God, who revealed his name to us, and bound its meaning to the welfare of his people, with a promise of his intimate presence in our lives, for all generations to come.922 *Yahweh* (יְהֹוָה), "being-on-his-own-terms," and thus, "the one who cannot be controlled,"923 is the *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים)—the God who is spoken of as a plurality, and yet, "is one, while there is no other."924 This God offers himself to his creation, and invites us into his own heart—into the dynamism of his own interpersonal Love, wherein we abandon the posture of appropriation, and enter into the eternal dialogue of giving and receiving.

3:16), sent his only-begotten Son into the world to redeem man" (§ 19 Vatican translation). John Paul II seems to hold a view similar to that of Ratzinger/Benedict XVI. See my article, on this issue and related issues, Richard H. Bulzacchelli, "Dives in Misericordia: The Pivotal Significance of a Forgotten encyclical, 125-162. For the principle Scriptural images in the Old Testament, see, the *Song of Songs* and *Hosea*, where the whole focus is upon the aspect of the divine lover.

922 This is one of the central themes in the scene in which God reveals his name to Moses in Exodus 3:1-19. Note God's phrasing in vv. 16-17, where he explicitly connects his name to his relationship with his people. He will be known forever, not merely as "God" in the abstract, but as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"—the God, that is, who, in his radical supremacy, still knows his people by name, and comes to be known for himself precisely in that context.

923 A good, if brief, analysis of the implications of the name *Yahweh* (יְהֹוָה) can be found in Demetrius Dumm, O.S.B., *Flowers in the Desert: A Spirituality of the Bible* (New York, Paulist Press, 1987), 77-82. Father Demetrius notes, as a point of great relevance to our broader discussion, that the term is presented, in Hebrew, in the *imperfect tense*, which always connotes, in that linguistic tradition, an *unfinished action* (78). He goes on to note that the linguistic connotations of the Greek and Latin renderings are not as well-suited to communicate this nuance, but, instead, tend to obfuscate the dimensions of *event* and *encounter* by introducing the statically *theoretical*. Joseph Ratzinger makes a similar set of observations in his *Introduction to Christianity*, J. R. Foster, trans. (San Francisco: Communio Books/Ignatius Press, 1969, 1990), 77-93.

4.2.4: Ratzinger’s Mariological Perspective:

In the context of Ratzinger’s distinction between revealed religion and natural religion, and what the latter means for humanity, we can begin to understand the figure of Mary in the thought of Joseph Ratzinger. We should note, at the outset, that Ratzinger held strongly critical views of what he saw, at the time, as a dominant approach to Mariology in the Catholic Church in the time leading up to the Second Vatican Council. So-called “Christotypical” Mariology was oriented to the figure of Mary as a kind of alter Christus—a Christic figure in the life of the Church, to whom the most emphatic devotion must be accorded. Here, we might recall Balthasar’s assessment of the situation leading up the Council and see the two figures in essential agreement. Ratzinger’s Christocentric approach to theology, in other words, does not equate in any way, to a Chisto-typical Mariology. Ratzinger favors the so-called “ecclesiotypical” approach to Mariology, according to which the figure of Mary stands as a kind of crystallization-point for our whole understanding of the Church in its soteriological and eschatological dimensions. Johann Roten explains distinct advantages of the ecclesio-typical approach in his article, “Mary—‘Personal Concretization of the Church’: Elements of Benedict XVI’s Marian Thinking.”925 He writes:

Christotypical projects may lack a degree of historical sensitivity; they may fail to consider Mary’s role as member of the Church and, at times, overlook her individuality. The ecclesiotypical point of view rests—among others—on solid patristic foundations and uses typological methodology. What derives from this approach is the mirror-effect: the Church reads and explicates itself in Mary and vice versa. Mary explains the Church’s relationship with Christ. In her the Church is Bride, Virgin and Mother. Conversely, Mary’s membership in the Church is reestablished. Simultaneously . . . she is in Erich Przywara’s word the “inner form” of the Church.926


Ratzinger notes that a Christotypical approach is not wholly distorted as an approach to Mariology insofar as it is correct, as a point of the history of doctrine, to note that the Church’s teaching about Mary developed, over time, in relation to her Christological deliberations. What we say about Mary has everything to do, in the end, with what we say about Christ. But Ratzinger’s view that the ecclesiotypical approach to Mariology still offers an essential correction against a tendency to, “constitute an independent Mariology,” cut off from its real center, is finally understandable in view of Ratzinger’s organic approach to theology as a whole. Just as he desires to see Christology, soteriology, and eschatology integrated once again as an organic whole, so he desires to see Christology integrated with ecclesiology. He understands Mariology to be precisely the locus of that integration. For Ratzinger, “we cannot assign Mariology to Christology alone (much less dissolve it into ecclesiology as a more or less superfluous exemplification of the Church).” What option, then, remains for us? He explains:

Mariology underscores the nexus mysteriorum—the intrinsic interwovenness of the mysteries in their irreducible mutual otherness [Gegenüber] and their unity. While the conceptual pairs bride-bridegroom and head-body allow us to perceive the connection between Christ and the Church, Mary represents a further step, inasmuch as she is first related to Christ, not as his bride, but as mother. Here we can see the function of the title “Mother of the Church”; it expresses the fact that Mariology goes beyond the framework of ecclesiology and at the same time is correlative of it.

For Ratzinger, then, an ecclesiotypical Mariology remains explicitly Christocentric without its reference to Christ constituting it as a study of Mary as if she were someone other-than a member of the Church, or separated from it in a realm of being all to herself. It reminds us, in fact, that the person of Christ and his work are properly understood only in union with one another—that seeing Christ in terms of his solicitude for the salvation of human beings and his desire to share himself with us is seeing Christ as

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928 Ratzinger, “Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine and Piety,” 29.
the revelation of the God of the Bible: the God who is Love. Placing Mary in the context of the Church is placing the Church in reference to Christ and vice-versa, such that it becomes possible, once again, to see the gospel as a whole.

For Ratzinger, who, on this point, thinks in highly patristic terms, Mary appears as essential because, “In theology, it is not the person that is reducible to the thing, but the thing to the person.” The Church, therefore, can never be understood in its genuine theological significance as long as it remains visible to us as a mere structure or program of action. The Church is only properly Church in its theological significance as someone. Mary, for Ratzinger, provides the Church her personality. No matter who else may enter into the reality of the Church, the Church is constituted as a theological reality at the moment that Mary utters her fiat and shares her humanity in a flesh-and-blood relationship with God.

Ratzinger explains that, “Paul captures the differentia specifica [specific difference] of the New Testament Church with respect to the Old Testament ‘pilgrim people of God’ in the term ‘Body of Christ’. Church is not an organization, but an organism of Christ.” Again, Ratzinger sees theology as whole, and not as a mere a set of distinct disciplines. The image of the “Body of Christ” is, for him, the central mystery of the Christological-soteriological-eschatological complex, and the fundamental subject of ecclesiology, which must now be seen yet another dimension of that complex. He goes on to explain that:

In Pauline terms, . . . the claim that we are the “Body of Christ” makes sense only against the backdrop of the formula of Genesis 2:24: “The two shall become one flesh” (cf. 1 Cor 6:17). The Church is the body, the flesh of Christ in the spiritual tension of love wherein the spousal mystery of Adam and Eve is consummated, hence, in the dynamism of a unity that does not abolish dialogical reciprocity [Gegenübersein]. By the same token, precisely the Eucharistic-christological mystery of the Church indicated in the term “Body of Christ” remains within the proper measure only when it includes the mystery of Mary: the mystery of

929 Ratzinger, “Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine and Piety,” 27.
the listening handmaid who—liberated in grace—speaks her Fiat
and, in so doing, becomes bride and thus body. 931

This insight takes us to the main point in Roten's analysis of Mary as the "Personal Concretization of the Church." For Ratzinger, theology is never about mere abstraction because its subject has to do with the real and living person of God, whom we know in Jesus Christ. But if that is the case, then all things theological finally have to do with the concreteness of actual persons. In this context, Mary becomes something truly essential for a genuine approach to the whole question of the Church, or, once again, even to the problem of Christ. On this matter, Ratzinger writes:

A purely structural ecclesiology is bound to degrade Church to a level of a program of action. Only the Marian dimension secures the place of affectivity in faith and thus ensures a fully human correspondence to the reality of the incarnate Logos. Here I see the truth of the saying that Mary is the "vanquisher of all heresies". This affective rooting guarantees the bond ex toto corde—from the depth of the heart—to the personal God and his Christ and rules out any recasting of Christology into a Jesus program, which can be atheistic and purely neutral: the experience of the last few years verifies today in an astonishing way the accuracy of such ancient phrases. 932

931 Ratzinger, "Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine and Piety," 26–27.

932 Ratzinger, "Thoughts on the Place of Marian Doctrine and Piety," 27. It is interesting, here, that Ratzinger admits to having been unable, at an earlier stage in his career, to understand the title for Mary that he mentions in this passage now with such lucidity. In his interview with Vittorio Messori from 1985, then Cardinal Ratzinger said that, "As a young theologian in the time before (and also during) the Council, I had, as many did then and still do today, some reservations in regard to certain ancient formulas, as, for example, that famous De Maria nunquam satis, 'concerning Mary one can never say enough.' It seemed exaggerated to me. So it was difficult for me later to understand the true meaning of another famous expression (current in the Church since the first centuries when—after a memorable dispute—the Council of Ephesus, in 431, had proclaimed Mary Theotokos, Mother of God). The declaration, namely, that designated the Virgin as 'the conquerer of all heresies'. Now—in this confused period where truly every type of heretical aberration seems to be pressing upon the doors of the authentic faith—now I understand that it was not a matter of pious exaggerations, but of truths that today are more valid than ever" (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Vittorio Messori, The
That said, Ratzinger endorses an ecclesiotypical Mariology precisely insofar as he sees it as the *nexus mysteriorum* that draws together the disparate theological considerations into a single, integral whole. Indeed, a responsibly Mariology also returns us to the liturgy and, through the liturgy to the sacraments, and it is rooted in the Bible. It is rooted in the Bible not in the sense of a Biblicism that Ratzinger would reject, according to which only that which is witnessed explicitly in Scripture can be justified, but in the sense that the figure of Mary stands unequivocally in the context of the Old Testament images upon which the New Testament authors build in their reflections on the Church as the Bride and Body of Christ. A responsible Mariology involves our being responsible to Scripture—reading it on its own terms, and in with an eye to what the human authors intended to convey. The reflections of the Fathers of the Church on the figure of Mary constituted a reflection on these texts and the images contained in them.

Ratzinger’s position is eminently understandable once we realize that he does not generally approach theology as a systematician at all. He does not set out to move his way from one proposition to another by constructing arguments as thought experiments, yielding as their findings a coherent fabric of doctrinal assertions. Rather, as Roten has already said, Ratzinger’s is a typological approach. Thus, in Ratzinger’s treatments of the Marian question, his remarks center upon the place of the figure of Mary within the context of the images presented in the Bible. It is through these images that the significance of Mary in the New Covenant context—in the Christian context—comes to light and can help the New Covenant’s inner logical to be made comprehensible.

Thus, in his short book, *Daughter Zion* begins with a treatment of “The Place of Mariology in the Bible,” and builds, upon that foundation, to his presentations of the four Marian dogmas. Even in this treatment, Ratzinger is concerned less with the arguments that “prove” the theses, but with the inner content at stake in these dogmatic insights. He explains this position rather compellingly, when he writes:

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Wherever the unity of Old and New Testaments disintegrates, the place of a healthy Mariology is lost. Likewise this unity of the Testaments guarantees the integrity of the doctrines of creation and of grace. In modern times, however, the loss of typological exegesis (seeing the cohesion of the one history in the many histories) has actually led to the separation of the Testaments, and by isolating the doctrine of grace it has at the same time increasingly threatened the doctrine of creation. In this respect one can note in passing how Mariology serves as an indicator of the correct positioning of the Christological accents.

This in no way means that the New Testament texts lose their importance. We are merely indicating the perspective within which they can develop their full significance. As we are here concerned not with a scientifically complete elaboration of Mariology but merely with a reflective explication of the substance of the Church’s Marian piety, we can take a shorter path to our goal: this will not be a Mariology constructed piece by piece out of its New Testament components; instead, I shall propose immediately the three great Marian dogmas934: their biblical foundations will emerge almost spontaneously to the reflective spirit.935

Commenting, then, on the mystery of the perpetual virginity and divine maternity of Mary, Ratzinger again returns us to the issue of theologies inner integration. He explains, on the basis of this inner integration, that, in order for Christology really to be as radical as the authenticity of the Christian faith insists, it had to become Mariology. Here, Ratzinger may appear to embrace the Christotypical approach, but we should be careful in offering such

934 We are used to speaking of four rather than three Marian dogmas. Ratzinger speaks here of three, however, because he collapses the dogma of Mary’s perpetual virginity with the dogma of her divine maternity. It is true that, from an analytical perpective, we can distinguish these two truths, but we should recall our earlier remarks about Ratzinger’s basic theological presupposition in favor of integration in our thinking, rather than categorization. If such categorization threatens to divide mystery from mystery, leading to a set of distinct assertions made understandable only on their own terms, but not in connection to one another, we should see that Ratzinger’s move in this text is designed to preserve the original unity of the two propositions in their inner dogmatic coherence. The preservation of Mary’s virginity in perpetuity, even at the physiological level, comes to seem like little more that magic when dissociated from its foundational relationship to her status as the Mother of God, with all the typological implications that would then attach to her person as a somatic whole.

935 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 32–33.
an assessment without considering carefully his line of reasoning. He explains that:

... the Christological affirmation of God's Incarnation in Christ becomes necessarily a Marian affirmation, as de facto it was from the beginning. Conversely: only when it touches Mary and becomes Mariology is Christology itself as radical as the faith of the Church requires. The appearance of a truly Marian awareness serves as the touchstone indicating whether or not the Christological substance is fully present. Nestorianism involves the fabrication of a Christology from which the nativity and the Mother are removed, a Christology without mariological consequences. Precisely this operation, which surgically removes God so far from man that nativity and maternity—all of corporeality—remain in a different sphere, indicated unambiguously to the Christian consciousness that the discussion no longer concerned Incarnation (becoming flesh), that the center of Christ's mystery was endangered, if not already destroyed.936

Ratzinger then goes on to develop his thought about Mary, including his specific treatments of the Marian dogmas, on the basis of a decidedly biblical approach to theology. He is not a Biblicist, of course, who would hold that the sacred texts are self-subsisting, standing apart from, and over-against the Church and her Tradition. Rather, he is a biblical theologian who sees in the sacred text the authoritative touchstone, which all authentically Christian thinking must take as its common literary point of departure, and which, for that reason, must always be permitted to bear the witness of the apostolic Church's universally binding interpretation of the essential content of divine revelation in Jesus Christ. All theology must take account of the sacred text, but theology need not, and, indeed, must not reduce to mere exegesis.

For Ratzinger, therefore, the significance of Mary's perpetual virginity has everything to do with the typology of the feminine in the Old Covenant as it now comes to stand in relation to its fulfillment in the divine maternity. In the Old Covenant, the blessing of children, which is everywhere attested in the Scriptures, has its correlate in the hidden blessedness afforded the barren, whose experience was, from their own limited human perspective, taken for a curse. There is no doubt that, in the biblical world-view, fertility is seen as among God's greatest gifts to humanity. But the mysterious depth of this gift is actually intuited

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936 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 35–36.
in and through the seeming curse of barrenness that, time and again in the Old Testament, and then again in the New, appears as the condition for a hidden blessing. Ratzinger explains:

The virgin birth is the necessary origin of him who is the Son and who as Son first endows the messianic hope with a permanent significance extending far beyond Israel. In this “new birth” (the Roman liturgy says nova nativitas), which simultaneously included the abandonment of earthly fertility, of self-disposal, and of the autonomous planning of one’s own life, Mary as Mother is truly “the bearer of God”; she is more than the organ of a fortuitous corporeal event. To bear the “Son” includes the surrender of oneself into barrenness. Now it becomes clear why barrenness is the condition of fruitfulness—the mystery of the Old Testament mothers becomes transparent in Mary. It receives its meaning in Christian virginity with Mary.937

Ratzinger goes on to develop a Mariology in which he ties together a series of related threads from the Old Testament into a cohesive fabric, itself woven into the whole tapestry of the New Testament witness about Jesus Christ. Central to this approach are the themes of “the feminine”, and of “the believer”. Regarding the first, Ratzinger sees a whole “feminine line in the Bible”938 that comes to rest upon the figure of Mary as its personal concretization. The Fathers of the Church had already developed the insight of the “New Eve”, and, thus, the figure of the “Woman.” But Ratzinger sees the whole typology of the feminine as bound into this narrative and taken up into the figure of Mary. Mary is “Daughter Zion”—Israel instantiated as person—and, finally, the Church in her personally concretized form. None of these ideas are original to Ratzinger, who sees himself as attempting to give voice to the integrity of the Tradition. But Ratzinger shows how these seemingly disparate images belong to one and the same line of insight in the total biblical narrative.

On the subject of the “believer,” Ratzinger places his emphasis upon the fact that the promise of God depends, for its fulfillment, upon the faith of the person—or the people—to whom it is made. The fact that the fulfillment of the promise depends, in part, upon the human person is a subtle point. God does not deliver on the condition of the human person’s performance of duty, as in

937 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 51–52.

Pelagianism. Neither is it the case that God is powerless to give unless humanity first produce some raw material. Instead, the very nature of promise itself implies a mutual giving and receiving, such that humanity can only fully receive what God gives through an unburdened faith that can give rise to a love moves upon a spiritual landscape devoid of interpersonal barriers. This pure faith that alone provides the space for humanity’s reception of the divine promise of Emmanuel is the faith of Israel, not as she is, but as she ought to be. It is, thus, the faith of the sinless one—the amomos (δμητην = amemton [blameless one, faultless one, spotless one]) or Immaculata. Again, returning to Roten’s exposition of Ratzinger’s Mariology, we can see that Israel here becomes the Church, but that the Church comes to exist as “she who believes” precisely in that historical moment when a concrete person actually does believe in precisely the manner in which she must to create the space for humanity’s reception of the promised Emmanuel. On this point, however, Mary’s Fiat, by which she so opens herself as to permit the fulfillment of God’s original promise—“the mystery of his will, which he freely made in Christ from the beginning, to act upon when the times had run their course to the end”—depends solidly upon the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

Ratzinger’s treatment of this issue in Daughter Zion is appears characteristically “above the fray” of doctrinaire entrenchment. He notes that the objections to Mary’s Immaculate Conception are objections based upon presuppositions about original sin itself that do not find their ground in the actual history of the development of the Church’s dogmatic consciousness concerning this mystery, nor, therefore, root problems in the early development of the Church’s doctrinal articulations. Ratzinger reminds us that original sin qua original sin—that is to say, not the root problem of evil knowable to everyone by simple observation, but the dogmatic mystery of a fallenness that rests upon the truth of who God is and who we are called to be in relationship to him—is not discoverable by natural reason, and cannot be known as a simple observable datum. Rather, the truth of this mystery comes gradually to light until it can be, “identified in a theological (reflex) manner through typological Scriptural exegesis.”

He adds that, on this same basis, “it is also clear that freedom from original sin cannot be communicated as a fact; it is only to be recognized by theology, and in no other way.”

939 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 66.

940 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 67.
At this point, then, Ratzinger returns to the typology of the *Immaculata* that runs through the whole of the Scriptures, all the way through the New Testament, and reveals, in the context *Ephesians*, Paul's vision of the Church as that true remnant that finally holds within herself that purity of faith in which the fullness of the Covenant can be realized in a definitive way. But, again, at the heart of this typology rests the necessity that someone actually holds this faith, personally, in its radical purity—that someone becomes so fully available to God as to say "Yes" to God without reservation. For Ratzinger, then, this problem means that both original sin and the Immaculate Conception must be understood along personalistic and relational, rather than substantialistic lines. The matter in question deals not with the singularity of the individual, but with the person precisely as relational, and, thus, as related to the whole, and to God. He sees the typological strand of the *Immaculata*, therefore, as the other side of the coin in the doctrine of original sin, without which, the Adamic typology is not fully comprehensible. The doctrine of original sin, in other words, appears to need the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Noting that, we are faced, here, with the question of the very meaning of "original sin", he explains that:

... perhaps it is only by introducing this second typological strand that we can resolve the muddle produced by considering exclusively the Adam-strand of interpretation. Only on this basis, perhaps, can we move towards a meaningful solution. The affirmation of Mary's freedom from original sin prunes away every naturalistic perspective. Thus we may say that original sin is not an assertion about a natural deficiency in or concerning man, but a statement about a relationship that can be meaningfully formulated only in the context of the God–man relation. The essence of sin can only be understood in an anthropology of relation, not by looking at an isolated human being. Such an anthropology is even more essential in the case of grace. We could therefore describe original sin as a statement about God's evaluation of man; evaluation not as something external, but as a revealing of the very depths of his interior being. It is the collapse of what man is, both in his origin from God and in himself, the contradiction between the will of the Creator and man's empirical being.\(^\text{941}\)

For Ratzinger, therefore, to speak about "original sin" is to speak about the fact that our experience shows us that the inner person as

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\(^{941}\) Ratzinger, *Daughter Zion*, 69–70.
he stands in relation to God and other human beings is someone other than he ought to be—that who we are in our inner integrity is not in line and is dis-oriented from God's intention for us. To speak, then, of the Immaculate Conception, is to speak of the person who exists in her own inner being in precisely the way that God wishes her to exist—namely, as outwardly-oriented and woven into interpersonal relation. From this foundation, she is able to move out from her own private self-possession into the realm of dispossession, and radical availability to communion. This paradoxical mode of existence, which seems, from our point of view, almost incomprehensible, represents a return to the purity of human personal being, where we exist not primarily as a collection of individuals, but as a communion of persons, and, as persons, only on account of communion. Ratzinger explains:

This correspondence of God's "Yes" with Mary's being as "Yes" is the freedom from original sin. Preservation from original sin, therefore, signifies no exceptional proficiency, no exceptional achievement; on the contrary, it signifies that Mary reserves no area of being, life, and will for herself as a private possession of self. Grace as dispossession becomes response as appropriation. Thus from another viewpoint the mystery of barren fruitfulness, the paradox of the barren mother, the mystery of virginity, becomes intelligible once more: dispossession as belonging, as the locus of new life.942

Ratzinger's position on this matter is a conscious departure from the neoscholastic approach to the question of original sin, and, thus, to the question of the Immaculate Conception. He sees the neoscholastic view of the matter as having missed the truth about the typological Scriptural exegesis that lies at the foundation of these concepts in the first place, and replaced typological insight with arguments based upon metaphysico-anthropological presuppositions that no longer appear comprehensible. He writes:

To have missed this truth is perhaps the principal error of the neoscholastic doctrine on original sin. The moment this error was introduced, in whatever degree, in conjunction with the total lack of understanding of typological identification, it led to the

942 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 70.
questioning of original sin, the impossibility of thinking or talking about it [in the contemporary context].

Turning again, then, to the relationship between the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception, the perpetual virginity, and the divine maternity, Ratzinger explains that the whole feminine line in the Bible has tended in the direction of faith-response to God's self-gift in grace so true and pure as to leave no longer any division between—any opposition—between nature and grace, such that the creature, in this person, is entirely permeated by God's love and can be called "full of grace"—κεχαριτωμένη [kecharitomenei = "one who enjoys now the full fruits of a blessedness already possessed"]—as she receives on behalf of Israel, humanity, and all creation, what God had sought to give from the beginning. He explains that:

... the holy remnant signifies that God's word really brings forth fruit, that God is not the only actor in history, as if history were only his monologue, but that he finds a response that is truly a response. As the holy remnant Mary signifies that in herself Old and New Covenants are really one. She is entirely a Jewess, a child of Israel, of the Old Covenant, and as such a child of the full covenant, entirely a Christian: Mother of the Word. She is the New Covenant in the Old Covenant; she is the New Covenant as the Old Covenant, as Israel: thus no one can comprehend her mission.

943 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 66–67. My [insertion]. Ratzinger is referencing the assault against Henri de Lubac by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange over the issue of pure nature, and the related opposition to Teilhard de Chardin concerning the "anthropic principle" of "complexification" as an eschatological imprint on the natural order, whereby the theory of evolution can be reconciled with revelation. Although both these theses were held under suspicion by the neoscholastic Classical Thomists, Ratzinger supports them. Even Teilhard's thesis is frequently referenced in his writings, in particular, in his Introduction to Christianity, where he treats it in some depth. There he says:

One can safely say that here the tendency of Pauline Christology is in essentials correctly grasped from the modern angle and rendered comprehensible again, even if the vocabulary employed is certainly rather too biological. Faith sees in Jesus the man in whom—on the biological plane—the next evolutionary leap, as it were, has been accomplished; the man in whom the breakthrough out of the limited scope of humanity, out of its monadic enclosure, has occurred. . . (Ratzinger, Introduction to Christianity, 178–179).
or her person if the unity of the Old and New Testaments collapses. Because she is entirely response, correspondence [Entsprechung], she cannot be understood where grace seems to be opposition and response, the real response of the creature, appears to be a denial of grace; for a word that never arrived, a grace that remained solely at God’s disposal without becoming a response to him would be no grace at all, but just a futile game. The essence of woman was already defined in Eve: to be the complement that exists entirely in its derivation from the other, and nevertheless remains its complement. Here this essence reaches its acme: pure derivation from God and at the same time the most complete creaturely complement—a creature that has become response.944

Ratzinger goes on to explain, later, that the mystery of the Immaculata stands as our assurance that, in fact, there is salvation—that God’s grace does not fail to yield its intended fruit. It is the sure sign for the Church that there is, in fact, a Church as a living organism which stands as creation’s response to the Creator’s invitation to become something more than mere nature. He writes:

Thus the doctrine of the Immaculata reflects ultimately faith’s certitude that there really is a holy Church—as a person and in a person. In this sense it expresses the Church’s certitude of salvation. Included therein is the knowledge that God’s covenant in Israel did not fail but produced a shoot out of which emerged the blossom, the Savior. The doctrine of the Immaculata testifies accordingly that God’s grace was powerful enough to awaken a response, that grace and freedom, grace and being oneself, renunciation and fulfillment are only apparent contradictories; in reality one conditions the other and grants it its very existence.945

From this point, Ratzinger goes on to show how the dogma of the Assumption of Mary also belongs to this same tapestry, such that the four dogmas appear, together, as a unified whole viewed from different perspectives. From this foundation, Mary comes to appear as a sort of “gospel” in her own person, in the sense, that is, that our understanding of Mary’s particular place in the movement of salvation history means, in the end, our understanding of salvation history’s whole trajectory. The whole logic of the Incarnation is made clear from the point of view of creation in and through the figure of Mary. If Christ is the Incarnation of Grace

944 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 65.
945 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 70–71.
itself, Mary is creation’s readiness for him. The mystery of the Assumption, then, is bound up with this fact and stands, we can say, as its radicalization. Ratzinger writes:

The way human life is, implanted in a world where death is the condition of life, birth is always ambivalent, simultaneously a dying and a becoming. The words of judgment in Genesis 3:16 describe exactly this fate of man, and the ambiguity of the figure of Eve expresses the ambiguity of biological becoming: birth is part of death, it happens under the sign of death and points to the death that it in a certain sense anticipates, prepares, and also presupposes. To give birth to life always signifies at the same time to open oneself to death. Now, if Mary is really the one giving birth to God, if she bears him who is the death of death and is life in the full sense of the word, this being the Mother of God is really a “new birth” (nova nativitas): a new way of giving birth inserted into the old way, just as Mary is the New Covenant in the midst of the Old Covenant, even as a member of the Old Covenant. This birth is no dying, but only a becoming, a bursting forth of life that casts off dying and leaves it behind once and for all. The title “Mother of God” points, on the one hand, back to the Virgin: this life is not received through the every-day dying and becoming but is pure beginning. On the other hand, the title points to the Assumption: from this birth comes only life, no death. This new “generation” does not demand the surrender of the old self as its sine qua non, rather it effects the ultimate validation of the whole.946

Continuing along these lines, Ratzinger does not stop at the relationship between the Assumption and the divine maternity and perpetual virginity of Mary, but, again, returns us the mystery of the Immaculata as it has been applied to her. For Ratzinger, total self-dispossession to God on the part of the creature means the creatures total transcendence of death, which, for its part, is a consequence of the person’s limitedness—of the limitations of the self, by the self, and of the creature within the bounds of his creatureliness. What contemporary scientistic sensibility sees as the value-neutral, meaning-neutral fact of finitude that accounts for the limitation of life by death, Ratzinger sees as a corruption of the cosmic integrity radiating outward from its anthropic foundation. The human person experiences the conflict of sinking back upon himself even as he longs to reach out infinitely beyond himself. This inner conflict exists because the human person does not exist

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946 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 77–78.
entirely as he ought, but remains trapped, and experiences himself as trapped, within the realm of pure \( \text{bios} \) [\( \text{bios} = \text{life that comes to be and passes away} \)]. Escaping this interior constriction within the self means transcending the limitedness of mere \( \text{bios} \), that we call "death", and entering upon the realm of \( \zeta\omega\eta \) [\( \zeta\omega\eta = \text{life that comes to be and passes away} \)]. In the Scriptural context, \( \zeta\omega\eta \) comes to indicate a form of life that reaches to the spiritual plane, and is not subject to corruption. The mystery of the Assumption points backward to the Immaculate Conception, therefore, by way of a logical reduction to the principle, while the Immaculate Conception points to the Assumption as to its logical conclusion. Ratzinger explains:

Here we see the connection to the Immaculate Conception. It can perhaps be paraphrased like this: where the reality of grace is, there is the totality of salvation. Where grace no longer exists in the fractured state of simul iustus et peccator, but in pure "Yes", death, sin's jailer, has no place. Naturally this involves the question: What does the assumption of body and soul into heavenly glory mean? What, after all, does "immortality" mean? And what does "death" mean? Man is not immortal by his own power, but only in and through another, preliminarily, tentatively, fragmentarily, in children, in fame, but finally and truly only in and from the Entirely-Other, God. We are mortal due to the usurped autarchy of a determination to remain within ourselves, which proves to be a deception. Death, the impossibility of giving oneself a foothold, the collapse of autarchy, is not merely a somatic but a human phenomenon of all-embracing profundity. Nevertheless, where the innate propensity to autarchy is totally lacking, where there is the pure self-dispossession of the one who does not rely upon himself ( = grace), death is absent, even if the somatic end is present. Instead, the whole human being enters salvation, because as a whole, undiminished, he stands eternally in God's life-giving memory that preserves him as himself in his own life.\(^{947}\)

At this final stage in our brief profile of Ratzinger's Mariological perspective, we return, once again, the Christological center at the heart of his whole theology. If we recall that the basic hallmark of Ratzinger's theology—perhaps the first clue by which far-future generations will identify unattributed fragments to his authorship—is the integrated quality of his thought, whereby all tendencies toward fragmentation and compartmentalization are meticulously avoided and consciously refused. "Theology" is not a

\(^{947}\) Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 78–79.
heading under which we can group a series of distinct academic exercises, but, in its fundamental essence, the human person's informed and disciplined meditation upon the inexhaustible mystery of God's Self-revelation as Love before, and, in fact, for humanity, in Jesus Christ. But, if this is so, Ratzinger's Mariology must, itself, return to this central moment of theological reflection. Our thinking about Mary must finally intersect with God—not only at the level of where we stand over-against him, but, more directly, as God is in himself. One might suppose that Ratzinger cannot do this without falling into the temptation he had already sought to avoid—namely, that of constructing a Christotypical Mariology that divorces itself from its foundations in Scripture and Liturgy. But, typical of Ratzinger's theological genius, he avoids this consequence by at first embracing it, and taking it as his starting point. Ratzinger begins with an observation concerning the revolutionary transformation the God of the Bible imposes upon classical philosophical conceptions of God. Starting with Bernard of Clairvaux, he develops the Judeo-Christian conception of the suffering God, moving his reader, by degrees, to a point of intersection with the feminine, upon which he will be able to draw out a Marian insight without falling into the pitfalls of an exaggerated Christotypism. We quote, here, at length, where he writes:

In Bernard of Clairvaux we find the wonderful statement that God cannot suffer [leiden], but he can suffer with [be compassionate, mit-leiden]. With these words, Bernard brings to a certain conclusion the Fathers' struggle to articulate the newness of the Christian concept of God. Ancient thought considered the passionlessness [Leidenschaftlosigkeit] of pure intellect to be an essential attribute of God. It proved difficult for the Fathers to reject this notion and to think of "passion" [Leidenschaft] in God. Yet in the light of the Bible they saw quite plainly that "Biblical revelation... upsets [everything]... the world had thought about God." They saw that there was an intimate passion in God, indeed, that it even constitutes his true essence: love. And because he loves, suffering [Leid] in the form of compassion [Mitleid] is not foreign to him. In this connection, Origen writes: "In his love for man the Impassible One suffered [erlitten] merciful compassion." We could only say that the Cross of Christ is God's compassionate suffering with the world. The Hebrew text of the Old Testament does not draw on psychology to speak about God's compassionate suffering with man. Rather, in accordance with the concreteness of Semitic thought, it designates it with a word whose basic meaning refers to a bodily organ, namely, rah'mim. Taken in the singular, rah'mim means the mother's womb. Just as "heart" stands for
feeling, and "loins" and "kidneys" stand for desire and pain, the womb becomes the term for being with another; it becomes the deepest reference for man's capacity to stand for another, to take the other into himself, to suffer him [erleiden], and in this long suffering to give him life. The Old Testament, with a word taken from the language of the body, tells us how God shelters us in himself, how he bears us in himself with compassionate love.  

Again, it is from this point of intersection with the feminine that Ratzinger is able to draw out the real insights possible from within a Christotypical approach while avoiding the pitfalls associated with such an approach. He does this by focusing upon how the figure of Mary becomes a window through which the deepest and most challenging dimensions of the mystery of the God of Revelation are brought into view. Recalling the characteristic concreteness of the Hebrew Language, reflective of the concreteness of Semitic thought, he writes:

The languages into which the Gospel entered when in entered the pagan world did not have such modes of expression. But the image of the Pietà, the Mother grieving [leiden] for her Son, became the vivid translation of this word [rah'mim]: in her God's maternal affliction [Leiden] is open to view. In her we can behold it and touch it. She is the compassion of God, displayed in a human being who has let herself be drawn wholly into God's mystery. It is because human life is at all times suffering that the image of the suffering Mother, the image of the rah'mim of God, is of such importance for Christianity. The Pietà completes the picture of the Cross, because Mary is the accepted Cross, the Cross communicating itself in love, the Cross that now allows us to experience in her compassion the compassion of God. In this way the Mother's affliction is Easter affliction, which already inaugurates the transformation of death into the redemptive being-with of love. Only apparently have we distanced ourselves from the "rejoice" with which the narrative of Mary begins. For the joy announced to her is not the banal joy clung to in the forgetfulness of the abysses of our being and so condemned to plunge into the void. It is the real joy that gives us the courage to venture the exodus of love into the burning holiness of God. It is the true joy that pain does not destroy but first brings to its maturity. Only the

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948 Ratzinger, "'Hail Full of Grace': Elements of Marian Piety According to the Bible," in Joseph Ratzinger and Hans Urs von Balthasar, Mary: The Church at the Source, 77–78.
joy that stands the test of pain and is stronger than affliction is authentic.  

With this passage, Ratzinger avoids transmuting the image of Mary into a fourth person of the Godhead precisely by appealing to her as the image of humanity's manifestation of the divine in creation. She is a window into the inner heart of the God who is able to pour himself out and to be received into another. Indeed, this God is, in fact, by virtue of his own inner dynamism of Love, the very exemplar of the dynamism of giving-and-receiving that makes possible an interpenetration of persons through which he can close the gap between the human and the divine. As he had already said, Mary's exceptionalism in the order of the soteriological represents no, "no exceptional proficiency, no exceptional achievement; on the contrary, it signifies that Mary reserves no area of being, life, and will for herself as a private possession of self." Mary, therefore, represents the actual achievement of God's grace in returning humanity to its own inner integrity. The grace of Christ can accomplish this; and we know that it can, because, in concrete fact, it has already done so in Mary. For Ratzinger, Mary is, "she who is wholly baptized, as the personal reality of the true Church, [and, thus,] is at the same time not merely the Church's promised certitude of salvation but its bodily certitude also." He explains, "The Church is already saved in her: the new Israel is no more to be rejected. It has already ascended into heaven."

4.2.5: Ratzinger's Reading of Redemptoris Mater:

So far, in our treatment of the Mariological perspective of Joseph Ratzinger, we have treated only his own position on the place and meaning of Mary in the mystery of Faith. Looking, now,  

949 Ratzinger, "Hail Full of Grace," 78–79.  
950 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 70.  
951 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 80–81.  
952 Ratzinger, Daughter Zion, 81.
to his reading of *Redemptoris Mater*, we can begin to see where he perceives the essential lines to fall in the significance of this encyclical for the development of the Tradition. Considering that he now stands, as Pope Benedict XVI, in the position of the one who carries the full weight of that Tradition on his own shoulders, locating his earlier reading of this text at the time he was serving as Prefect of the Congregation for the doctrine of the faith will serve as an important touchstone for our expectations for further development in Magisterial teaching on the subject of Mary as it may unfold in his own papacy.

That said, Ratzinger’s reading of *Redemptoris Mater* is presented in two parts. In the first part, he offers a series of rather general observations concerning the proper approach to Scriptural interpretation, the significance of the biblical position on the feminine in contrast to the pagan position, the contextualization of Mary in the historical present, and the eschatological nearness of eternity in time. In the second part, he presents more specific comments on what he sees as John Paul II’s main points in *Redemptoris Mater*, of which he names four. These are, Mary as the woman of faith, the “Sign of the Woman,” Mary’s role in mediation, and the meaning of the Marian Year introduced by the encyclical.\(^{953}\) In what follows, we will consider the more salient points in Ratzinger’s reading, in particular, in light of our own analysis, based upon an understanding of John Paul II’s central anthropologic-ethical interests.

Ratzinger reminds us that John Paul II is not merely a philosopher, but the Pope, who, as such, safeguards and witnesses to the deposit of faith in a uniquely responsible way in his own time. Thus, he presents his reflections with an awareness of the unity of the Bible—that is to say, of the fact that the Bible, whatever we may say in terms of historical criticism, represents for the Church, and within the Church, a coherent witness of God’s own self-revelation. The Church finds in Scripture a single voice, even in and through the multiplicity of voices undoubtedly reflected in it as its human sources. For the Church, there is no contradiction between these two observations—that human beings with their own personal distinctions, cultural and historical conditioning, fallibility and limitations, nonetheless deliver to us in the context of the mystery of Tradition, a prophetic oracle of God himself. God and humanity, the eternal and the temporal, the Creator and the created, cooperate in a mysterious way, so as to

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\(^{953}\) *Redemptoris Mater*, § 49.
allow each to speak for himself without silencing the voice of the other. The key to this mystery, for Ratzinger, lies in the relationship between the person and the community, and calls to mind, under a different but complementary approach to a personalist theological anthropology Wojtyla's notion of "participation." He explains that, Scripture originates from the People of God—a reality that already presupposes both a human and divine aspect within a subjective unity—such that God speaks to humanity in Scripture, precisely through this unity. "Whenever this People of God is speaking, not just incidentally and on the surface but from the heart of its identity," says Ratzinger, "it speaks within the stages of history, yet nevertheless always as one and the same subject." And in this very moment, "there speaks not merely a man or a people, but God himself in human words: the one Spirit who is the abiding power leading this people through history."  

On the subject of the "feminine line in the Bible," Ratzinger traces out the familiar theme of the contrast between the biblical anthropology and that of Gnosticism, noting that Gnosticism denigrates the material world, and, with it, all corporally-bound human characteristics. This position runs contrary to the picture painted in the Bible, and, especially, its radicalization in the New Covenant of the Incarnation. Ratzinger sees the contemporary tendency toward a gender-neutral reading of the Bible and a gender-neutral covenantal life to be a tacitly Gnostic, neo-pagan turn in the modern mind. He sees Redemptoris Mater as taking a strong stance against this turn, and, therefore, in favor of the dignity of the feminine, and of humanity itself, which exists only as a psychosomatic whole. Once again, on this point, we can hear echoes of Wojtyla’s concerns in The Acting Person, in insisting upon the irreducibility of the concrete human person—the psychosomatic whole someone—and resistance to the reductive theoretical abstraction that constantly threatens to impersonalize

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954 Ratzinger, "The Sign of the Woman," in Mary, God's Yes to Man, 11-40 (12). All quotes from "The Sign of the Woman" are taken from this publication.


the subject. Ratzinger sees the importance of this point to cut to the heart of the Christian option—namely, that of the reciprocity between the divine and thus human, characterized in the Bible in the dialectical image male–female. By creating us in this male–female reciprocity, God creates us in his own relational image,959 and then calls us back to himself through that very dynamic. Ratzinger writes:

Only in the right coordination of one to the other [i.e., male to female] can we discover the truth about God and ourselves. Those radical ideas of our time—which tear us apart and push class struggle to the very roots of human existence, namely the relationship of man and woman—are heresies in the original meaning of the word: they pick and choose and disregard the whole. We have to regain the whole of the biblical message in order to regain that spiritual center in which we as human beings become whole.960

Once again, turning in the direction of John Paul II’s insistence upon the concreteness of human experience and human-beingness, Ratzinger goes on to explain that Redemptoris Mater exhibits an option to avoid abstract titles and pronouncements about Mary, favoring, instead, an approach that places the question of Mary in the very same context of lived-experience in history that shapes our own self-awareness.961 Such titles are “static, self-contained mysteries,”962 according to Ratzinger, when, much more essentially, we are called to, “enter into the dynamic quality of salvation that reaches out to us as a gift and a challenge and that assigns to us our place in history.”963 Yet, for Ratzinger, it is precisely this concretion and historicization of the context for Mariology that allows Mary to move beyond the confines of a “static, self-contained mystery” and enter, actively, as a participant in the life of Church across time. “Mary dwells not just in the past or in the lofty sphere of heaven under God’s immediate

959 Genesis 1:27.
disposition,” he writes; “she is and remains present and real in this historical moment; she is a person acting here and now.”

Finally, in the first part of Ratzinger’s commentary, he sees the call to a Marian Year in the context of a historicization of the faith experience as a concrete act for the person today. The Marian Year, in this initial, broad section of his commentary, is oriented toward making the Marian faith more consciously present to the Church today through the faith-act of each member of the Church. This act rests for us, as it did for Mary, on the nearness of God in our lives through grace. This nearness in grace closes the gap that separates human action from divine action, and makes possible a constancy for us that frees us from the fleeting character of our temporally-limited sphere of existence. Ratzinger explains that, “God holds all time in his hands. He is the ‘Holy Mystery’, both touching and transcending time; and so he enables us, in this ever-changing, ever-flowing stream of time, to find firm ground to stand on, to grasp the abiding elements in all that passes away.”

In Part II of his commentary on *Redemptoris Mater*, Ratzinger enters into more detailed analysis of the specific content of the encyclical. Here, the question of mediation, which has been, for us, the central theme of our own analysis in the present dissertation, occupies the central place. Ratzinger cites four basic concepts in this section of the commentary, which mirror with greater specificity the four themes he had outlined in Part I. These are: 1) “Mary, Woman of Faith;” 2) “The Sign of the Woman;” 3) “Mary’s Role of Mediation;” and 4) “Meaning of the Marian Year.” The profile of Mary as the “woman of faith” is an essential theme for Ratzinger in his own Mariological consideration, as we have already seen. Here, he draws a clear parallel to the theme of the unity of the Bible, which he had considered in Part I. If the People of God participate with God to give voice to the mind of God for human beings in the authorship of Scripture, then it stands to reason that the one who most fully adheres to the pure faith would form, in herself, the crystallization point of the whole People whose Faith she embodies in its total purity. At this moment, Mary is able to participate with God in God’s speech to humanity, precisely as a member of this community, speaking,

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“from the heart of its identity,” and, thus, “not merely as a [wo]man or a people, but God himself in human words.”

Ratzinger sees this location of Mary among believers to be an essential element in a proper Mariological perspective, and, thus, notes it enthusiastically as an issue of central concern in Redemptoris Mater. He says that Mary, “joins the circle of the great men of faith who are praised in the Letter to the Hebrews (chapter 11) whereby all commemoration of faith-heroes is given its theological place. This fundamental ground is sustained through the encyclical and should always be remembered for a correct understanding.” Ratzinger reads the issue of Mary’s faith under the dimension of the “act.” This reading places Ratzinger’s reading of Redemptoris Mater in consistency with that offered in Part I of this chapter of the present dissertation. Mary’s faith is faith, however, precisely because it stands as a response to mystery—a mystery that the privilege of the Immaculate Conception only clarifies but does not comprehend. “Even in intimate closeness to Jesus,” says Ratzinger, “the mystery remains mystery, and Mary cannot approach it but in faith.” In the totality of Mary’s response of faith—her act of faith—Mary’s whole life enters into the mystery of the divine kenosis fully manifest in the Incarnation itself. Her life becomes total self-surrender—total gift and vulnerability—from the moment of the Annunciation when she first utters her “Fiat,” to the foot of the Cross, at which stands before the darkness of death and its apparent power over life. Ratzinger sees the challenge of faith and faith’s real moral import precisely in this moment of darkness. He writes:

Now this offer of self-surrender has been accepted, and Mary’s faith in darkness is precisely the culmination of that unity of will discussed at the beginning of this reflection. Faith—evident since Abraham—means communion with the Cross, and only on the Cross does faith find its highest fulfillment. In this and no other way will faith merit God’s “Blessed are you.” “You have revealed it to the merest children.”

969 Ratzinger, “The Sign of the Woman,” 27.
For Ratzinger, then, faith—which is an inherently communal act—appears as the sphere of revelation. In our own analysis, we had noted that this act was an instance of what Wojtyła had called, “participation,” such that we can now say that God comes to be known through a participatory act, because God comes to be known to us through the faith of others. In this way, Mary’s perfect and total act of pure faith makes her not only the perennial witness and spiritual progenitor of a people, as Abraham’s faith had made him. Rather, Mary’s faith makes her the conduit through which God comes to be knowable to us in the Person of Jesus Christ; and, thus, she becomes the sacramental progenitor of a people. Ratzinger will develop this line of interpretation through the final two sections of his commentary.

Picking up on the earlier theme of “the feminine line in the Bible,” Ratzinger goes on in the second section of Part II to explain how the literary structure of the Redemptoris Mater plays out along the same lines as that of the Bible itself, as concerns the feminine line. In the beginning, immediately following upon the Fall, God declares redemption through the offspring of the woman, and sets the stage for a history of salvation that repeatedly passes through moments of renewal in the maternal mediation of a woman. In the figure of Mary, then, the God fulfills his initial promise and finally resolves the tension that leaves the ultimate outcome to appear uncertain in the period of our pilgrimage in history. For Ratzinger, “the sign of the woman” is essentially bound-up with the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. It reveals the ultimate triumph of grace over sin in “the Son,” who, “once and for all, has directed the drama of history toward the blessing.”

Mary, therefore, who gave birth to him, is truly “full of grace”—she becomes a sign in history. The angel greeted Mary, and from then on it is clear that the blessing is stronger than the curse. The sign of the woman has become the sign of hope, leading the way to hope. The sign of the woman reveals God’s favor toward humanity, “a favor more powerful than all manifestation of evil and sin, all that ‘enmity’ that constantly has shaped the course of human history.”


The “sign of the woman” becomes fully manifest in the concrete reality of Mary’s maternal mediation. Ratzinger makes a great deal out of John Paul II’s emphasis upon the maternal dimension of Mary’s mediation. This fact is important, once again, because John Paul II’s view, consistent with his pre-papal interests, rests upon lived-experience rather than abstractions. It is only in the context of the concrete lived reality of Mary as an actual person, living and acting in history, that the Mary of faith has any authentic meaning and value. Mary is not an abstract principle, but a person and, as such, an agent of responsibility and a subject of action. The context of that action is her acceptance of the divine maternity with all its broader implications for the community of faith which it at once ratifies and renews in the form of the Church.

Once again, the notion of “participation” as Wojtyla had defined it in *The Acting Person* comes to the fore in Ratzinger’s presentation. While he does not provide any analysis of John Paul II’s thought in light of *The Acting Person*—and it is not at all our contention to suggest that he does or that he intends to do so—he perceives the content of John Paul II’s concerns in *Redemptoris Mater* shows an agreement with the themes addressed in *The Acting Person*. Since it has been our intention in the present dissertation to situate John Paul II’s mariological perspective in precisely that context, and to provide a detailed reading of that relationship, in particular as it becomes apparent in *The Acting Person*, noting Ratzinger’s assessment of the essential content of the encyclical provides additional support for our overall argument. Whether it occurred to Ratzinger or not to associate the two works we cannot say, but his presentation of Mary’s mediation as he sees it represented in *Redemptoris Mater* does correspond with Wojtyla’s thought in *The Acting Person*. He writes:

> The Holy Father strongly emphasizes Jesus Christ as the sole mediator. But this mediation is not exclusive, rather inclusive, allowing forms of participation. In other words, Christ as the only mediator does not take away our task to stand before God as persons linked to each other and responsible for each other.972

As in our own analysis, Ratzinger recognizes that there exists, here, a general principle, applicable to all people of faith, and thus, open to all human beings insofar as all are invited to enter into covenant with God in the life of the Church. It will be upon this

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general foundation that the uniqueness of Mary's mediation can come to the fore. But, once again, Mary's uniqueness does not stem from her separateness from humanity as if she emerged from a different plane of existence "above" humanity. It stems, rather, from her irreducibility and her concrete personal relationship with God as the human mother of the Incarnate Son. 973

Consistent with our own analysis, Ratzinger explains that, "We all, in different ways and in union with Jesus Christ, can be mediators for each other in our approach to God." 974 He reminds us that John Paul II's approach is consistent with the thought of the Fathers in Lumen gentium, saying, "Mary's mediation is based on participation in Christ's mediation; compared to his role, hers is one of subordination." 975 Yet, precisely insofar as this is true, "Everything said so far applies to Mary as well as to any human participation in Christ's mediating role. In all of this, Mary's mediation is not different from any other comparable human mediation." 976 What more is there, then, such that we can say that Mary's role, "uniquely surpasses the mediating role that all of us, as members of the communion of saints, are empowered to exercise"? 977

Returning, tacitly, to the themes of faith and the "feminine line," Ratzinger summarizes John Paul II's answer to this question by saying, "The Pope's basic thesis is this: Mary's mediation is unique because it is maternal mediation, related to Christ who is always born anew into this world. Her mediation thus represents the female dimension in salvation history; this female dimension is forever centered on Mary's role." 978 But, in what sense does this observation constitute an insight? It is immediately obvious to any observer that Mary is the biological mother of Jesus of Nazareth, yet this fact alone does not, in the minds of many contemporary Protestant interlocutors, indicate any special agency in the ongoing salvific economy. For Ratzinger, John Paul II finds the answer in the organismic understanding of the Church—an understanding of the Church that transcends a merely sociological ecclesiology. This

973 Ratzinger, "The Sign of the Woman," 33.
976 Ratzinger, "The Sign of the Woman," 32.
977 Ratzinger, "The Sign of the Woman," 32.
understanding of the Church, however, lies at the center of our analysis in Part I of the present chapter of this dissertation, in which we considered the relationship between Wojtyla’s concept of “participation” and the formation of the “we”—a communal subject—as a moment of mutual interpersonal transcendence above the moment of the “I-thou” relationship. It is only the “we” as a communal subject inclusive of the distinct persons (a rather Trinitarian notion, we might add) that allows for the conceptualization of the Church in genuinely organismic terms; and Mary plays a unique role in the establishment of this relationship. Ratzinger explains:

Of course, if the Church is conceived only as an institution, only as the result of majority decisions and managed activities, then there is no room for such reflections [on the maternal mediation of Mary as a continuing soteriological reality]. The Pope, in contrast to a readily accepted sociological notion of the Church, reminds us of a Pauline statement that has not received its due consideration: “You are my children, and you put me back in labor pains until Christ is formed in you (Gal 4:19). Life is not “made” but born, and not without labor pains. The “motherly awareness of the early Church”, identified here by the Pope, has great significance for our own time (RM n. 43).

Ratzinger is aware, of course, that he has not yet fully answered the basic question, so he restates it more precisely than before. He asks, “Why do we have to think that this female and motherly dimension of the Church is residing forever in Mary?” His answer to this question rests upon John Paul II’s reflections concerning the apparently anti-Marian sayings in the Gospel of Luke. “When the unknown woman, excited after hearing Jesus, breaks out in praise of the ‘womb that bore’ such a man,” Ratzinger recounts, “the Lord retorts, ‘Rather, blest are they that hear the word of God and keep it’ (Luke 11:28). The Holy Father connects this text with the Lord’s similar saying: ‘My mother and my bothers are those who hear the word of God and act upon it’ (Luke 8:20f.).” His analysis of this section of Redemptoris Mater returns us, once again, to the place of Mary as the “woman of faith,” and ends in a reminder of the communal, participatory reality in which the act of faith consists as such. He writes:

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980 Ratzinger, “The Sign of the Woman,” 34.
It seems as if these were anti-Marian statements. In truth, however, these passages reveal two important insights. First, beyond the unique physical birth of Christ, there exists another dimension of motherhood, which is and must be more comprehensive. And secondly, this motherhood, which constantly gives birth to Jesus, is founded on the hearing, keeping, and doing of his word.981

Ratzinger draws out the implications of this insight, by noting that, “Mary’s motherhood is not just based upon a biological event, which happened once, but on the fact that in her total being, Mary was, and is, and therefore will remain, a mother.”982 The Penecost event, notes Ratzinger, is characterized by the birth of the Church through the descent of the Holy Spirit involves the presence of Mary in an act of prayer—and, thus, an act of faith—entered into in union with the whole of the believing community. This event represents the moment of the Church’s birth, now bound to the Annunciation as its socio-liturgical consequence. This linkage between the Annunciation and the Pentecost event means, in the end, that in a mystical way, Mary becomes a mother for and of the Church. “Pentecost,” says Ratzinger, “the birth of the Church by the Holy Spirit, shows this [i.e., the universal motherhood of Mary] in factual terms: Mary is in the midst of the praying assembly that, by the Spirit’s Advent, becomes Church.”983 In this event, Mary, once again, through her perfect act of faith, conceives by the power of the Holy Spirit, and gives birth, this time to the Church—the mystical Body of Christ. The logic of this event lies, once again, in the concept of “participation” as Wojtyla had discussed it in The Acting Person, whereby the person “acts together with other men, to realize thereby and at once the authentically personalistic value—the performance of the action and the fulfillment of himself in the action.”984 And, since participation, “corresponds to the person’s transcendence and integration in the action,”985 it means the movement of the individual person into the realm of the “we”—a condition that, itself, occurs because of the correspondence between the “transitive” and “intransitive”

981 Ratzinger, “The Sign of the Woman,” 34.
984 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 7.3 (270).
985 Wojtyla, The Acting Person, 7.3 (270).
dimensions of the act. Once again, according to Wojtyla's thesis, the exterior act corresponds to an interior act and an interior effect that does not, "vanish without a trace," once performed, but leaves its, "moral value, which constitutes an objective reality intrinsically cohesive with the person, and thus, a reality also profoundly subjective."986

Ratzinger understands John Paul II as indicating that this reality becomes a reality for every member of the Church already in the final moments of the Passion, as Christ addresses Mary and John from the Cross, and the evangelist declares that, "from that hour onward, he took her into his own."987 Ratzinger notes:

This, for the Holy Father, means a special personal relationship between the disciple—any disciple—and Mary, the admission of Mary in the innermost regions of one's mental and spiritual life, the entrance into her reality as woman and mother. All this becomes a way to bring forth Christ always anew, and leads a disciple to conform to the image of Christ.988

Characteristic of his own theological genius, Ratzinger sees, in this dynamic, the tie that binds together all the themes he has been discussing into a unified mystery. The faith-act of Mary is the "sign of the woman" and the heart of her maternal mediation, all as an organic whole. Retracing the overall scriptural outline of the encyclical, he writes:

All the Scripture passages converge, once their correlation within one fabric of thought has been shown in the encyclical. For the Gospel writer John, in the Cana passage as well as in the crucifixion account, does not use Mary's proper name, nor the title "Mother", but "Woman". The correlation to chapter three of Genesis and chapter twelve of Revelation, to the "Sign of the Woman", is thus suggested by these texts. Without doubt, John's specific expressions are designed to show Mary simply as "the Woman", a symbol of general and symbolic significance. The crucifixion account, then, turns into an interpretation of history, pointing to the "Sign of the Woman", to her who with maternal

987 John 19:27.
988 Ratzinger, "The Sign of the Woman," 36.
care takes part in the struggle against the powers of negation and so becomes our sign of hope (RM, nos. 24 and 47). 989

Ratzinger understands this synthesis in light of a statement, referenced in the encyclical, from Paul VI's profession of faith: "We believe that the most holy Mother of God, the new Eve, the Mother of the Church, carries on in heaven her maternal role with regard to the members of Christ, cooperating in the birth and development of divine life in the souls of the redeemed." 990 Ratzinger then comes to interpret the meaning of the Marian year as a call to each and every member of the Church to a participatory faith-act.

Ratzinger does not use this language, of course, but he describes John Paul II's intentions, as he reads them, in terms that suggest precisely this concept. Recalling that Mary gives birth to the Church in and through an act of faith, where faith is understood as a communal, participatory act, it becomes clear that the "ever-anew" birth of Christ into the world in the mystical reality of the Church requires, for its own part, a participation of the would-be members of the Church in the very act whereby they are "born from above" in Jesus Christ. The Marian year is given to the Church as a call to re-affirm with active receptivity the decision to enter into the grace of the Holy Spirit in new birth. He explains that, "Only through a re-orientation toward the Sign of the Woman, toward the correctly defined female dimension of the Church, will come about a new openness for the Spirit's creative power and our transformation into the image and likeness of Christ, whose presence alone can give direction and hope to history." 992

Ratzinger's presentation of Redemptoris Mater does provide interpretive evidence supportive of our general thesis. While he makes no reference to The Acting Person, nor to any of Wojtyla's pre-papal writings in his commentary, he describes John Paul II's intentions in terms that recall with striking distinctness the texts we have presented in our own analysis and through the body of this dissertation. We have attempted to point to those elements in our reading of Ratzinger's commentary. As we look forward in the


990 Ratzinger, "The Sign of the Woman," 37. The quote is taken from Redemptoris Mater, § 47.


present papacy to any Marian developments that may yet emerge from the teaching of Benedict XVI, we can expect them to be marked by a continuity with the Tradition—in particular, the Tradition as Benedict understands it. We have, already before us, then, the outlines along which such development would take its shape.
Summary Remarks
and Concluding Reflections

5.1: Summary of the Dissertation:

In the course of this study, we have attempted to situate the thought of Karol Wojtyla/Pope John Paul II in the context of a philosophical dialogue with the figures of St. Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, Max Scheler, and others, including, especially, Joseph Ratzinger, whose thought received some careful attention in Part I of the final chapter. In the context of this dialogue, Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II found that the human person was constantly under the threat of some form or another of reductionistic thinking. In the Thomistic tradition, we found the problem of naturalism and a cosmological understanding of the human person. In Scheler, Wojtyla saw the problem of emotionalism or sentimentalism, and the reduction of the will to emotive reaction. In Kant, Wojtyla saw the so-called “categorical imperative” of Kant’s formalistic ethic of pure duty to cut the person off from lived experience, reducing him to a mere intellect, and failing to resolve the epistemological problems that stood as Kant’s original motivators. Wojtyla also saw in the contemporary world, an attempt to reduce the human person to the confines of the merely material order. Especially the context of Marxism, which is, for its own part, a materialistic thesis, the human person appears as nothing more than a particular historic-material moment that comes to be and passes away in the great sweep of the dialectic of history. The person in his most fundamental irreducibility is obliterated in this context.

Throughout, Wojtyla/John Paul II attempts to illuminate and safeguard the irreducible person. The person is seen, not in terms of any particular faculty or function, primarily, but, instead, in and through his or her self-disclosure as a self-determining agent of responsibility. The turn to the subject in Wojtyla’s thought does not represent the option for a mere “philosophy of consciousness,” but the recognition that all knowledge begins with the subject as the subject experiences himself in the context of his engagement with the world. The subject’s experience, moreover, begins as self-
experience, as the subject perceives his own efficacy in the act. This experience sets the person apart from the merely material, revealing the person to himself precisely as person.

In this context, the person comes to be seen as a unique, irreducible, for-its-own-sake being, who is free and self-determining. Wojtyła/John Paul II recognizes that serious metaphysical questions remain in the face of this truth, but he does not take them up himself. Nonetheless, he insists that the irreducibility of the person, given as that datum is in our lived experience, can never be explained away, but must itself enjoy the right to impose itself upon the metaphysician as a kind of “first principle”. Here, Wojtyła appears to part company both with Scheler, whom he sees as reducing the experience of self-determination to emotion, and with Classical Thomism, which reduces human self-determination to a merely “secondary cause”, totally subject to the immediate causal influence of the divine, and that, for the sake of an agenda that may even work against the human person.

From this point of view, it became clear that whatever theological positions could be extrapolated from Wojtyla’s philosophical considerations, nothing could be proposed that would consist in an essential denial of the overwhelming interest at the heart of his considerations of the person. Applying this criterion to the question of Mariology, we saw that Mary could be seen, in Wojtyla’s thinking, as the exemplary acting person—as a free and self-determining agent of responsibility. Seeing Mary in this light meant exploring the intersection between Mary’s activity as a creature and God’s activity as Creator. It meant understanding how and why Mary’s role in the order of salvation must always remain an indispensible dimension of Catholic thought.

In the end, we introduced the term “proredemption” to describe the relationship between Mary and Christ in the order of salvation. According to this concept, built upon Wojtyla’s thesis of “participation” as developed in his work The Acting Person, Mary cooperates with God in her capacity as a creature, but she stands, uniquely, in and through that very act of cooperation, at the very center of God’s own redemptive act. Like other human mothers, she cooperates with God to bring new human life into the world. But, in this instance, the human life she brings into the world through God’s initiative is no mere created person, but the divine Person, Logos, whose penetration into the created order represents the fulfillment of the eschatological promise made by God to creation from the very beginning of time. Mary’s fiat, and every
act in her life that stands as a concrete reaffirmation of that initial choice, places her in the position of the one who chooses the common good of all humanity as her own good, and does so in a uniquely efficacious way. This fact about Mary binds her to Christ’s salvific work in a way that is truly unrepeatable, and it does so through her efficacious self-determination, which she exercises in her personal irreducibility.

Central to the Marian development opened up by John Paul II’s contribution is the framing of the whole problematic of Mariology in the context of interpersonal relatedness. Redemptoris Mater is the most explicitly personalist presentation of Mary to emerge from within a magisterial context. The work of private theologians aside, this text represents a formal teaching instrument of the Church in which the Marian problem is cast in a personalist light that takes its implications farther than they had previously been taken in magisterial teaching.

In his prepapal work, we saw that, central to his whole anthropology and ethics, Wojtyla saw the human act as efficacious both transitively and intransitively, the concept of “participation” that involved, in the end, the transcendence of the merely “I–thou” relationship in favor of entrance into the “we”, and the affirmation that “transcendence” is a basic property of personhood. All of these concepts rest upon the idea that the human person exists in the context of relationship—indeed, that the human person’s existence as person is most fully realized only in his or her relatedness to others. This is precisely the context, then, in which Mariology is now to be understood. In the present study, we had set out to show the philosophical presuppositions of John Paul II’s thought as they came to bear on his presentation of Mary, mostly in the context of Redemptoris Mater. It is not our intention to suggest that John Paul II had worked through all the dimensions of the Marian question as it is situated in the context of the whole of theology, nor that he had drawn out all the implications of his own presentation of Mary as “the acting person”. Instead, having gained an important orientation, it is now up to theologians, and, especially to Mariologists, to continue this work. Perhaps, however, we can suggest some of the immediate implications we would draw from what we have already seen.

Thus, from this point of view, we can avoid any claims that Mary appears as an appendage to orthodoxy and as a figure threatening to the unicity of Christ. This objection to Marian piety and devotion melts in the face of a personalist and “interpersonalist” paradigm, because Mary’s salvific import is and
must be referenced to Christ. In this way, the "Christotypical" vs. "ecclesiotypical" dichotomy is completely transcended, because the very mode of theotic Christiformation for the created person subsists in the interrelatedness of the covenantal life of the Church.

Of course, the issue for us here is not that this claim is new, but that John Paul II's presentation of the figure of Mary already rests upon a set of philosophical presuppositions that provides a lens through which we can begin to see the real contours of this dynamic. The dogmatic content of a mystery is one issue, but the philosophico-theological apparatus within which it can be made understandable to us and penetrable by us in our own time and context is another matter. On this point, John Paul II's personalist perspective has opened a window of insight.

Indeed, we also have to say that, from the perspective we have developed in the present dissertation, the Incarnation, too, only makes sense in light of the human person for whose sake God becomes a human being himself. Thus, the idea that there exists a relationship that moves in both directions means that we are reminded of the fact that the human being enjoys dignity in the eyes of God, and that human beings bring to the relationship with God something of ourselves as persons, and not merely as things that are "acted-upon". The relatedness of Mary to the Church, the Church to Mary, and the individual person to Mary and to the Church also come into view from this perspective. From our new perspective, the so-called "ecclesiotypical" model of Mary must now place Mary precisely into the context of the relationship of faith—that is to say, the context of faith understood as relationship. Although Mary is the only one who could believe as she does, she does not believe only for herself, but on behalf of the whole. This assertion, too, is nothing new in itself, but it now becomes thoroughly understandable within our new interpersonalist frame of reference. We do not believe alone, but with the whole; and we are neither saved alone, but only with and in the whole. John Paul II has taken us far along in the ongoing quest for an ever-deepening penetration into the heart and meaning of these truths of the Faith, which have become all but totally incomprehensible to a great many Christians who have inherited a perspective grown from the seeds of the Protestant Reformation. We have, here, then, an important development that promises to yield fruit in the ecumenical dialogue.

Bound as is John Paul II's perspective to the reality of personal efficacious action as the very avenue into full "participation" as he understands that term, we can see that human action has an effect
in the order of salvation precisely because human beings exist in the context of dialogue with the divine and with one another. We do not exist merely in a framework of passivity relative to the divine, but in a framework of reciprocity with him and with other human beings. In this context, the Communion of Saints takes the shape of the interrelatedness of human persons transcending the isolation of the Self as they make entrance into the "we", where the figure of Mary is the first of us to have done so completely as she moved out from herself into oneness with Christ. As both Ratzinger and Balthasar had suggested, then, the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception provides us the necessary precondition for this movement, as the "yes" by which Mary first takes this outward turn is only possible because she withholds nothing of herself from God, but makes herself totally available to him. She maintains perfect "integrity" in her act, such that her act can yield its effects both within her and beyond her in the world of personal interrelatedness. But this fact also becomes the window through which the Assumption of Mary comes into view. From this point of view, Mary transcends in her act of faith, the limitations of mere Self, and enters fully into the divine life: the "Eternal We" of God's own innate dynamism of giving and receiving.

5.2: The Importance of the Present Study in My Own Intellectual Development:

Writing this dissertation represents an important period of transition in my own intellectual development. Prior to beginning this work, I had been trained primarily in the Thomistic tradition, and had expected to find in John Paul II little more than a Thomist writing in contemporary language. I pointed out in the body of the dissertation that this perception is actually represented in the literature, even by prominent thinkers. In the course of my work, however, I became deeply aware, largely through Wojtyla's own writings, of a serious limitation within the Thomistic perspective. I came to see that many issues I once saw as tangential to Thomas, and as historically conditioned limitations in his thinking that could be easily transcended with minor adjustments, actually rested upon basic presuppositions in his thought. The human person was not a for-its-own-sake being, for Aquinas, but a thing
made for the sake of the cosmic perfection. Aquinas is not a personalist; and I had not realized how much I had come to accept personalist insights as expressions of the mature mind of the Church. There can be no doubt that this fact is due, in large measure, to John Paul II, but that fact itself tells us that John Paul II had, himself, transcended Thomism in his own thought.

In the end, I found myself engaged, in my own generational context, in the very same dialogue in which Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Joseph Ratzinger had found themselves engaged in the middle of the twentieth century. I found myself, moreover, drawing many of the same conclusions. In the course of this study, in a way that, due to the parameters of the topic, could not show directly in the pages of the dissertation itself, I devoted myself to the study of Joseph Ratzinger, whom I came to learn I had never really understood before. My entire theological approach underwent an aggiornamento as I found myself drifting away from St. Thomas’s way of doing theology, and into an entirely different approach.

I had been formed in St. Thomas’ thought from the time I was an undergraduate, and found, in St. Thomas, the sort of clarity that my own generation desperately needed. I belong to the generation that inherited the confusion unleashed upon society by the relativism and nihilism that rose to prominence during the 1960’s and came to dominate academic culture by the 1980’s. In this context, characterized by a seeming unwillingness to ask the question of whether an assertion is “true” or “false,” but only whether it is “bold” or “timid,” “broad-minded” or “narrow-minded,” and so on, I found in St. Thomas a thinker who could point the way out of the darkness. This was the real root of my affinity with St. Thomas; and I joined an army of my contemporaries in the American academy who embraced St. Thomas for the very same reasons.

I have found, in retrospect, actually, that this cultural condition is poorly understood by the scholars of the prior generation, who did not begin from the same cultural starting point themselves. The defining difference lies in the fact that in the Ressourcement generation, the teaching of the Church appeared clear at the outset, and these thinkers reacted against what they saw as an overly rigid definition of orthodoxy that excluded the possibility of engaging new thoughts, and imprisoned the Church in a defensive mode of disengagement with the world that threatened to cut her off even from her own foundations. In my own generation, rather than rigid and narrow definitions, we inherited questions that appeared unanswerable with the tools available to us, and, thus, an
invincible ignorance concerning the essential dogmatic deposit of the faith. We experienced ourselves as actually having been cut off from our own foundations, as a matter of fact. It was, thus, only after a long journey into the heart of the Church, and unto her mind, initially under the guidance of St. Thomas, that I found myself at the same starting point as those in the Ressourcement generation, and could enter into that dialogue in a truly meaningful way.

All of this meant, of course, that I also underwent a significant philosophical transition, as well. My study of John Paul II had, again, begun from the foundation of a Thomistic background, for which I am, and will always remain, grateful. But I found, as I went forward, that this background was insufficient in itself as a basis for understanding Wojtyła. Wojtyła was deeply engaged in the problems of contemporary philosophy, and was having a conversation with which I was only tangentially familiar, and I had to turn to it, myself, in earnest. To this end, I devoted myself to the study of Max Scheler, and found myself making a phenomenological turn in my own philosophical thought. I came to this dissertation, one should remember, not only as one theologically trained, but also, in the classical way, philosophically trained. But that training would undergo an adjustment.

Now, as this project comes to a close, I find that I have become a very different kind of thinker than I was when I had begun it. I have taken a turn toward phenomenology and begun to seek the foundations of knowledge in the “givens” of “lived experience” rather than in a priori first principles. I have thus accepted that, while philosophical truth, and even properly metaphysical truth, is genuinely available to us, our philosophical presuppositions do not enjoy an unchallenged right in the face of lived experience. I did once believe that they did—that I held certainty about a series of metaphysical claims that actually flew in the face of lived experience, and that stood as the correction that experience, which, itself, was to be characterized as a “naïve” and unreflective attitude. Today, I find myself persuaded by Wojtyła’s call to “give the irreducible the upper hand” over metaphysics—to test our metaphysical assertions against lived experience to see if, in the givenness of that experience, our theories really do hold up. Metaphysics is to serve in an explanatory, bound to my lived experience, and accountable to it, rather than the other way around, by which, as had previously held, my lived experience would be judged as adequate or inadequate to my metaphysical certainties. I do not pretend that there do not remain any number of
epistemological issues to be explored; I wish only to point out there I have made a shift in the way I approach philosophical inquiry, and in how, then, I would go about prioritizing the criteria by which I could found a claim to certainty in the area of metaphysics.

I am also, today, a very different sort of theologian than I was before. I have turned, with Ratzinger, away from a "systematic" approach, whereby I attempt to deduce one truth from another, as in a scholastic *summa*, and toward a more "biblical" approach to theology, which rests upon typology and imagery. This approach to theology makes recourse to the poetic, and, again, to our experience, and seeks knowledge through love, rather than love through knowledge. This turn in my theological posture does not mean a repudiation of the philosophical in theology, but different use of it than I had been accustomed to before. I used to hold the classically Thomistic view that so-called "natural knowledge" drew us to a limit which revealed truths would then complete. From this point of view, revealed truth could not actually challenge philosophical assertion—it could not serve to correct philosophy, because natural knowledge was "complete" already, as far as it went. Now, however, I have come to hold that natural knowledge faces rather serious limitations in the absence of revealed truth—not just in the sense that there are truths we cannot discover on our own, but in the sense that, in the absence of those undiscoverable truths, we can and do draw inappropriate conclusions on the basis of natural reason. I am not saying that we can properly know something to be true on the basis of natural reason that, by faith, we also know to be false. I am saying, instead, that, restricted only to naturally-knowable premises, we can draw conclusions that, in light of deeper truth—namely, the unimaginable, unforeseeable content of revelation—prove to be false. We sometimes think we know what, now, in the light of revelation, appears incomplete or even false.

In the end, I now see theology as beginning from a different place than the place from which I had thought it to begin before. Before, I had thought of theology as completing the journey undertaken by philosophy, and, thus, as beginning from the very same starting point, only to continue where philosophy had to leave off. I now see theology as a journey to wisdom undertaken from an entirely new point of departure. Philosophical inquiry begins with what human beings can know on the basis of the particulars of their experience, drawing more general conclusions, arriving at principles, and universal insights, until, in the end, we
might be able to say something about the transcendental realities and even God. But this project, in the fallen condition, apart from revelation, must stop short at a very imperfect stage, because it can only, at its very best, touch upon the mystery of the divine from the outside. Theology, however, begins with God’s self-revelation, and, from this point of departure, draws conclusions, finally, about the particulars of our experience.

The reader of this dissertation will find evidence of my own transition, as much of what motivated my inquiry came from the problems I had slowly begun to perceive in my own presuppositions. I sought to give voice to my recognition of those problems because I had come to perceive them precisely in my attempt to encounter John Paul II on his own terms. As I have already said, this attempt required the development of an entirely new area of competency on my part. I had to enter the contemporary philosophico-theological dialogue in earnest, and not remain a mere outside observer. But entering into this dialogue led me to see that my own starting point was no longer adequate to deal with the questions I was now forced to entertain.

5.3: **Indications for Future Study:**

I would leave the reader, finally, with the admission that this dissertation represents only a first step in the development of its central insight. We will see, for several generations to come, I think, a deepening study of the thought of Karol Wojtyła and the papal writings of John Paul II. I cannot hope to say everything, and do not pretend to have done so here. My real contribution is to point out the connection between his prepopal work on the concept of the “acting person”—his anthropological insights—and his Mariology as reflected, primarily, in *Redemptoris Mater*. I believe that I have succeeded in establishing that there is a profound connection between these two elements in his writings, and that his Mariology can, indeed, be understood through the lens of his overall anthropology. This insight means that, from this point forward, studies of John Paul II’s Marian writings will have to take into consideration his concepts of irreducibility, transcendence, self-determination, efficacy, and participation. In short, our term, “proredemption” is offered, here, as word that can serve to indicate
this essential connection in Wojtyla’s thought on Mary as the exemplary “acting person.”

In a Christian world in which we already enjoy essentially unanimous consensus on the concept of “procreation” in the natural order, the concept of “proredemption” makes the necessary point in a way that preserves the whole substance of the distinction between creature and Creator. Thus, the term “Pro-Redemptress”, we would suggest, serves to articulate the Marian mystery in language that makes sense to the contemporary interlocutor. We hope, then, that our efforts in the present dissertation will advance, not only the study of John Paul II and the field of Mariology, but also the ecumenical dialogue, in which we think about Mary reflects and conditions how we think about the whole content of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. If the terms “proredemption” and “Pro-Redemptress” can open a way to understand by providing words to identify important conceptual content, then the way forward will have been made easier.

Perhaps, also, the categories of receptivity and reflexivity introduced in some detail in the fourth Chapter of the present dissertation call for further consideration. Classical constructions of natural theology might be seriously rethought in this light. We would argue that a more authentically biblical portrait of God could be painted within this frame than within the more familiar Platonic and Aristotelian framework that has led to the very cosmological understanding of the human person the Church has attempted to overcome in the course of the twentieth century.

Finally, we would suggest that the consideration of Wojtyla’s intellectual kinship with Duns Scotus be made the focus of a sustained study. There can be no doubt in the mind of a careful student of both thinkers that John Paul II and Duns Scotus agree on many of the points that separate Scotists from Thomists. It may be that Wojtyla came to identify with Aquinas as a matter of sheer historical accident, in the absence of any thorough introduction to Scotus on his own terms. If that is so, it would be fascinating to see in plainer light the many points of intersection between Scotus and Wojtyla/John Paul II. In particular, one might consider whether Scotus would really have offered a still more secure foundation for Wojtyla’s thought than Aquinas had offered, and whether he would have been, in the end, a more natural element in the synthesis Wojtyla had undertaken with phenomenology and personalism in the formulation of his own original perspective.
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