FROM HUMAN DIGNITY TO THE COMMON GOOD.

A STUDY OF JACQUES MARITAIN'S INTEGRAL HUMANISM

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Abstraction

According to Catholic social doctrine, there are two principles which serve as foundational pillars of social thought and action: the dignity of human being and the primacy of the common good. Each human person has unique and endless worth in the eye of God, since "God created each human person in His image, in the image of God he created humankind, male and female. He created them" (*Genesis*, 1: 27). God creates all things and wanted them to participate in His glory and happiness (well-being). Thus, by their nature, all human beings want to be happy. To reach happiness is "something final and self-sufficient and the end of our actions" (*NE* 1097b20), but we should not forget that by nature man is a part of the greater order. How can one defend both the dignity of the human person and the primacy of the common good?

To defend the dignity of human person the first question must be answered what is meant a human person, since the ways in which we understand ourselves as persons have direct effects on the ways in which we organize ourselves collectively in the political communities. To answer what is a human person we will understand how Maritain makes the distinction between individual and person, and what it is that constitutes a human person. It leads to understand the whole human being, soul and body, is a person. Man is as a part of the greater order.

According to Aristotle and followed by Aquinas, every creature is only a part of the whole perfection of the universe, just as one instrument in an orchestra is a part of the whole perfection of the harmony. "Society is a whole composed of persons is to say that society is a whole composed of wholes" (Evans and Ward, *The Social and Political Philosophy of Jacques Maritain,* p. 85).

Because the relationship between the common good and the dignity of the human person is the relationship of our dignity of finality and our dignity of nature. We distinguish between the human acts and the acts of human being in order to understand the notion of Aquinas's the human act. Then, we will understand why Maritain defends natural law as an antidote for a secular society and present crisis of pluralist society.

According to Maritain, the deepest result of the crisis from the modern to the present time is man's natural community in the natural law and his innate ordination to the transcendent as the source of ultimate value have been casted into doubt. Thus, the only appropriate way to reconcile the common good and my good is to turn God into my private good as a kind of a good infinitely shareable, as if there were commensurability between my finite and infinite goodness. To make this reconciliation into the present age, "you must love your neighbor as, like yourselves," ordered to a common good.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SYSTEM of CITATIONS

The following abbreviations are used for works of Jacques Maritain, Thomas Aquinas, and Aristotle. The full publication information for all these sources are provided in Biography.

I. The Works by Jacques Maritain
PM   *A Preface to Metaphysics: Seven Lectures on Being.*
IP   *An Introduction to Philosophy.*
BP   *An Introduction to The Basic Problems of Moral Philosophy.*
AN   *Antimoderne.*
AS   *Art and Scholasticism.*
BPT   *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism.*
D   *Christianity and Democracy and The Rights of Man and Natural Law.*
DK   *The Degrees of Knowledge.*
EC   *Education at the Crossroads.*
EE   *Existence and the Existent.*
FMW   *Freedom in the Modern World.*
IH   *Integral Humanism.*
LC   *Liturgy and Contemplation.*
MS   *Man and State.*
MG   *Man's Approach to God.*
MP   *Moral Philosophy: An historical and critical survey of the great systems.*
NL   *Natural Law: Reflection on Theory and Practice.*
PH   *On Philosophy of History.*
PN   *Philosophy of Nature.*
UP   *On The Use of Philosophy: Three Essays.*
RT   *Redeeming the Time.*
RON   *Reflections on America.*
SW   *Science and Wisdom.*
SP   *Scholasticism and Politics.*
SR   *Some Reflections On Culture and Liberty.*
DK   *The Degrees of Knowledge.*
DD   *The Dream Descartes, together with some other Essays.*
TP   *The Peasant of The Garonne: An Old Layman Questions Himself about the Present Time.*
PG   *The Person and the Common Good.*
RR   *The Range of Reason.*
RM   *The Rights of Man and Natural Law.*
NC   *The Things That Are Not Caesar's.*
TS   *Theonas: Conversations of a Sage.*
TR   *Three Reformers: Luther – Descartes – Rousseau.*
TC   *The Twilight of Civilization.*

II. The Works of Thomas Aquinas
ST   *Summa theologiae.*
SCG   *Summa contra gentiles.*
In Meta   *Commentary on the Metaphysics.*

III. The Work of Aristotle
NE   *Nicomachean Ethics.*

INTRODUCTION

We are living in a world that is changing very quickly. We are in a time that confuses a civilization with any notion of virtues and vices. Life is always confusing if one's life is without a clear understanding of the nature of the human person. Only when we know what a human person is, can we say in what type of society a person should live and what institutions should serve her or him. According to Catholic social doctrine, there are two principles which serve as foundational pillars of social thought and action: the dignity of human being and the primacy of the common good. Each human person has unique and endless worth in the eye of God, since "God created each human person in His image, in the image of God he created humankind, male and female. He created them."[1] Since God created human persons in His image, they have an intrinsic value that transcends what is produced within nature. By virtue of her or his very created nature, each human person is endowed with inalienable rights, even though these inalienable rights are not always recognized by positive laws.

The human person is not only created with inalienable rights, but also is a social animal. Each of us is to seek not only her or his own private interests, but also the common good of society. Human society, in turn, does not exist only for the sake of its members' private interests, but also not only for the sake of the total sum of these private interests. It exists for the common good that belongs to no one and transcends everyone. The common good is an end which fulfills both society and each member of society. It includes an ethical life lived in common, a life based on justice, friendship, and charity. If a society is without these characteristics, it is not an authentic political society, but only a totalitarian State system or else anarchy.

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[1] *Genesis*, 1: 27.

Human dignity and common good are two basic principles which perfect a society. In this dissertation, we will try to understand Maritain's claim that there is a necessary relationship between these two principles. To pursue the common good and promote human dignity, in Chapters I and II, an effort is made to understand the nature of human being in the background of the hylomorphism defended by Aristotle and Aquinas. We depend heavily on their works to understand substantial form, soul and body of human being. Then, from Maritain's view, we distinguish the difference between person and individual to understand the person as a whole. Person must refer to the whole human being, in whom spirit is embodied. The whole human being, body and soul, are the composition of a person. The ways in which we understand nature of human being, human being as person, and person as a whole help us to organize ourselves collectively in political communities. Person is being-in-relation toward the common good.

Human dignity is at stake whenever the essential nature of human being and fundamental human rights are threatened. The need for a philosophical anthropology that offers an integral, harmonic, and profound vision of the human being becomes ever more urgent as our world changes in a way that brings this threat. In chapters III and IV, we will understand how Maritain offers an integral humanism in which every aspect of a human person's dignity can be lifted up (although we also know that this theory is imperfect). We will distinguish various acts of human being to confirm that the human act must have and relate to a moral essence, which is to say, to either its goodness or its evil. We then turn to an understanding of Aquinas's conception of the human act. In order to better understand this conception, we will also trace its roots in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*. Against this background, we will discover how Maritain's model of integral humanism can promote the common good in a way that is prepared to engage some parts of modern society and culture.

The particular value of integral humanism, therefore, can also be seen in the way Maritain points out the root of errors in modern philosophy in what he leads us to understand as anthropocentric humanism. The main problem of modern philosophy is that human being removes God from the center of the picture and places himself there instead. This shift also affects the fundamental forms of human community. We review Maritain's criticism of errors in certain notions of human equality that can be traced to the modern distance from God taken in the step to anthropocentric humanism. To correct these errors, theocentric humanism or integral humanism needs to be recovered.

In order to pursue the common good, the law must be established. The law is considered primary with respect to the common good rather than with the good of individual. In chapter V, we will understand theories of law, especially the theory of natural law and its application to the moral, political, and economic problems that confront modern man. We see how Maritain presents an overview of important concepts of Thomistic natural law. According to classical traditions, every law is a work of reason, at the source of Natural Law, and since every being has its own natural law, it has its own essence and desirable end. All created being has a natural function that serves to achieve the desirable end, so a natural law is found in all sensible beings and for human being, the natural law is a moral law.

Maritain holds that for human being the moral law is natural in two senses: ontological or metaphysical, and gnoseological or epistemological. The moral law is *natural* in the view that it is related to human nature in terms of human functioning and human ends. The natural law is *immanent* in human nature, and it is not deducible from human nature. Maritain also holds that the natural law is natural because of how it is known. This means that the natural law is natural in light of its epistemological character.

Maritain holds that the rights of the human person are based on natural law. "The dignity of the human person? The expression means nothing if it does not signify that by virtue of natural law, the human person has the right to be respected, is the subject of rights, possesses rights."[2] His main argument is that the human person is by nature endowed with rights. He provides us with a *résumé* of those rights, natural, based upon the *ius gentium.* It is important to note that not all of these are natural rights. It is also important to understand this within the entire context of Maritain's teaching on natural law, natural rights, and justice. Since the philosophical foundation of the rights of the human person is based on natural law, and since every creature acts by virtue of its Principle, the authentic rights of human person is bound by virtue of the right possessed by God.

Because of modern philosophy's denial of transcendence, "man has lost track of his soul." We cannot deny that the modern age offers many good things, though along wrong tracks, but the question now is that how we can seek good things along right tracts. Maritain suggests that "the only way of regeneration for the human community is a rediscovery of the true image of man and a definite attempt toward a new Christian civilization, a new Christendom" in which "a world of genuine humanism and Christian inspiration must be built."[3] The ultimate cause of the modern crisis is not only in the denial of transcendence, but rather an atmosphere of doubt which "distorts the way man pursues the primary precepts of the natural law. The natural law cannot be ignored, yet doubt leads modern man to assume he cannot fulfill it, that he can neither know Truth nor enjoy a truly common Good."[4] Therefore, to seek good things along right tracts we need to re-start philosophy based on the true idea of natural law.

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[2] *RM*, p. 37.
[3] *RR*, p. 193.
[4] Joshua Schulz, ed., *Engaging the Times,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017, p. 219.

In chapter VI, according to Maritain, the deepest result of the crisis from the modern to the present time is man's natural community in the natural law and his innate ordination to the transcendent as the source of ultimate value have been casted into doubt. In modern culture all is relative and nothing is absolute. It denies eternal truths. Those who accept this modernity have no first principles, no ultimate values, no unshakable commitments, no conviction that there is any final meaning to life. In order to get out of an atmosphere of doubt which distorts the way man pursues the primary precepts of the natural law is the ultimate cause of modern crisis. We need to restart from natural law with the common ground of ethics and rehabilitate the attitude of philosophical wonder. The attitude of wonder invites us to participate in being's mystery and to uncover the knowable. In contrast, the attitude of doubt tries to replace mystery with unknowability.

When we wonder at the assumed intelligibility of the universe, it opens us to the possibility of attaining transcendent truth. When we wonder at, the assumed sociability of human beings, we are opened automatically to other persons as an infinite source of growth, a kind of a vibrant and mutually supportive society. Aquinas argues that the precepts of the natural law or moral law come after man's natural teleological inclinations. Thus, it is the fact that from our form that each of us. "has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society." "To know the truth about God and to live in society," knowledge of God and love of neighbor, are the two most fundamental precepts of natural law, which come directly from human person's rationality. By his rational nature, on the one hand, human person desires to know the highest truth; and on the other hand, in order to attain the ultimate truth, human person seeks friendship so that through social relationships he or she can grow virtually to achieve his or her absolute ultimate end. To know the truth about God and to live in a pluralist society, we need right thinking about a pluralist society.

We agree with Maritain that a pluralist society has different worldviews and pursues the moral values in common. We must cooperate within a pluralist, multicultural, democratic society, but human dignity, freedom, and peace are not menaced between different outlooks. Maritain's solution to modern pluralist societies and relativism lies at how we deal with the tension between tolerance and truth, both of which are good elements to develop a society. He suggests we should have "right thinking" about both the objective order of ideas that are either false or true when considered in themselves and the subjective order of persons who hold these ideas. Right thinking about the subjective order of persons and the objective order of ideas is very important for solving the tension between tolerance and truth in the pluralist and democratic societies.

To deal with the irreconcilable struggle of the pluralist societies, we need to recover "what we need is not truths that serve us but a truth we may serve"[5] in agreeing with the traditional view of Christianity in circumstances of pluralist societies. Human beings do not need truth to serve them, but the truth that thy can serve. "Truths that serve us" is seen as an objectification of the world whereas "a truth we may serve" is seen as a demonstration of the goodness of God's creation. The expression "truths that serve us" expresses exactly the attitude of philosophies in the heart of our modern civilization. It extols doing over being, action over contemplation, problems over mysteries, analysis over intuition, conquering over nurturing. Our civilization is arrogant in its technology. "Truths that serve us" would lead us to a position in which human persons are proud of their accomplishments and power, while "a truth we may serve" would lead us to glorify and praise the Almighty God and His majesty in all creation.

If Christians live and pursue "a truth we may serve" in a pluralist society, they do not only live the natural law ("good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided"), but further the New Law: "love

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[5] *DK*, p.4.

one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." The supreme force of charity and the primacy of fraternal love among Christian communities are the foundation of the future course and direction of history in a time of extreme crisis. We hope that the law of love or charity, in Christianity's view and lived out by Christians, has the spiritual power to transform human history and society.

Part I: THE DIGNITY OF A HUMAN PERSON

Chapter One: Aristotle's and Aquinas's Hylomorphism as the Background for

Maritain's Presentation of the Person as a Whole.

> The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created him through love, and through love continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his Creator.
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> Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes,* 19 § 1.

I. Proposing Maritain's Integral Humanism

Every human being has at least a vague image, notion, or dream of what a human being is and how humanity ought to be, of how human nature[6] ought to act. Surely man is always studying himself. The most fundamental and most pressing question of all time concerns our own nature. Only when we know what man is, can we agree with each other what type of society one should live in and what institutions one should serve. Maritain wrote, "Nothing is more necessary to man than to *discern*, and nothing does he find more difficult."[7] He also confirmed, "Every great period of civilization is dominated by a certain peculiar idea that man fashions of man. Our behavior depends on this image as such as on our very nature."[8]

Human beings have been philosophizing about what a person is for more than twenty-five centuries, and in fact: we never stop questioning about our nature. The question of all social philosophy is therefore about the nature of man and man naturally asks himself in a threefold sense: "what – his essence?" "whence – his origin?" "whither – his end?"

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[6] The term nature designates a thing's specific identity, its essence and indicates the essential, dynamic constitution of a thing (seeing Mullaney, T. U., "Subsistence," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., vol. 13, Gale, 2003, p. 570).

[7] *TS,* pp. 173-4.

[8] Maritain, "What is man," *Jacques Maritain Center*, University of Notre Dame, https://Maritain.nd.edu/Maritainc/Maritain502.htm (accessed September 28, 2020).

Nothing is more important than the answer to this threefold question, because only when we know what man is, can we say in what type of society he should live and what institutions should serve him. Maritain approaches remarkable answers to this threefold question when in his philosophy of human being he examines the fact that a human being exists both as an individual and as a person. In his works, Maritain provides views of how integral humanism can promote a free society. It is not individual but personalist, not communist but communitarian, not anarchic but pluralist, not anthropomorphic but theistic. These features are the principal doctrines of Maritain's theocentric and integral humanism.[9]

From his distinction between person and individual, we begin to understand how a person is a whole and in order to understand what this means it is first necessary to review Aristotle's theory of hylomorphism which he used in the analysis of human persons, and then Aquinas' commentary where Aristotle's ideas are brought into contact with divine transcendence and creation. These are the essential background ideas for understanding Maritain's views of person and society.

According to Maritain, a human being is both a person and an individual. A man is an individual just as any other concrete sensible being existing in the extramental world of concrete reality, in the real world. However, man is different from other material individuals since man is also a person. Personality is the spirit, so it means that it is able to interiority to oneself. Personality has a certain subjectivity, a certain reflective awareness of self, and makes communications or relationships with others and with the Other. Man is a person as a whole and a social unit in relationship with others and with the Other as the end of the social whole. From this notion of human beings as both individual and person, Maritain proposes his integral humanism.

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[9] *CD,* xix.

II. A Brief Consideration of Aristotle's Hylomorphism

Aristotle claims that each thing which has a nature is a substance[10] and each concrete sensible substance (ουσία) is an individual being.[11] It is composed of form and matter – a doctrine known as *hylomorphism* or *hylemorphism*. The term "hylomorphism" drives from two Greek words. *Hyle* means "matter" and *morphe* means "form". Hylomorphism, first formulated by Aristotle, remains today one of the main theories of the constitution of natural objects, and almost all Scholastic philosophers agree that it is the only adequate theory. The central idea of this theory is that a concrete substance includes a composite of matter and form, and cannot properly be understood except as such.[12]

> What comes into existence must always be divisible, and there must be two identifiable components, one matter and the other form… It is obvious from what has been said that the part which is called form or substance does not come into existence, what comes into existence is the composite entity which bears its name.[13]

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[10] Aristotle, *Physics* II. 1, 192b33.

[11] It is good to know at the outset that Aristotle's conception of substance is developed over time. In Book VI of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* substances are simply divided into changeable and unchangeable substances, while in Book XII are distinguished three types of substances: (1) sensible and perishable, (2) sensible and eternal, i.e. the heavenly bodies, (3) non-sensible and eternal. Etymologically, the word 'substance' means "standing under," through itself, whereas the other categories are said to be properties or accidents of a given substance. It is translated from a Greek original whose signification terms of being (*ousia*). "Substance is a being absolutely and through itself; and all kinds other than substance are beings in a certain respect and through substance" (*In Meta VII*, lect. 1 (ed. Cathala-Spiazzi) no. 1248. Cf. ibid., nos. 1247-59, and *In Meta IV*, lect. 1, nos. 535-9). In *Categories* and *Metaphysics* VII, Aristotle divided substances into the primary and secondary substances. For Aristotle, individual existing things are substances in the primary sense because they actually exist and they stand under everything else, both the genera and species predicated of them and the accidents that are present in them. "Thus, everything except primary substances is either predicated of primary substances, or is present in them, and if these last did not exist, it would be impossible for anything else to exist" (*Categories,* 2b4-6). For example, Socrates is a primary substance, and man, the secondary substance, can be predicated of him (with e.g., black skin, fat, and taller than Peter). Genera and species of individual things are called in a secondary sense of the term substance (e.g., the species man, the genus animal). "When we exclude primary substances, we concede to species and genera alone the name 'secondary substance', for these alone of all the predicates convey a knowledge of primary substance" (*Categories,* 2b28-30). "Of secondary substance, the species is more truly substance than genus, being more nearly related to primary substance. For if anyone should render an account of what a primary substance is, he would render a more instructive account, and one more proper to the subject, by stating the species than by stating the genus" (*Categories,* 2b8-11). For example, I know Socrates by means of the species 'man' and the genus 'animal' that I predicate of him.

[12] Edward Feser, *Philosophy of Mind,* One World, 2018, p. 220.

[13] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VII, 8. 1033b 13 -19.

A concrete sensible substance as a compound of form and matter is the specific way in which things of our everyday experience are capable of undergoing change. The nature of anything is the principle of movement and rest within it.[14] The primary proof of hylomorphism is based on the fact of substantial change and is simply the development of Aristotle's previous analysis of change. Anything compounded of form and matter is also compounded of act and potency, but there are compounds of act and potency that have no matter (namely angels).[15] In general, the form is the *whatness* of a thing, the qualities that make the thing what is. There is one form per species. The formal element in a being is the same in all the members of a species.[16] The matter is what something is made of. The matter is the *thisness*. Aristotle defines matter as "the primary substratum of each thing, from which it comes to be without qualification, and which persists in the result."[17] The matter is what distinguishes individuals in the same species from each other. Matter is the principle of individuation and unknowable in itself.[18] The form of a substance is its organizational structure, and the matter is that which is provided organizational structure by the form. Form is that by which a substance comes to be, and matter is that from which a substance comes to be.[19]

For instance, Socrates and Callias are the same form, the form of man, but not in the same matter, they are different in virtue of the different matter that is informed. "When we have the whole such and such a form in this flesh and in these bones, this is Callias or Socrates; and they are different in virtue of their matter (for that is different), but the same in form, for their form is indivisible."[20]

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[14] Aristotle, *Physics* II. 1, 192b13-14.

[15] *ST,* I, 50, 2.

[16] We should note that Aristotle uses the same word: ειδος for 'species' and for 'form.' For instance, in some place of Aristotle's works, at first it seems to be that Aristotle is talking about the species *man,* but it may turn out to be about the *form* of the species *man* when it is further investigated.

[17] Aristotle, *Physics,* I, 9, 192a, 30-31.

[18] Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy,* vol. I: Greece and Rome, Doubleday Press, 1993, p. 309.

[19] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* VII 6. 1032a13.

[20] Ibid*.,* VII, 8, 1034a 5-8.

For Aristotle, the combination or the relationship of matter and form in individual beings always contains and includes an element of teleology or purposiveness into everything. We do not wonder why Aristotle believed that the formal cause of a thing is normally its final cause as well.[21] The purpose and nature of a thing must be the same. Form is what each thing is and also the purpose of thing is. Each natural thing "has *within itself* a principle of motion and of stationariness."[22] This is true of living things as well as non-living things. The fundamental difference between them is that the kind of motion which they possess is by virtue of their respective natures. The motion to living things is self-motion.[23] Aristotle distinguishes different levels of actuality in living things.[24] The ability to grow is natural in plants and animals, but even in the simple elements there are tendencies to move in fixed directions. For instance, the property of fire has the tendency to move toward the circumference of the universe and will do so unless it is hindered. When the fire reaches the circumference, its 'upward' motion will cease.[25]

The relationship of form and matter is so complex so that, with our human abilities, we do not fully understand it. A form is internal to a natural object and a principle within itself. It is immanent and dynamic in a natural object. "Since nature is twofold, the matter and the form, of which the latter is the end, and since all the rest is for the sake of the end, the form must be the cause in the sense of 'that for the sake of which'."[26] Thus, form must be a part of a natural thing from the

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[21] Ibid.*,* VIII, 4, 1044a36-b11.
[22] Aristotle, *Physics* II, 1, 192b13-14.
[23] Ibid.*,* VIII, 4, 254b.
[24] According to Aristotle, there is three kinds of souls are mentioned in *De anima* where they serve as a distinction between different levels of living things. First, plants have a vegetative soul, which is for reproduction and growth (simple living), second a sensitive soul, which is for animals that move and have some sort of sensual abilities, and third a rational soul for reflections and thinking. Of course, the higher forms always contain the lower forms, so that humans have a vegetative, sensitive and rational soul. However, in our time with chemical science we know that all sensible being, not only all living things, have an organized structure: that all sensible things that existed must be either substance or somehow dependent on substance for its existence (Aristotle, *On the Soul* II.1, 412a10, a22 and seeing explanation of Edward Feser, *Philosophy of Mind,* One World, 2018, pp. 19-20, pp. 50-51 and 52).
[25] Aristotle, *Physics* II,1, 192b37.
[26] Ibid.*,* 8. 199a30-32.

beginning. It is not only what things are, but also what they should be, and what they strive to be.[27]

Now a question is asked how do form and matter work together to become a sensible substance? If matter and form are distinct components within a composite, how can a natural object composed of matter and form be a genuine unity or be one substance?

III. Hylomorphism to Answer for Unity in a Sensible Substance

According to Aristotle's hylomorphic view, a sensible substance is composed of form and matter. It is one and the same thing rather than a heap and it is a kind of a syllable. He insists that each natural substance is a unity.[28] In *Metaphysics* V 6, Aristotle describes the various senses of "unity". These senses are mapped as follows:

(1) "one means that which is one by accident" (1015b16). He explained further by giving an example of the musical Coriscus. "For it is the same thing to say 'Coriscus and what is musical, and 'musical Coriscus'… For all of these are called one by virtue of accident.. They are accident of one substance" (1015b16-34).

(2) Of things that are called one in virtue of their own nature or substance (1015b17 and 36). Things which are one by themselves are so called:

(3 - a) either because they are continuous. A thing is called continuous which has by its own nature one movement and cannot have any other; and the movement is one when it is indivisible, and it is indivisible in respect to time. For instance, a bundle is made one by a hand, and a piece of wood are made one by glue, etc. (1016a1-16)

Or (b):

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[27] Seeing Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VII, 7-9.
[28] The meaning of "unity" is ambiguous in Aristotle's language. It is used equivalently with the term of "one". A person, a tree, a dog is called one thing, but sometimes hundreds or thousands of people are said to be one nation, or a pile of sand is said to be one.

4 - (i) because their substratum (substance) does not differ in kind. For instance, all juices, e.g., oil and wine, are said to be one, and so are all things that can be melted. They are called one because all these share the same (generic) nature, e.g., water or air (1016a19-24).

5 - (ii) those things are called one whose genus is one… and these are all called one because the genus that underlines their differences is one (e.g. horse, man, and dog form a unity, because all are animals). They are one because genus above the proximate one is the same. Therefore, the isosceles and the equilateral are called one and the same figure, because both are triangles; but they are not the same triangles (1016a25-32).

(6 - c) or because their definitions are indivisible (one and the same). Two things are called one, when the definition which states the essence of one is indivisible from another definition which shows us the other though in itself every definition is divisible (1016a33-1016b1-17).

(7) The essence of what is one is to be some kind of beginning of number. The one is the beginning of the knowable regarding each class. To be one is to be a principle with respect to something. The one as defined here is a universal object which requires to be further specified.

A human person is one in number, but among themselves human persons are one in species (1016b18-34).

(8) that which is one by analogy (1016b32).

Among the above senses of unity, the primary sense is (2) one by itself (*kath'autho*) (1015b17&36). Aristotle points out that things which are one by themselves are known either

because they are continuous or because their definitions are the same. His distinction is seen in two senses in which things are called one. The first sense is that it is derivative. The second is the primary sense and it applies to substances. According to Aristotle, then, the world is made up of individual substances as such man, dog, and tree. Each of these has within itself a substantial nature which causes it to exist in its own right. Such existence means that each individual substance is relatively independent of other things.

> The things that are primarily called one are those whose substance is one – and one either in continuity or in form or in definition; for we count as more than one either things that are not continuous, or whose form is not one, or those whose definition is not one."[29]

The point here is that a sensible substance is one in the primary sense, because its substance is one. The most important character which characterizes the one is indivisibility. A substance above all things cannot be divided. If each substance is a unity, even though there are some different kinds of unity as the above lists, and also a substance is composed of form and matter. But then, are form and matter, these ontological parts, somehow indivisible?

In *Metaphysics* VII. 17, Aristotle points out that a substance is not like a heap, but it can be like a syllable. For an organized unity, to be organized requires a principle responsible for the organization. Aristotle supposes that an organized unity must be distinguished from the matter which establishes it. A heap is not really a unity, but it can be called as a mere agglomeration of its material constituents.[30] The syllable *ba* cannot be thought as a mere heap of its constituents *b* and *a*. To be a syllable it must be formed either in speech or writing by a person[31] who also

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[29] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* V 6, 1016b8-10.
[30] Most ancient and modern commentators have interpreted Aristotle's views as if the hylomorphic compound were a mereological sum and thought that form and matter were two distinct elements in a sensible substance. With that view, they understood what relationship could adequately bring together two parts into a unity is in need of "re-conditioning" (see. Charlotte Witt, C. *Substance and Essence in Aristotle: An Interpretation of Metaphysics VII-IX*, Cornell University Press, 1989, pp. 6-37).
[31] This person with linguistic abilities can function as a principle of organization. He forms the syllable into the syllable that it is. For instance, if one knows the Vietnamese language, *ba* is not only b and a, but it contains a meaning either *ba* which can mean *bố (dad)* or *three (number three)*.

understand the language is rather than a mere arrangement of shapes *b, a*.[32] "The whole is one, not like a heap but like a syllable – now the syllable is not its elements, *ba* is not the same as *b* and *a*… ; the syllable, then, is something – not only its elements, but also something else."[33] Thus, for Aristotle, the form of the syllable "*ba*" unifies the letters, but not as an additional element, rather, as a principle.[34] In a similar way, a sensible substance is not the same as the totality of its elements, but it has something besides or beyond all of its elements.

> We are in the habit of recognizing, as one determinate kind of what is, substance, and that in several senses, (*a*) in the sense of matter or that which in itself is not 'a this', and (*b*) in the sense of form or essence, which is that precisely in virtue of which a thing is called 'a this', and thirdly, (*c*) in the sense of that which is compounded of both (*a*) and (*b*).[35]

To explain for something besides all of its elements or besides the combination of matter and form, Aristotle says that matter is a relative form – it is always the matter of something.[36] Form is not an element of sensible substance, but it is a cause or principle which makes matter is some definite things.[37] Form is the principle which directs the growth, development, and characteristic activity of a natural organism existing in the organism itself,[38] and matter is that which desires and receives the cause (*aitia*).[39] Maritain believed that "matter is an avidity for being, without determination,

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[32] Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle the desire to understand,* Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 20 - 21.

[33] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* VII.17, 1041b12-32.

[34] Ibid*.,* VII.17, 1041b25–31.

[35] Aristotle, *On the Soul,* II, 412a6-9.

[36] Aristotle, *Physics* II. 2, 194b9.

[37] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, VII, 17, 1041b8.

[38] Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle the desire to understand,* Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 25.

[39] Aristotle believes that in something called "prime matter" [the word: "prime matter" (*prôtê hulê*) and "primary underlying thing" (*prôton hupokeimenon*) is used several times: *Physics* I 9, 192a31, II 1, 193a10 and 193a29; *Metaphysics* V 4, 1014b32 and 1015a7–10; V 6, 1017a5–6; VIII 4, 1044a23; IX 7, 1049a24–7; *Generation of Animals* I 20, 729a32], which is the matter of the elements, where each element is a compound of this matter and a form. The prime matter is often seen as "pure potentiality." It can easily take on any form whatsoever and is completely without any essential properties of its own. It exists eternally. Because it is prime matter, which is the matter of the elements, which are themselves present in all more complex bodies, it is omnipresent. It stays not only elemental destruction and generation, but also all physical changes. Perhaps, Aristotle got the idea: "matter is that which desires and receives the cause" from his mentor, Plato, in *Timaeus,* 49-52, and adopts it: "a receptacle of all coming to be" (49a5-6). For Aquinas, "potency does not raise itself to act; it must be raised to act by something that is in act" (*SCG*, I.16.3) and "what is in potency to exist substantially is called *prime matter*" (*The Principles of Nature,* 1.2). From this, we can say that prime matter has no form whatsoever, and it has the potential to take on the various substantial form. Prime matter is just the notion of something in pure potential state in which is available to having any kind of form. This distinction is called a purely conceptual one by Aquinas. "Since all cognition and every definition are through

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an avidity which receives its determination from form."[40] Every natural being is a composite of an

actual, determining, and active principle called form and a potential, determinable, and passive

principle called matter. Marmodoro argues further that

> for Aristotle substances are paradigmatic unities, wherein the parts that compose them have undergone a *change in their identity criteria* by becoming parts of substance, so they are not in it as identifiable and distinct parts in the same way they were when they were "outside of" or separate from the substance.[41]

Matter and form are the genuine parts of a sensible substance, but each of them plays different

roles and has a distinct ontological status in the constitution of a sensible substance. They are really

distinct parts of the sensible substance. They are parts that enter into composition to make up the

complete nature.[42] Matter is entirely potential, and so is of itself undetermined to any form. A form

is what unifies a compound[43] and "is to "strip" the constituents of their original criteria of identity,

and make them functionally and definitionally dependent on the substance of which they have

become parts.[44] "Form alone is in its own way the cause of this being."[45] Both form and matter,

the constituents of a complete object, belong reductively to the category of substance; and are

integral parts which include in themselves the one substantial form of the whole composite.[46] They

gather together to constitute the only one complete substance and receive only the one act of being

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form, it follows that prime matter can be known or defined, not of itself, but through the composite" (*The Principles of Nature,* 2.14). Thus, what is *purely* potential does not have any actuality, so it does not exist at all. This is totally opposite to contemporary materialism. It is thought that "matter is all that exists" whereas for hylomorphism, matter by itself without anything else would not be existent.

[40] *SP,* pp. 65-6.

[41] Anna Marmodoro and Erasmus Mayr, *Metaphysics: An Introduction to Contemporary Debates and Their History,* Oxford University Press, 2019, p. 36.

[42] According to traditional Scholastic terminology, matter considered alone may be seen as an incomplete substance. Substantial form considered alone may be seen in the similar that way. However, Aquinas did not agree with the notion of an incomplete substance of primary matter and substantial form (see. Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics,* The Bruce Publishing Company, 1963, pp.150-151).

[43] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* VIII 6, 1045a7–10, and VII 17, 1041a26.

[44] Anna Marmodoro and Erasmus Mayr, *Metaphysics: An Introduction to Contemporary Debates and Their History,* Oxford University Press, 2019, p. 36.

[45] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence,* trans. Armand Maurer, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1968, p. 36.

[46] Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics,* The Bruce Publishing Company, 1963, p 150.

in a firm way of the substantial order. Form and matter are not beings but principles of a being.[47]

The union of form and matter constitutes one real and actual thing of a definite kind. Every

generated substance must belong to a certain kind of thing and has its special form, which is

identical to the form of its generator. "Since what comes into being comes about by the action of

something, and out of something (and let this be not lack but the material…), and becomes

something."[48] For instance, an oak tree is generated according to its tree-nature and from a seed,

and it must become a certain kind of plant – a living oak tree, impossible to be another type of tree.

Form and matter are not two inert ingredients of a sensible substance, but they are two causes of

its coming-to-be. They may from one angle be regarded as incomplete substances that are joined

together to make the one complete substance.[49]

> It is clear that most of what seem to be independent things are potencies, not only the parts
> of animals, but also earth and fire and air, since none of them is one, but just like a heap,
> until some one thing is ripened or born out of them.[50]

Through natural processes, as long as form is present and joins in matter, it corporates and makes

with matter an actual thing. Matter is no longer in a potential state and has already become an

actual being. A concrete sensible substance generated is result of the outcome from bringing a

form into a certain matter and is understood as an "enmattered form." Aristotle insists this

"enmattered form" is a strict unity, which means that it has only one substance and nature. The

unity of a concrete sensible substance is secured when the matter has attained the form and the

form has been realized in the matter.[51] To explain this process, according to Aristotle, form is

essentially and definitionally prior to matter and material parts[52] and "more real, it will be prior

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[47] J.A. J. Peters, "Matter and Form in Metaphysics," *The New Scholasticism* 31, (1957), pp. 447-83.
[48] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 1033a24-27.
[49] Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics,* The Bruce Publishing Company, 1963, p. 150. If matter or form is alone, each of them may be called an incomplete substance. Seee. Aquinas*, on Being and Essence*, trans. A. A. Maurer, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1968), chap. 6, para. 2., p. 67.
[50] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 1040b5-8.
[51] Ibid.*,* 1034a32-1034b1-2.
[52] I do not discuss how Aristotle explains this in here. Furthermore, seeing *Metaphysics* Z, 10–11, *Physics* B.1–2.

also to the compound of both."[53] Form is essentially and definitionally prior to particular and

universal compounds.[54] Whenever a form has been brought in some matter, a concrete sensible

substance is generated. At the same time, "matter exists in a potential state, just because it may

attain to its form and when it exists actually, then it is in its form."[55] And the matter to be grounded

on the form is precisely the kind of matter involved in substance such as human, house, or bed.[56]

The matter caused to be as it is by the form, is regarded 'causal-explanatory model' or posterior to

form by Aristotle.[57]

In the general, according to Aristotle's hylomorphism of sensible substances, every individual

actual substance of whatever kind is essentially composite of a determinable and determining

principle. "Because everything that comes to be moves towards a principle, i.e. an end (for that for

the sake of which a thing is, is its principle, and the becoming is for the sake of the end), and the

actuality is the end, and it is for the sake of this that the potency is acquired."[58] We have already

understood that form and matter are implicated in the explanation of how things come to be and

pass away. However, we should note that form and matter are not themselves the kinds of things

that come to be or pass. As Aquinas explains,

> prime matter, and even form, are neither generated nor corrupted, inasmuch as every
> generation is from something to something. That from which generation arises is matter;
> that to which it proceeds is form. If, therefore, matter and form were generated, there would
> have to be a matter of matter and form of form *ad infinitum.* Hence, properly speaking,
> only composites are generated.[59]

In short, according to hylomorphism, a being compounds of matter and form is the special way in

which things of our everyday are able to undergo change. A living being's matter is its body, which

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[53] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 1029a6.
[54] Ibid., 1035b4–6; 11–14; 18–20; 27–31.
[55] Ibid., 1050a15-16.
[56] Ibid., 1041a26-7; 29-30; 1041b1; b5-6; 6-7.
[57] Ibid., Z.10-11. / Z.10, 1035b11–14/ at 1035b19–20.
[58] Ibid., 1050a7-10.
[59] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature,* 2.15.

needs a soul in order to be alive. Because soul is form, form and matter are not two distinct elements which, when mingled, establish a living being. They are themselves unity which can be seen to have material and formal aspects. "That is why we can dismiss as unnecessary the question whether the soul and the body are one: it is as though we were to ask whether the wax and its shape are one."[60] Thus, soul or form is not a special element which breathes life into a lifeless being. It must be a certain aspect of a living being. That is why the living being is explained to be a substance and has a paradigm of a functioning unity. Aristotle proposes within the form of living beings a force for the preservation of form. This leads us to discover that each living being has only one substantial form. which helps us to understand that each human person has only one body and one soul. He or she is unique. This will help us to prove that there is only one substantial form for a sensible substance.

IV. Only One Substantial Form

Every natural changeable substance is a composite of two natural, intrinsic, constitutive principles: the determinable and the determining. They are a determinable potential element or primary matter and a determining actual element or the form. Primary matter is common to all sensible substances. Whatever is made out it must come from the same ultimate potential matter – primary matter. [61] And each different kind of substance must possess this matter under a different kind of actual form. And "a form, considered in itself, does not have the complete nature of an essence, nevertheless it is part of a complete essence."[62] Thus, what exists must be the composite of form and matter, but

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[60] Aristotle, *On the Soul,* II.I., 412b6-7.
[61] According to Aristotle and Aquinas's view, primary matter, properly, is formless, natureless, characterless, indefinitely mutable. It is not seen as atoms, protons, electrons or any definite actual thing in chemico-physical elements. It is only an available element there to be made into something, but it is not in itself anything actual. "Primary matter does not exist by itself in nature, since it is not actually being, but potentially only; hence it is something concreated rather than created" (*ST*, I, 7, 2, ad 3). "The act which primary matter is in potentiality is the substantial form. Therefore the potentiality of matter is nothing else but its essence" (*ST*, I, 77, 1, ad 2).
[62] Aquinas*, On Being and Essence,* trans. A. A. Maurer, 2nd ed., (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1968), chap. 6, para. 2., p. 67.

form and matter are not beings. They are the two substantial principles of a being. Each of the two

substantial principles exercise its own proper causality. Arising from the composition of these two

principles, the being of a thing bears the marks of both. If each had formal act in itself, each could

have its own distinct formal cause of being. This means that there can be only one substantial form

in any substance.

> Now it is the nature of a substantial form to give to matter its existence without qualification. For the form is that through which a thing is the very thing that it is; through accidental forms a thing does not possess unqualified existence, but only qualified existence, for example, to exist as large, or colored, or something of this kind. Therefore, if there is a form which does not give unqualified existence to matter but which accrues to matter that is already actually existing through another form, then such a form will not be a substantial form.[63]

Form and matter are not substances but parts. They are not considered to be substances in

themselves. There is no other substances of their own, even incomplete substances.[64]

> Hence in order that any things should become actually one, it is necessary that they all be brought together under one form, and that they do not have each its own form by which they are in act. Therefore, it is clear that if a particular substance is one, it will not be made up of substances that exist actually in it.[65]

According to Aquinas, form and matter are only two components of one complete substance, not

even incomplete substances in themselves. From this notion, some people have referred to

"Thomistic dualism" or "hylomorphic dualism." Of course, this dualism is not property dualism

or Cartesian dualism which is well known to contemporary thinkers. Both these dualisms, alone

with materialism, are united in rejecting the very notion of form or soul as organizing, animating,

and directing principle of the body.

Cartesian dualism holds that the form or soul and matter or body are two complete substances.

This dualism was expounded by Descartes in text such as his *Meditations on First Philosophy*.

According to Descartes, human beings are composed of two complete substances: mind and body.

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[63] Aquinas, *Questions on the Soul,* q. 9, trans. James Robb, Marquette University Press, 1984, p. 127.
[64] *ST,* III, 2, 2, ad 3m.
[65] Aquinas, *In VII Metaphysics,* lecture 13, no. 1588.

The mind and body are connected and able to influence each other. However, the mind is distinct from body. Each person is identical with its mind, not its body. The real self is my soul, not my body. As Descartes write,

> My essence consists solely in the fact that I am a thinking thing. It is true that I may have (or, to anticipate, that I certainly have) a body that is very closely joined to me. But nevertheless, on the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing; and on the other I have a clear and distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply an extended non-thinking thing. And accordingly, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body and can exist without it.[66]

According to Descartes's dualism, the body is defined by the early modern philosophers in virtue of the mechanistic conception of matter. It is thought on the model of a machine and their operations are mechanically automatic. It denies the very existence of final causes and operates entirely in terms of a notion of cause as events. This rule is out any sense of a cause and an effect that would be simultaneous, as Aristotle and Aquinas defend. "It should be understood in speaking of actual causes that what causes and what is caused must exist simultaneously, such that if the one exists, the other does also."[67] For Descartes, the mind is essentially a *thinking* thing (*res cogitans*). Descartes's philosophy therefore is far from Aristotle and Aquinas on matter and form, substance, and person, etc.

The problem with Descartes's view is easily seen, and it points back to the stronger position of Aristotle and Aquinas. If form and matter are two complete substances, how do we explain that the mental world can interact any causal influence on the physical things to come to be one complete substance? It is only in the view of hylomorphism that an instance of formal causation relating two components of one complete substance is plausible and able to solve this difficulty. It is only form and matter or soul and body together which constitute a complete substance. For only

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[66] *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John. Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge, 1985), ii. 54. For modern defenses of Descartes's position, seeing H. D. Lewis, The Elusive Self (London, 1982) and Richard Swinburne, The Evolution of the Soul (Oxford, 1986).
[67] Aquinas, *The Principles of Nature,* 5. 34.

as soon as the intelligible form or soul is realized in matter or body, does individuality come to be.[68]

Matter also is only the part of man which is not intelligible. It can be understood in a proper way that matter is *infra-intelligible.* Matter can be seen to be the principle of individuation. It is reason why Aquinas is convinced that "one thing has but one substantial being. But substantial form gives substantial being. Therefore, of one thing there is but one substantial form."[69] It means that in any one complete substance, no matter how complex it is, it has only one substantial nature, which in the case of a human being is the intellective soul. All the parts of each complete substance are made up of what they are by that one substantial nature.

For example, in the human being or organism there is mere one substantial form, the intellectual soul. It informs every part of the body, making the whole a complete, unified, integral organism, and giving to each part its structure and function. The different parts of the human body are made up, according to chemists, by the various chemical elements and compounds, but according to Thomists, they are not present as distinct substances in the body. If they were actually present as distinct substances, the human person could not be one substance, but it had to be an aggregate of many substances. This is not plausible for the substantial forms of these elements and compounds to exist within the body, but it needs the soul to link and unite all these elements and compounds, and then, functioning and molding each of them according to the right function. The soul (the principle of life) never ceases to remain and activate them and leads all of them to the end of the organism as such. Only the accidental forms of the elements and compounds are present in the body, and all the matter throughout the whole body is united with one substantial form, the human soul and therefore, "it is impossible for there to be in man another substantial form besides the

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[68] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 1035b 30-31.
[69] *ST,* I, 76, 4, sed contra.

intellectual soul."[70] As we will see, this conclusion is very important for Maritain to prove and distinguish the difference between an individual and a person, and also a person as a whole.

The whole body of one thing is united with one substantial form is called the doctrine of the unicity of substantial form. This doctrine is opposed to the doctrine of the plurality of substantial forms accepted by many philosophers of the Augustinian school.[71] Here I do not focus on the historical debate between Aquinas and his contemporary adversaries,[72] and how Aquinas defends the unity of the substantial form against those who support a plurality of substantial forms.[73] I simply provide some quotations where Aquinas makes the unicity of substantial form plausible and logical. These passages will help us later to understand why human being is a hylomorphic composite: soul and body. In turn, this will prepare us to understand Maritain's view of a person as a whole.

Aquinas with regards to one substantial form in *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* and with reference to those who make thinking of form as the term of generation and posit a plurality of forms, says this.

> Many make mistakes about *forms* by treating them as if they were substances. This seems to happen because forms are described by using nouns, just as substances are, albeit abstract nouns, such as whiteness or virtue, and so on. That is why some are led by this way of speaking to treat them as if they were substances. From this, two errors arise: (a) some people posit a *hidden existence* for forms; (b) others hold that forms exist by being *created*. For they reckon that whatever is true of a substance ought to be true of a form, and so, when they fail to find a source from which forms can be generated, they hold either that they are created {cf. (b)}, or that they pre-exist in matter {cf. (a)}. They do not notice that just as *being* belongs not to a form but to a subject by means of the form, so too the process of *coming into being* (which concludes with there being a form) does not belong

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[70]Ibid., 76, 4.

[71] Brother Benignus, *Nature, Knowledge and God: An Introduction To Thomistic Philosophy,* The Bruce Publishing Company, 1949, pp. 107 - 8.

[72] For understanding more, the historical debate, see Daniel A. Callus, "The Origins of the Problem of the Unity of Form," *The Thomist* 24, 1961, 257-83 and Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages,* New York, 1955, pp. 416-20.

[73] The details of this discussion are interesting, but not to the point of this dissertation. I refer the reader to Joseph Owens, *An Element Christian Metaphysics,* pp. 143-154; Armand Maurer, "Form and Essence in the Philosophy of St. Thomas, *Mediaeval Studies,* XIII (1951), pp. 165 – 176.

to the form, but to the subject. A form x is called a 'being' not because *it itself is*, if we speak strictly, but because *something is it*. In the same way, a form is said to 'come into being' not because it itself comes into being, but because something comes to be it: namely when its subject is brought from capacity to actualization.[74]

Aquinas points out the misconception of the formal cause as an efficient cause. Substances are compounded by matter and form as the two principles of being, but they are noted as beings in their own right related to one another as mover and moved. Aristotle and Aquinas sometimes mention the soul as a mover, but the soul in those cases must cause the body to be an organized whole. The soul as mover presupposes a prior and more essential activity of the soul. "The soul does not move the body by its essence, as the form of the body but by the motive power, the act of which presupposes the body to be already actualized by the soul."[75]

> For one thing to be another's substantial form, two conditions are required. One of them is that the form be the principle of substantial being to the thing of which it is the form: and I speak not of the effective but of the formal principle, whereby a thing is, and is called a being. Hence follows the second condition, namely that the form and matter combine together in one being, which is not the case with the effective principle together with that to which it gives being. This is the being in which a composite substance subsists, which is one in being, and consists of matter and form.[76]

We should also attempt to understand the connection between the view of form as a mover and the doctrine of the plurality of forms. Aquinas points out that the doctrine of the plurality of forms is reduced to the Platonic conception of the soul as sailor in the ship.[77] A plurality can be acceptable, only if the soul is seen as a mover cause rather than as a formal cause.

> Plato held that there were several souls in one body, distinct even as to organs, to which souls he referred the different vital actions, saying that the nutritive power is in the liver, the concupiscible in the heart, and the power of knowledge in the brain. . ... The opinion of Plato might be maintained if, as he held, the soul was supposed to be united to the body, not as its form, but as its motor. For it involves nothing unreasonable that the same movable thing be moved by several motors; and still less if it be moved according to its various

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[74] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues: On the Virtues in General,* edited by Atkins and Thomas Williams, Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 73-74.
[75] *ST*, I, 76, 4, ad.2.
[76] *SCG,* II, 68, p. 171.
[77] Here I do not debate Plato's theory of soul as mover of the body and how we can adjust the Platonic theory of the soul as the sailor in the ship and set a plurality of movers to Aristotle and Aquinas's theory of the hylomorphism.

parts. If we suppose, however, that the soul is united to the body as its form, it is quite impossible for several essentially different souls to be in one body.[78]

The doctrine of unicity of substantial form should not be considered that the parts of an organism or a compound substance are just accidents. They also are not complete substances, but they are parts. All parts are determined by the one substantial form of the substance of which they are parts. The parts of a substance are potencies of the matters made actual by form. A given substantial form can be only actualized by matters that is prepared for it. Because the form is received by the prepared or suitable matters, it is very natural that these prepared matters must bear the marks of their origin from particular elements into the compound. Although the prepared matters have something in connection with the compound there is no reason for them to retain or remain the substantial natures which they had before the combination. Thus, Aquinas suggests the unicity of substantial form can be proven through processing from the higher form to the lower forms virtually.

> More probable, however, seems the opinion of the Commentator [Averroes] … who … says that the forms of the elements neither remain in the compound nor are entirely corrupted, but that out of them is made one intermediate form, according to as they are augmented or diminished. But since it is not proper to speak of a substantial form as suffering augmentation or diminution, it seems that his statement ought to be understood in the following way: that the forms of the elements are not augmented or diminished as actual substantial forms, but inasmuch as they remain virtually in the elementary qualities, as if in their own instruments; so that it may be said that the forms do not remain as actual substantial forms, but only as being present virtually in their qualities, from which one intermediate quality is made.[79]

Matter in process of change from a lower to a higher form never ceases to manifest certain traits exposed under the lower form. This is because from the beginning the matter could not have capacity to receive the higher form, if it did not possess something in its nature which made it proper for the higher form. Aquinas suggests that the higher forms, because they are higher, are able to contain the substantial form of the lower substances virtually, but not actually. The higher

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[78] *ST,* I, 76, 3.
[79] Aquinas, *Commentary on Boethius's De Trinitate,* IV, 3, ad 6.

substance contains the perfection found in the lower substances virtually but does not contain them as actually distinct substances.

> There is no other substantial form in man besides the intellectual soul; and that the soul, as it virtually contains the sensitive and nutritive souls, so does it virtually contain all inferior forms, and itself alone does whatever the imperfect forms do in other things. The same is to be said of the sensitive soul in brute animals, and of the nutritive soul in plants, and universally of all more perfect forms with regard to the imperfect.[80]

Form and matter are the two intrinsic principles or causes of the substance. By actualizing and determining the matter, form makes it be a specific nature. By receiving and embodying the form, matter becomes and is in concrete being. Form is the principle of essence or species, and matter is the principle of individuation. "Forms which can be received in matter are individualized by matter, which cannot be in another as in a subject since it is the first underlying subject; although the form of itself, unless something else prevents its, can be received by many."[81]

When a complete substance subsists, it is called a supposit and when a substance exists directly through the real thing that corresponds to its nature, it is called subsist.[82] A complete substance is one that can exist per se. It is above all things indivisible. Subsistence belongs only to individual substances. Both material and substantial principles of a concrete sensible substance are not subsistent, for each of them does not directly have being in itself. Both belong reductively to the category of substance. Each of them is only a principle of an existent substance. It is only indirectly, and just as it belongs to the category of substance only indirectly.[83] "For the being that

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[80] *ST,* I, 76, 4.

[81] Ibid.*,* I, 3, 2, ad 3.

[82] From the Latin *subsistere,* subsistence means to stand under, or to stand still. It is "that mode of existence which is self-contained and independent of any subject, and also a being that exists in this manner, synonym of *hypostasis, res subsistens, persona,* i.e., both that which exists for itself and not in another and also the manner of existence…" (L. Deferrari, M.I. Barry, and J. McGuiness, *A Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas,* Washington, 1948, p.1063). Bernard Wuellner, S.J., *Dictionary of Scholastic Philosophy,* The Bruce Publishing Company, 1956, pp. 119-120

[83] For the same reason a non-spiritual substantial form is not subsistent. It is only a principle of an existent substance. Further, cognitional being does not suffice to make a thing subsist. A thing does not have cognitional being in itself, but only in a knower. Cognitional being is being in something else, and so does not confer subsistence. Universal cannot subsist. (Seeing Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics,* The Bruce Publishing Company, 1963, p. 151).

a composite substance has is not the being of the form alone nor of the matter alone but of the composite, and it is essence according to which a thing is said to be."[84]

According to Aristotle's hylomorphism, the nature of any sensible substance compounds of matter and form. This doctrine regards the only possible explanation of the immanent finality of nature, namely, an intrinsic, essential nature-determining principle in each substance – a principle which organizes the matter into a substance of a definite nature and endows it with a specific set of properties. However, for Aquinas, a sensible substance is not identical with its essence. "In things composed of matter and form, the nature or essence must differ from the *suppositum*, because the essence or nature connotes only what is included in the definition of species."[85] Suppositum is *that which* has an essence, *that which* exercises existence and action, *that which* subsists. Essence is *that which* a thing is.[86] Thus, while created essences are divided into both possible and actual, existence is always actual and opposed by its nature to simple potentiality.[87]

Aquinas makes an important distinction that the complete substance is existence (esse) and in all finite beings existence is other than essence. The essence gives an answer to the question as to *what* the thing is, whereas the existence is the affirmative to the question as to *whether* it is. Aquinas is convinced that "I can know what a man or what a phoenix is and still be ignorant whether it has been in reality. From this it is clear that being is other than essence or quiddity, unless perhaps there is a reality whose quiddity is its being. This reality, moreover, must be unique and primary."[88]

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[84] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence,* trans. Armand Maurer, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1968, p. 36.
[85] *ST,* I, 3.3.
[86] *EE*, p. 53.
[87] *ST*, I, 3, 4.
[88] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence,* trans. Armand Mauer, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1968, p. 55.
Norman Kretzmann, *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas,* Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 101.

In *Reply Objection* of *ST*, I, 3, 5, ad. 1, "The substance signifies not only what exists of itself; but, it also signifies an essence that has the property of existing in this way – namely, of existing of itself; this existence, however, is not its essence."[89] In this definition, both essence and existence appear. Substance signifies the basic principle in a thing in its reference to a per se mode of existence, while essence signifies reference to existence without specifying dependent or independent mode. It emphasizes the absolute and independent character of substance and also provides the reason for substance's capacity for supporting accidents.

> There are two things proper to substance as a subject. The first is that it does not need an extrinsic foundation in which it is sustained, but is sustained in itself; and thus it is said to subsist, as existing per se and not in another. The second is that it is itself a foundation sustaining accidents; and as such it is said to stand under (*substare*).[90]

Aquinas also makes distinctive God's substance and all creatures. All finite substance has its existence as act in relation to which substance is potency, whereas "only in God is His substance the same as His existence."[91] "God contains within himself all the perfection of being" because He is Being itself, or "the very act of existing, subsistent by itself."[92]

In chapter three: "Being in itself and contingent being the idea of nothingness" of *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism* to answer, "why is there being?" Maritain points out that

> It is absurd to seek a cause for God's being, it is legitimate and necessary to seek a cause for the world's being. Out of these two problems is made a single pseudo-problem: why is there being?
> In fact, being which is being according to its whole self and in which essence and existence are one, cannot have any cause. On the other hand, being which is participated and in which essence and existence are distinct, absolutely needs to have a cause; and this cause, far from being posited "at the bottom of everything" like a principle in logic, exists necessarily above everything like a boundless plentitude of perfect life whose being transcends infinitely the beings of things.[93]

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[89] *ST,* I, 3, 5, ad 1.
[90] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Power of God,* 9, a.1.
[91] *ST,* I, 54, 1.
[92] Ibid*.,* I, 4, 2, c.
[93] *BPT*, p. 87.

When a complete substance subsists, it is called a supposit. According to scholastic theologians and philosophers, what is called *supposit* at the infrahuman level is called *person* in the human species.[94] When a particular substance is a human nature, the supposit is a person. "The individuals of the rational nature have a special name even among other substances; and this name is *person*."[95] A supposit is an individually existing substance. It must be an existent and is something that really acts. This is what we call "*subject* St. Thomas called *suppositum.* Essence is *that which* a thing is; suppositum is *that which* has an essence, *that which* exercises existence and action *that which* subsists."[96]

We have now understood that for Aquinas, following Aristotle, the sensible beings or the objects of our experience are composites of form and matter. Both form and matter together are principles to constitute a complete substance. Each sensible substance exists one and only one substantial form for its being. This theory applies to all inanimate objects as well as all living things.

V. Soul and Body of Human Being: Anima Forma Corporis

According to Aristotle, we can find threefold division of things in the sensible world: mineral, vegetable, and animal. However, for him, the more important distinction is a distinction between living and nonliving beings. Among living beings, from human person's experience, there are three kinds, namely, plants, animals, and human beings. All living beings have certain common characteristics: nourishment, growth, and reproduction, but what differentiates all living beings from inert bodies. Aristotle was aware that in the world of sensible beings, the transition from nonliving beings to living beings and from plant life to animal life is gradual and not a clear-cut.

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[94] *New Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement 2012-13: Ethics and Philosophy,* vol 4, pp. 1480-7.
[95] *ST*, I, 29, 1.
[96] *EE*, p. 53.

If we did not recognize the clear-cut distinction among kinds of living beings in some situations, each distinct kind of things, Aristotle thought, has a essence that distinguishes it from all the others. In his scheme of classification, Aristotle arranged in an ascending order. Each of the higher classes is higher because it possesses the characteristics of the class below. The higher class possesses certain distinguishing characteristics that the class below does not possess. Human life is the highest form of life in the world. Human beings possess characteristics of other animals, and they also can perform certain functions that no other animals perform. Human beings can perform all the vital capability performed by other animals, and, in addition, can have ability to ask general questions and seek answers to them by observation and by thought. That is why Aristotle named human beings rational animal. Animals are a higher form of life than plants. The animate is a higher form of existence than the inanimate.

Of course, we can divide each class or kind of beings into an endless variety of subclasses. The differences between one subclass and another of the same class of being are superficial. Aristotle called the superficial differences accidental whereas the basic differences divide different classes regarded as essential.[97]

In following Aristotle's divisions, Aquinas uses the term *anima (soul)* as if it were merely a noun associated with *animata (animate)* to describe form which makes the difference non-living and living things. "For we call living things *animate* [or ensouled], and those things which have no life, *inanimate* [or not ensouled]."[98] Soul simply names one kind of special form among others

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[97] Mortimer J. Adler, *Aristotle for Everybody: Difficult Thought Made Easy,* A Touchstone Book, 1978, pp. 3-9.
[98] *ST,* I, 75, 1.c.

which we use to designate a substantial form. It confers on matter which it actualizes and performs vital operations.[99]

In *On the Soul,* Aristotle says that the nature of the soul by means of the formula *"anima forma corporis"* (the soul is the form of the body)."[100] The soul is defined as "the first principle of life in those things which live" and the soul, "which is the first principle of life, is not a body, but the act of a body; thus heat, which is the principle of calefaction, is not a body, but an act of a body."[101] What is it exactly to have the soul or the form of a living thing? What are living things essentially different from non-living things? Are the three kinds of living things essentially different from one another? Aristotle answers that "life is essentially that by which anything has power to move itself"[102] and according to Aquinas, "the more immanent the activity, the higher the life."[103]

Earlier, we noted that for Aristotle and Aquinas's view, all things can move itself moved by the unmoved Mover or the First Cause. Thus, a living thing is a kind of thing whose activities originate from within. "All things are said to be alive that determine themselves to movement or operation of any kind."[104] Among all living beings, there is a supreme and perfect degree of life, *"qui est secundum intellectum,"* which is according to the intellect: "for the intellect reflects on itself, and can understand itself, *seipsum intelligere potest*."[105] Since the highest capacity of human soul, the intellect, is an immaterial power,[106] the human persons are peculiar examples of form-matter composition. Nowhere else in sensible beings can we find an immaterial power united to a body

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[99] The human soul is special form, because, on the one hand, like the form of any material object, it exists in the composite of two components which it comes into being; on the other hand, unlike the forms of other material objects, it is directly created by God, as an individual thing in its own right (Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas, p.207*).

[100] Aristotle, *On the Soul,* II.1.234.

[101] *ST,* I, 75, 1.

[102] Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima,* II.1.219, trans. Kenelm Foster and Silvester Humphries, Dumb Ox Kooks, 1994.

[103] *SCG,* IV,11.

[104] *ST*, I, 18, 1.c.

[105] *SCG*, IV, 12, p. 48.

[106] About "intellect," we will discuss at chapter 2 at II.2. of this dissertation.

except in the human person. The human soul is a different form than other material forms and has been absolutely. It is not only a substance, but also *hoc aliquid (this thing),* designations that apply only to the human soul among all other forms.[107] In this case, the distinction between soul and body is a special case of the distinction between form and matter.

The most important element of distinction between non-living and living things depends on the distinction between transeunt and immanent causation. Transeunt causation is directly entirely outwardly, from cause to an external effect. In contrast, immanent causation means the performance by an agent of an operation which still remains within the cause itself. "By vital operations are meant those whose principles are within the operator, and in virtue of which the operator produces such operations of itself."[108] Of course, in living beings they also have transeunt causes, but characters of these causes are that they possess capabilities of immanent causation that non-living beings do not have. A living being has abilities to attain or reach its own good whereas it is impossible for a non-living being. Moreover, for Aquinas, life is not only an operation, but it is the living thing of being. It is a kind of substance. It is not the parts of a complex machine that have no inherent tendency to come together in complete unity.

> The name [life] is given from a certain external appearance, namely, self-movement, yet not precisely to signify this, but rather a substance to which self-movement and the application of itself to any kind of operation, belong naturally. To live, accordingly, is nothing else than to exist in this or that nature; and life signifies this, though in the abstract, just as the word *running* denotes *to run* in abstract. Hence, *living* is not an accidental but an essential predicate.[109]

The parts of a machine are not natural as are the parts of a natural thing. They must be arranged by human beings to form a complete thing. The parts of a machine or any human artifact are impossible to have the immanent causation. The arrangement of an artifact is accidental, not

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[107] J. Obi Oguejiofor, *The Philosophical Significance of Immortality in Aquinas,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001, p. 89.
[108] *ST,* I, 18, 2, ad 2.
[109] Ibid., I, 18, 2, c.

substantial. Thus, a machine cannot have a soul. As we note previously all sensible beings including the non-living beings can be governed by the teleological principle. It is immanent teleology that is set up in nature of all things by the First Cause, from whom they are derived.[110] The manner in which soul is the form of a living things, depends, for Aquinas, as for Aristotle, on the degree to which the movements of the living agent are distinguished by the agent itself from within. All living beings have their capacities for nutrition, growth, and reproduction. For these capacities, the most basic kind of soul is the soul which provides these three powers. The vegetative soul is named for this basic soul. The soul of plants which gives the thing, that has it, the powers of taking nutrients, growing, and reproducing itself is the plant's own nature which is the agent of this movement.[111] Some living things, animals and human beings, can perceive and sense, but plants cannot. An animal performs immanent operations which are called a sensitive soul. Its own nature is not only the powers of the vegetative soul, but in addition the forms which it possesses within itself the powers of sensation.[112] With these powers an animal can sense or receive the world around it through sense. Animals cannot determine for themselves the ends of their own operations. They can only desire or be repulsed by natural instinct to those sensible goods which they apprehend. Man for Aquinas forms a specific type of being, distinct from other beings, and the nature of such a specific being must involve whatever the strict and correct definition of the being must include.[113]

Human being is superior to plants and animals, since the powers of the rational soul include the powers of the vegetative and sensitive souls. According to Aquinas's conception there is a natural

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[110] Edward Feser, *Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide,* One World, 2019, pp. 135-7.

[111] Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima,* II.7-9, trans. Kenelm Foster and Silvester Humphries, Dumb Ox Books, 1994.

[112] Ibid., II. 10 ff, trans. Kenelm Foster and Silvester Humphries, Dumb Ox Kooks, 1994.

[113] *ST*, I. 75.4.

hierarchical relationship among the powers of the souls. An advanced soul resides in upper levels of the hierarchy. The higher contains the lower, but the powers of higher souls in the hierarchy cannot be reducible to those of lower kinds of soul. The rational soul incorporates and adds to the powers of both the vegetative and the sensitive souls. The sensitive soul incorporates but adds to the powers of the vegetative soul.[114] Although in an important sense, a human being possesses at the same time a rational soul, a sensitive soul, and a vegetative soul, according to Aristotle and Aquinas, in a more important sense one living being possesses only one soul. The soul is the substantial form of the living substance, and one substance possesses only one substantial form. One living being possesses only one soul. Within an individual the human being has only one substantial form to constitute its specifically human mode of existence. Man possesses a single and unique substantial form which is the human form. It includes his being man, his being animal, living, body, substance and a being.[115]

VI. When Soul Joins to Body

If one living being has only one soul, we may wonder when or how does the soul conjoin with the body and when or how does it leave in the case of human being? According to hylomorphism, the soul is the form of body. Whenever soul and body or form and matter come together, they compose a living body in the first place, at that moment when the soul is present in the body. This can be said in simple terms: whenever the body itself is present, the soul also is present. Thus, if as current biological science contends the human organism comes into being at the moment of conception, then the soul must be first present at this moment. A human organism only comes into being if it has two principles of form and matter together. If it is lacking one of the two principles, it would

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[114] Aquinas, *Disputed Question on the Soul,* I *,* a. 9, ad Resp.
[115] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Spiritual Creatures,* art III, c, also
        https://isidore.co/aquinas/QDdeSpirCreat.htm#3

not come into being as a human organism, for the matter that composes it would not have the requisite form. It must be in the same way that whenever the human organism is alive, the soul must remain to be present, otherwise the living human body could not come into being in the first place. The soul is known as "the principle of life in those things in our world which live,"[116] so whenever the soul leaves or is in some other way not present in the body, the human being is dead, has no life, *inanimate*. Even though we still see the dead body (corpse) is present there, it is not a living body.[117] This means that if a human body is in the absence of the rational soul, the human body is no longer a human body (it is a corpse). "If the soul has been removed, neither the human body nor the eye remain unless equivocally."[118] This brings us to a crucial question: how do the soul and body work together in the unique individual person?

To understand the nature of any being, we need to discover its operation. Because the rational soul is man's form, "consequently, corporeity taken as meaning the substantial form in man, is nothing else but the rational soul."[119] According to Aquinas' view, in some way man's bodily being is the spiritual soul itself. The rational principle is the form of body. This operation is characteristic of the human being. By the intellectual principle the human being surpasses all other animals in dignity.[120] The human soul is causally responsible for the various activities which make up a human life. Man acts the means of its soul.

> It is clear that the first thing by which the body lives is the soul. And as life appears through various operations in different degrees of living things, that whereby we primarily perform each of all these vital actions is the soul. For the soul is the primary principle of our nourishment, sensation, and local movement, and likewise of our understanding. Therefore, this principle by which we primarily understand whether it be called the intellect or the intellectual soul, is the form of the body.[121]

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[116] *ST*, I, 75, 1, c.
[117] Edward Feser, *Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide,* One World, 2019, pp. 138-40.
[118] Aquinas, *Disputed Question on the Soul,* I, a.9.
[119] *SCG*, IV, 81, p .275.
[120] *ST,* I, 76, 1, ad. Resp.
[121] Ibid., 76, 1, c.

However, man's condition is not simply such this he uses not simply that a soul uses his body as a mover uses whatever he moves, but a true whole, composed of body and soul.[122] Man is not an aggregate, a juxtaposition of two substances, but a natural whole, single being. "The human body is brought to reality by the soul. It is essentially one and the same form by which man is a real being, by which he is a living being and by which he has animal life and by which he is man."[123] Here we should not mistake Aquinas's position for Plato's idea that the soul is in the body as the pilot on his ship. Aquinas considers the intellect to be united with the body as the motive force of the body. This supposes that the soul to be the mover of the body has no right to attribute the intellectual activity of the soul to the whole human being.[124] For the intellectual operation, the form of body, is immaterial while body is material, so body and soul should not be understood as a mixed being which participate at the same time in the immaterial and the material substances composing it. When the component parts conjoin together and a complete being comes into being, the mixture is complete and, in a sense, no longer exists as mixed parts. If the component parts still exist, it is impossible to be a being, but simply a conglomerate. Moreover, nature of intellectual substances is incorruptible and subsistent.[125] The intellectual operation cannot unite with the body to form a mixture in which it would cease to exist. For Aquinas (and more generally the Christian view), the soul cannot pass away. It remains a form after separation, even though it does not vivify a body anymore.[126] It survives the death of the body.

> The soul communicates that existence in which it subsists to the corporeal matter, out of which and the intellectual soul there results unity of existence; so that the existence of the whole composite is also the existence of the soul. This is not the case with other non-

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[122] Aquinas, *Disputed Question on the Soul,* I, 1, ad Resp.
[123] Ibid., a.1.
[124] Ibid., 1, ad Resp.
[125] *ST,* I, 75, 2.
[126] *SCG,* II, 81, 8.

subsistent forms. For this reason, the human soul retains its own existence after the dissolution of the body; whereas it is not so with other forms.[127]

The human soul is naturally capable of union with a body by some fundamental feature of its own nature. It is not accidentally united, but essentially with the body. When the soul is combined with the body in constituting an individual human being, his own soul and body is totally unique. An individual human nature is a natural unity of the rational soul and body, each complementary to the other. There is no separation between man and his body. The body is not a "thing," but the expression of ourselves. It must be the same person who experiences pain and pleasure in his body who is aware of his sense-perceptions. Since man directly experiences it and senses it as a mode of being of his own self. This is why, strictly speaking the term "man," means neither the human soul nor the human body, but the combination of soul and body taken as a whole.[128] "It is one and the same man who is conscious both that he understands, and that he senses. But one cannot sense without a body: therefore, the body must be some part of man."[129]

Since matter or body is some part of man and "matter has not actual being except through a form,"[130] Aquinas argues that when the substantial form is reunited to matter, the "being" of the person, which has not been corrupted by the death, can be restored. Because "the soul of man is an individual substance, existing by and unto itself as a perfectly defined unit; because it is destined to objective immortality, genuine personal immortality, not in time and history, but in eternity."[131] For Aquinas, the resurrection of the body is not only necessary because the revelation of Scripture lets us know, but it is metaphysically necessary due to the nature of the human species. He makes a logical explanation that the life of the body is bestowed to it by the soul. The soul is form, and

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[127] *ST*, I, 76, 1, 5.
[128] Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Aquinas,* trans. Edward Bullough, Dorset Press, p. 215.
[129] *ST*, I, 76, 1, c.
[130] *SCG*, IV, 81.
[131] *RR*, p. 54.

form is the actuality of matter. If the soul is really immortal, then its life-giving will not be hampered to continue. Hence, the body would also be immortal, since an effect still continues if its cause remains to operate.[132] The human soul cannot perish, because it subsists itself and does not depend on material influences from outside. The act of being of sensible substances is not applied to one of their two components, but it attributes to the whole which is that which exists. When this whole is separated, its components also cease to exist. However, for human beings, its whole being depends on his spiritual soul, which communicates it to the body. Since human being's being is not separate from the spiritual soul, it remains connected to the soul after the death.[133] And by the virtues of perfection of its whole human being, its spiritual soul does not want to lose its perfection. It has something to attract to the primary matter of the body. The body is there for the sake of the spiritual soul, the perfection of which is the reason for the union. The soul can never absolutely leave behind its relationship with matter. If it belongs to the very nature of the soul to be the form of the body, then its ordination to matter is inescapable. The only way to destroy the relation would be for the soul to be dissolved by God, but God is love. He creates all creatures by His love. He never does that.[134] Thus, for Aquinas, nothing can be destroyed by that in which its perfection consists, since the body plays a very important role, which perfects the soul.

> No part has the perfection of its nature when it is separated from whole. And so since the soul is a part of human nature, it does not have the perfection of its nature except in union with the body… And so, although the soul can exist and intellectively cognize when it is separated from the body, nonetheless it does not have the perfection of its nature when it is separated from the body.[135]

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[132] Aquinas, *Disputed Question on the Soul,* a.14, ob. 20: "While the cause remains, the effect remains. However, the soul is the cause of the life of the body. Therefore, if the soul always remains, it seems that the body also always lives." (manente causa manet effectus. Sed anima est causa vitae corporis. Si ergo anima semper manet, videtur quod corpus semper vivat).

[133] *ST*, I-II, 4, 5, ad 2.

[134] Bernard Boedder, S.J., "Chapter I: The Divine Preservation and Concurrence," *Natural Theology,* Book III, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902 also seeing Jacques Maritain Center https://www3.nd.edu/~maritain/jmc/etext/nath46.htm (accessed Setemper 17, 2020).

[135] Aquinas, *Disputed Question on the Soul*, 2, ad 5.

Since no part of the whole is separated, the living body belongs inseparably to the being of man. The soul forms itself a living body, a self-identical living body, as its material expression. The identity of a human body is decided in virtue of its soul, but not in virtue of its matter. The living body is totally determined by reference to the soul. Thus, the material things from out of which human physiology is formulated obtain their figure of being "body" in terms of being formed by the expressive power of soul. This can help us to explain the distinction between 'bodiliness' and 'physiological unit.' A living body is not only calculated by the individual molecules and atoms which are added up, but the identity of the living body does not depend on the sum of all material elements. It depends on the fact that the soul's power of expression attracts matter into the soul.[136] In this point, we can see Aquinas is over and surpasses Aristotle's teaching.

With Aristotle the definition of soul as act or "entelechy," that is, "substance in the sense of the form of a natural body which has life through its own potentiality."[137] For him the soul is seen as an organic principle. It is tied as form to its matter, and so soul is perishable when union of form and matter ends. The truly spiritual thing in human being locates in the "mind," *nous.* It is not seen as something individual and personal, but as a participation of human being in a divine and transcendent principle.[138] For Aristotle, "the soul is the form of the body" only means that the soul is tied to matter. The soul of man is dependent on matter for being what it is. For him form and matter are strict correlatives. Form becomes reality only when it unites with matter, and matter without form is in state of potency. If the soul is form, it only belongs to the world of sensible bodies. It seems to be a kind of thing which comes to be and then passes away again. The soul of

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[136] Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life,* trans. Michael Waldstein and Aidan Nichols,Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988, pp. 178-81.
[137] Aristotle, *On the Soul,* B, 2, 412a 19ff.
[138] Aristotle, *On The Generation of Animals (De generatione amimalium)* B. 3, 736b 28. 3, 737a 10; 6, 744b 22.

human being is not immortal. In turn, the soul does not belong to the world, so it cannot be individual and personal.

In contrast, Aquinas affirms that the soul of man is at the same time both something personal and the 'form' of matter. This twofold affirmation of Aquinas is unthinkable for Aristotle. With Aquinas's affirmation it can be explained that the human soul is so totally and fully one with the body that the term 'form' can be used of soul and remains its accurate meaning. It is understood that the form of the body is soul, and the soul belongs to the body as 'form' which is the form of body is still soul.[139] Both soul and body are realities. They are both attracted by each other and oriented towards each other. They are not identical, but they are one. They together establish an individual human being.

> The soul is not two things: substance, and the form of the body. Rather, is it substance *as* the form of the body, just as it is the form of the body *as* substance…. The separation of the soul from its body goes against its nature and diminishes its likeness to God, its Creator. Being in the body is not an activity, but the self-realization of the soul. The body is the visibility of the soul, because the soul is the actuality of the body.[140]

According to Aquinas's interpretation of the formula *anima forma corporis,* unity of soul and body in an individual human being depends on the creative act of the soul to matter. The identity of the body is derived from the person, the soul in the fullest sense, and not from matter. Bodiliness is something other than a sum of all cells and corpuscles. The physiology becomes truly body through the heart of the personality. This is what makes the human being an individual, a person and opens him to immortality.[141]

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[139] Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life,* trans. Michael Waldstein and Aidan Nichols,Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988, pp. 144-50.

[140] Schneider T., *Die Einheit des Menschen. Die anthropologische Formel 'anima forma corporis' im sogenannten Korrektorienstreit und bei Petrus Johannis Olivi,* Munster 1972, p. 23, 27 (quoted from Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life,* trans. Michael Waldstein and Aidan Nichols, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988, p 149).

[141] Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life,* trans. Michael Waldstein and Aidan Nichols, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988, pp. 144-50.

Aquinas provides one another reason that by virtue of its very nature the spiritual soul always desires to exist. A natural desire exists which results from the very nature of all things. "Being-ness is better than nothing-ness."

> From the fact that everything naturally aspires to existence after its own manner. Now, in things that have knowledge, desire ensues up on knowledge. The senses indeed do not know existence, except under the conditions of *here* and *now*, whereas the intellect apprehends existence absolutely, and for all time; so that everything that has an intellect naturally desires always exists. But a natural desire cannot be in vain. Therefore every intellectual substance is incorruptible.[142]

Moreover, according to Aquinas, the human soul is created directly by God and infused into matter.[143] The soul is actuality, and its perfected state is embodied existence. A state of disembodied existence is not natural and impermanent to the soul. Consequently, the state of the soul's separation from the body cannot last.

> It is therefore contrary to the nature of the soul to be without the body. But nothing which is contrary to nature can be perpetual. Hence the soul will not forever be without the body. Therefore, since the soul remains forever, it should be united again with the body, and this is what meant by rising (from the dead). The immortality of souls seems then to demand the future of bodies.[144]

In short, we have seen that our understanding of the meaning of hylomorphism, unity in a sensible substance, and one substantial form in one being, helps us have a clear notion of a sensible substance. The nature of any sensible substance is a compound of form and matter. Matter is the principle of individuation and form is the principle of essence. If nature of one sensible substance is rational, the supposit is called a person. Person as any other sensible substance is one of those beings whose substance is one, and which is one in the substantial form. This makes up the metaphysical understanding of "person" that Maritain accepts from Aquinas. Now we turn to understand how Maritain explains the human person as both person and individual. When we

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[142] *ST*, I, 76, 6, c.
[143] See, e.g., *ST,* I, 90, 2.
[144] *SGG*, IV, 79.

understand this properly, we can then turn to the question of person as a whole, we will in itself and in relationships with others or society.

VII. Maritain's Distinction between the Person and the Individual

To understand Maritain's concept of person as a whole we begin with the starting point of his anthropology in which he points out a distinction between person and individual. Maritain realizes that a deep understanding of the human person's nature will lead to solutions of innumerable political and social problems. In *Three Reformers* (*Trois Réformateurs),* published in 1925, he gave a harsh criticism of Luther, Descartes, and Rousseau as the begetters of the errors of the modern world, and all philosophical movements or thinkers rooted in the work of these three.

> Look at the Kantian shriveled up in his autonomy, the Protestant tormented by concern for his inward liberty, the Nietzschean giving himself curvature of the spine in his effort to jump beyond good and evil, the Freudian cultivating his complexes and sublimating his libido, the thinker preparing an unpublished conception of the world for the next philosophical congress, the "surrealist" hero throwing himself into a trance and plunging into the abyss of dream.[145]

Maritain's distinction between person and individual was first appeared in this work when he said, "see with what religious pomp the modern world has proclaimed the sacred rights of individual, and what a price it has paid for that proclamation."[146] However, for Maritain not all philosophy formulated by modern philosophers or from their perspectives was totally erroneous or beyond rescue. There were incontestable proofs that some features of modern philosophy had positive effects, and that it had produced some philosophical good fruits which could not be dismissed. The tree of modernity had generated good fruit. Thus, Maritain adopted what he called the "judgment of ambiguity." He thought that it was necessary to discriminate among modern perspectives, and then appreciated the Scholastic movements of Catholic philosophy which were attacked or

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[145] *TR*, p. 19.
[146] Ibid., p. 19.

damaged by the errors of modern perspectives.[147] From the standpoint of this Christian approach,

Maritain gave us definition of person and individual.

> *Person* is "a complete individual substance, intellectual in nature and master of its actions," *sui juris, autonomous,* in the authentic sense of the word. And so, the word *person* is reserved for substances which possess that divine thing, the spirit, and are in consequence, each by itself [*à elle seule*], a world above to the whole bodily order, a spiritual and moral world which, strictly speaking, is not *a part* of this universe. . ... The word *person* is reserved for substances which, choosing their end, are capable of themselves deciding on the means, and of introducing series of new events into the universe by their liberty; for substances which can say after their kind, *fiat,* and it is so. And what makes their dignity, what makes their personality, is just exactly the subsistence of the spiritual and immortal soul and its supreme independence in regard to all fleeting imagery and all the machinery of sensible phenomena.
> *Individual*, on the contrary, is common to man and beast, and to plant, microbe, and atom. . ... So that in so far as we are individuals, we are only a fragment of matter, a part of this universe, distinct, no doubt, but a part, a point in that immense network of forces and influences, physical and cosmic, vegetative and animal, ethnic, atavistic, hereditary, economic, and historic, to whose laws we are subject. As individuals, we are subject to the stars. As persons, we rule them. [148]

Ancient wisdom had known this distinction between person and individual, whereas the modern

world makes them confounded. "There is nothing new in this distinction; it is indeed a classical

distinction, belonging to the intellectual heritage of humanity." [149] We can find this distinction in

the fact that the Greek language has two terms for life: "Bios" and "Zoe." "Bios" indicates the way

of living proper to an individual life, the life that was contained within the singular living thing.

"Zoe" expresses the simple fact of living common to all living beings.[150] According to C.S Lewis,

although Bios and Zoe have differences to distinguish, they must be the same sort of thing. Bios

which comes to human being through nature is in the form of air, water, food, etc., whereas Zoe,

which is in God from all eternity, and which made the whole natural universe, is a transcendent

form of life, life that could be shared. All comes from God. Bios has a certain shadowy

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[147] Juan Manuel Burgos, *An Introduction to Personalism*, Catholic University of America Press, 2018, p. 46.
[148] *TR*, pp. 20 - 21.
[149] *PG*, p. 43; and *SP*, p. 63.
[150] Laurent Dubreuil, "Leaving Politics: Bios, Zoe, Life," *Diacritics* 36, no. 2, Summer 2006, pp. 83-98.

resemblance to Zoe and its natural tendency would draw up into the Zoe.[151] Maritain could take

the distinction granted, as it is well known that it comes from a fundamental distinction in

Aquinas's philosophy and the work of some Dominican theologians such as Pere Garrigou-

Lagrange and R.P. Schwalm, O.P.[152]

We should be aware that what is distinguished between "person" and "individual" by mind is not

necessarily separable in reality. Although we can plainly distinguish "individual" from "person,"

we cannot separate them from each other in the concrete human being.

> We do not represent two separate things. There is not in me one reality called my
> individuality and another called my personality. It is the same entire being which, in one
> sense, is an individual and, in another sense, a person. I am wholly an individual, by reason
> of what I receive from matter, and I am wholly a person, by reason of what I receive from
> spirit.[153]

Some authors criticized Maritain's distinction between person and individual as overly effected by

the Cartesian split between *res extensa* and *res inextensa*. However, his distinction convinces that

there is a formal difference between the person and the individual human being.[154] For his most

important book, published in 1932, Maritain chose the title *Distinguish to Unite or The Degrees*

of Knowledge. "To distinguish to unite" became the motto of his philosophical life. He analyzed

the relationships of the sciences that study the world of nature. Maritain began with discussions

of the natural sciences and ended with studies on mystical experience. As Yves Simon shared, this

disposition has been with him from the beginning of his philosophical and religious development.

"He knows St John of the Cross as well as St Aquinas."[155] Thus, every effort in Maritain's

philosophy is to distinguish, but ultimate purpose of distinction is not to separate things into

fragments, it must distinguish in order to unite. "To distinguish to unite" helps understanding more

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[151] C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* Macmillan Publishing Company, 1960, pp.123-4.
[152] Joseph W. Evans, "Jacques Maritain's Personalism," *The Review of Politics,* vol. 14, No. 2 (Apr., 1952), p. 168.
[153] *SP*, p. 68.
[154] Romanus Cessario, O.P., *The Virtues or The Examined Life,* Continuum, 2002, p.135.
[155] Joseph W. Evans, ed., *Jacques Maritain: The Man and His Achievement,* NY: Sheed and Ward, 1963, p.7.

profoundly the multi-faceted constitution of being, the diversity with unity in which the object of philosophical inquiry is integrated. He analyzed "his data in order to rise to their ontological principles and integrating within his investigation of causes, points of information which he gets from the theologian, just as, on other occasions, he likewise integrates points of information that he gets from the biologist or the physicist."[156] In the distinction between person and individual, Maritain wants to understand how they combine, like soul and body, to constitute a single and united human being.

The distinction between person and individual does not mean that a person rooted in spirit is higher than individual as rooted in matter. Matter is not thought that something is evil itself. It is not "the body, in which we are imprisoned like an oyster in its shell."[157] Since material individuality is the very condition of man's existence, it is something good when it submits to the just demands of person. It only becomes bad as long as it reverses natural order and seeks preponderance over personality.[158] Moreover, Maritain's distinction wants to say that "the individual *qua* individual can be subordinated to larger societal interests, the individual *qua* person enjoys an excellence that surpass that of the whole human social order and, because of the divine design, finds rest and perfection only in union with God."[159]

1. Individuality

Human being is both a person and an individual. "The human being is caught between two poles; a material pole, which, in reality, does not concern the true person but rather the shadow of personality or what, in the strict sense, is called *individuality*, and a spiritual pole, which does

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[156] *DK*, pp. xi - xii.
[157] Plato, *Phaedrus,* 250c.
[158] *PG*, p.43.
[159] Romanus Cessario, O.P., *The Virtues or The Examined Life,* Continuum, 2002, p.135.

concern *true personality*."[160] A human being is an individual just as any other concrete sensible beings existing in the extramental world of concrete reality, in the real world. We must reaffirm, first of all, with each other a fundamental knowledge that only individuals have real existence, existing outside the mind that exists whether or not any human being is thinking about it at the moment. Each individual is called a real being or a being in reality. In contrast to the real being, existence in the mind or imagination or sensation may be called cognitional beings, and an idea or representation in thought can be called intentional beings. If they do not have real existence, they cannot have capacities of exercising the act of existing. Thus, in following the thought of Aquinas with an emphasis closed to existentialism, Maritain wrote that "the act of existing is the act *par excellence.*" "The act of existing is the actuality of every form or nature." "It is the actuality of all things, and even of forms themselves." The act of existing, which is not an essence, but it is that which is most actual and most formal.[161] The act of existing is the underlying subject. It is this subject (what is called *supposit* at the infrahuman level is called *person* at the level of the human species) that exercises the act of existing and allows an essence to make its entrance into the real world. For Aquinas, as Maritain interprets him, reality is composed of subjects or supposita that exercise existence and manifest an essence.

> Existent subjects or supposita which subsist in the individual nature that constitutes them and which receive from the creative influx their nature as well as their subsistence, their existence, and their activity. Each of them possesses an essence and pours itself out in action.[162]

This point is very important to help us to distinguish real entities from those Platonic ideal forms that float in abstraction. "Nor can we say that the notions of a genus and species belong to an essence as a reality existing outside of individual things, as the Platonists held."[163]

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[160] *PG*, p. 33.
[161] *EE*, p. 26.
[162] Ibid., p. 55.
[163] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence,* trans. Armand Mauer, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1968, p. 45.

In human being, as in all other sensible being, individuality has its first ontological roots in matter. A human being is an individual because of "matter with its quantity designated." For Maritain, individuality designates that "concrete state of unity and indivision, required by existence, in virtue of which every actually or possibly existing nature can posit itself in existence as distinct from other being."[164] As a material individuality, each of us has but a precarious unity, which tends to be scattered in a multiplicity. For matter in its nature inclines to decompose itself. Therefore, each human being is a fragment of a species, and the species in turn is a part of a larger whole. However, human being is different from other material individuals. He or she is also a person.

> Man is an animal and an individual, but unlike other animals or individuals. Man is an individual who holds himself in hand by his intelligence and his will. He exists not merely physically; there is in him a richer and nobler existence; he has spiritual super-existence through knowledge and through love.[165]

2. Personality

Human being possesses sensitive knowledge like other animals but is different from them in that he or she has intellect and will. "Even if the intellectual part in us is small as regards its material size (as it is limited by man's small bodily dimensions), it far surpasses other things by its power and dignity."[166] Because of its power of intellect and will, in following Aquinas, Maritain explained

> a donkey does not have a natural desire to become a lion, because this would involve a desire to destroy what it is, that is to say, a donkey. But intelligence, love, personality, are not destroyed in passing from an inferior to a superior degree of being. Far from being destroyed, these transcendental perfections are then more than ever themselves. That is why there exists in us, as reasonable animals, a natural desire, which is not exactly of ourselves but of a transcendental element within us, to pass beyond the human condition: which does not take place, of course, without some accidents, and which too often makes us want to be unreasonable animals. But precisely because these desires to pass beyond the human state are not desires of our own specific nature but are only the product of a transcendental element in us, they remain inefficacious and conditional.[167]

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[164] *PG*, p. 34.
[165] *RM*, pp. 2-3.
[166] *NE,* X, 1777b33.
[167] *SP,* p. 130.

Thus, human being, with powers of intellect and will, can transcend matter. Unlike the concept of individuality of corporeal things, the concept of personality is not limited by matter. It is the deepest and highest dimensions of human being. Though man is indeed a material being, he is still more a spiritual being. The person is "a substance which lives a life that is not merely biological and instinctive but is also a life of intellect and will."[168] According to human nature, a person is the subsistence of the spiritual soul communicated to the human composite. Person is an imprint which enables it to possess its existence and makes it perfect and free. It demands to communicate itself according to man's proper nature.

In human being the subsistent form is "at the same time the form of matter, and as actuated by being it forms the matter and makes the matter be. In man therefore the act of being comes to the matter and the composite not directly but because they are actuated by an existent form."[169] Thus, within the secret depths of our ontological structure, person is a source of dynamic unity, of unification from within. "Personality is subsistence, the ultimate achievement by which the creative influx seals, within itself, a nature face to face with the whole order of existence so that the existence which it receives is its own existence and its own perfection."[170]

Since personality is the spirit, it means that it is able to relate interiorly to oneself. Personality has a certain subjectivity, a certain reflective awareness of self. "Only the person is free; only the person possesses inwardness and subjectivity – because it contains itself and moves about within itself." "I know myself as subject by consciousness and reflexivity."[171] Maritain explains in a concrete way in daily observance that because of very fact that I am a person, I can express myself to myself. I can make communications with "*that which is other* and with *others*" in the order of

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[168] *EE*, p. 66.
[169] Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics,* The Bruce Publishing Company, 1963, p. 323.
[170] *PG,* p. 40-41.
[171] *EE*, p. 56 and p. 57.

knowledge and love.[172] Thus, to be a person is to be both self-possessing and self-giving. We are self-possessing because we have a capability for self-awareness and of self-determination. We are self-giving because we have capability of self-communicating and receptivity to others. We could not be self-possessing unless we were first be open to others. We are only ourselves only when we open or relate to others. According to Maritain, self-mastery is for the purpose of self-giving.[173] "A person is a universe of spiritual nature endowed with freedom of choice and constituting to this extent a whole which is independent in face of the world – neither nature nor the State can lay prey to this universe without its permission."[174]

When a person communicates or relates with others and the Other (God), he is not shut up in himself, but an open whole to give or share with and receive from others. To explain how a person can be "an open whole" Maritain begins by understanding the relation between personality and love. For him, love is a movement that leads itself to the deepest center of one's personality. Love is not concerned with qualities or natures but with *persons*. It concerns the metaphysical center of the beloved's personality. Of course, love wants to reach the deepest center of person, but it never ignores the qualities of the one who is loved, because it wants to be united one with them.

> What I love is the deepest reality, the most substantial, hidden, *existing* reality in the beloved – a metaphysical center, deeper than all qualities and essences which I can discover and enumerate in the beloved… Love aims at this center, without separating it from the qualities, – in fact, merging into one with them.[175]

Moreover, the lover does not only manifest his love in giving gifts which are merely presented his love, but also the lover offers himself as a gift. It is "capable of giving and of *giving itself;* capable of receiving not only this or that bestowed by another, but even another self as a gift, another self

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[172] *PG*, p. 41-2.
[173] *EE*, p. 67.
[174] *IH*, p. 9.
[175] *SP*, p. 66.

which bestows itself."[176] Thus, according to this notion, relationship between the lover and the

beloved is not a subject to an object or vice versa. It is not just the mind thinks of an object and

the object in being grasped and mastered by the subject increases the richness of the subject.

However, it becomes subject to subject in a reciprocal relationship.

> We know those subjects; we shall never get through knowing them. We do not know them as subjects, we know them by objectizing them, by achieving objective insights of them and making them our objects; for the object is nothing other than something of the subject transferred into the state of immaterial existence of intellection in act. We know subjects not as subjects, but as objects.[177]

It is through love that each person brings unity to other's fragmented personality. The intellect

only knows things as objects, since "knowledge as the immaterial super-existence in which the

knower intentionally is, or becomes, the known." However, love lifts us up to a different and

higher level. It loves the other as a subject, since "loves as the immaterial super-existence in which

the beloved is or becomes, in the lover."[178] By love, the metaphysical center of personality is

abilities to offer oneself as a person and to receive the gift of another person. Love helps to reach

more completely the purpose of our existence. It lifts and makes perfect our personalities. It breaks

down all barriers that keep people at a distance from each other, causing them to see one another

as objects, not as subjects. It is the nature of subject to transcend the operation of the intellect. "In

the subject, *that which,* we possess an essence or an intelligible – insofar as it is this or that, insofar

as it possesses a nature. In the verb *exist* we have the act of existing, or a super-intelligible. To say

that which exists is to join an intelligible to a super-intelligible."[179] It is the reason why love

becomes sources in the metaphysics of inter-subjectivity. "Union in love makes the being we love

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[176] *PG*, p.39.
[177] *EE*, p. 56.
[178] Ibid., p. 29.
[179] Ibid., p. 24.

another *ourselves* for us is to say that it makes that being another subjectivity for us, another subjectivity that is ours."[180]

Subjectivity is an essential mark of the difference between philosophy and religion. Philosophy only investigates the relation of intelligence to objects whereas religion elevates to the relation of subject to subject. Religion is that by which, in human being, the *suppositum* becomes *persona,* and person can exist as subject. Person is "a whole which subsists and exists in virtue of the very subsistence and existence of its spiritual soul, and acts by setting itself its own ends; a universe in itself; a microcosm which possesses a higher ontological density than that whole universe."[181] Because person's abilities are "open" with others and the "Other," the Western metaphysical tradition defines the person in terms of independence: "the person is a reality, which, subsisting spiritually, constitutes a universe by itself and an independent whole, in the great whole of the universe and facing the transcendent Whole, which is God." Thus, human being does not only bear to God the same resemblance as all other creatures that are created by God, but it resembles Him in a special and proper way. For God is pure Spirit, and man is both as person and individual. The whole human being proceeds from God, and since the person subsists spiritually, he is capable of both knowing and loving. God is defined as love, so love in human being might help us to be uplifted by grace to participate in God's life and establish subject-to-subject relationship between human being and God. It might know and love God as He knows and loves Himself. [182] For this reason, religion becomes a paradigm for the existence of inter-subjectivity. This is why Aquinas says that person is that which is noblest and highest in all nature.[183]

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[180] Ibid., p. 69.
[181] Ibid., p. 56.
[182] For this explanation, seeing *SP*, pp. 67-8.
[183] *EE*, p. 56.

Subjectivity both gives and receives. "Subjectivity, this essentially dynamic, living and open center, both receives and gives. It receives through the intellect, by super-existing in knowledge." However, it is not given by the intellect, but "it gives through the will by super-existing in love." Thus, 'it is better to give than to receive', because of love that a person can attain the supreme revelation of his personal reality by "the principle of a gravitational pull or intentional connaturality by which the lover tends inwardly towards existential union with the beloved, as towards its own being from which it has been separated, and thus loses itself in the reality of the beloved."[184] At the same time the lover discovers the basic generosity of existence and realizes that love has the very meaning of his being alive. The life of personality is self-giving and self-development. It is not a passing emotion or pleasure.[185] As a result, subjectivity requires sacrifice that cannot be found in individuality. Sacrifice cannot be impersonal.

In short, as an individual, each human person always has need of others so that he can receive and be existent in the world. He only receives existence when he "opens" himself to enter into a subject-to-subject reciprocal relationship with others. As a material individual, human person needs to live with others because of his natural needs. He cannot survive and act, because of his needs or deficiencies, which derive from his material individuality. As a person, human being also needs to "open" to others or society, because of his or her perfection and his or her inner urge to the communication of knowledge and love.[186] Now, what is the relation of human being to others or society?

3. Human Being in Relation to Society

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[184] Ibid., p. 29.
[185] Ibid., p. 68.
[186] *PG*, pp. 48-9.

In the very beginning of *The Person and the Common Good,* Maritain asks "does society exist for each one of us, or does each one of us exist for society? Does the parish exist for the parishioner or the parishioner for the parish?"[187] In his circumstances of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, on the one hand, individualism declares the absolute liberty of each person and argues that if the body politic exists, it must exist for individual. On the other hand, totalitarianism or an exclusively communal conception of society argues against individualism declares that man must exist for the body politic. In his response to these two conflicting positions, Maritain discerns elements of truth in each of them. Solution to the dilemma that they present depends on how the status of human being in society is applied to the metaphysical distinction between the person and the individual. We need to distinguish between every social philosophy centered on the primacy of the individual and on the private good and a social philosophy centered on the dignity of the human person. When human being is seen as person, he is the whole. "If the person of itself requires "to be part of" society, or "to be a member of society" …he requires to be treated as a whole in society."[188]

When human being is seen as individual, he is only a part of society. He exists as *part* of a whole which is better and greater than its parts, and of which the common good is worth more than the good of each part. He exists for society. Human being, as an individual, required to be treated as a part. However, human being, as a rational being, never really exists as a mere individual. For this, Aquinas writes "the good of the universe is greater than the particular good of one, if we consider both in the same genus. But the good of grace in one is greater than the good of nature in the whole universe."[189] As previously noted, we have understood that the distinction between "person" and "individual" by mind is not necessarily separable in reality. "For this paradox is linked to the fact

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[187] Ibid., p. 11.
[188] Ibid., p. 58.
[189] Ibid., p. 18n.

that each of us is altogether an individual and altogether a person." Thus, human being is always a person, although he is in various stages of development as a person. He must always be treated as a whole. As a person, human being lives in society as being evidence of a whole within a whole: "The person, as such, is a whole – a whole open and generous… when such a person enters into the society of his fellows, he becomes a *part* of a whole, a whole which is larger and better than its parts, in so far as they are parts… society, being a whole of persons, is a *whole of wholes*."[190] Moreover, according to Maritain, each person not only belongs to the temporal realm where human being are a part of the order of physical universe and a part of a political body in that they were made for the order of the created universe, but also belongs in the eternal realm to God. There is an order of goods that each person directs in proportion to its level of importance. "Man alone in the universe is willed for his own sake," since each man as "a rational being is made, first, for God, second, for the perfection of the order of the universe (it is for both the universe of spirits and of the bodies), and third for itself by which it perfects itself and accomplishes its destiny."[191] The whole that a person is, is not only for itself and for the society, but first of all is destined for eternal union with the transcendent Whole. For Maritain, "a single human soul is of more worth than the whole universe of bodies and material goods." "The human person, as a spiritual totality, referring to the transcendent Whole, *surpasses* all temporal societies and is superior to them."[192] As a person, human being both transcends society and possesses eternal values. Society exists for each person and is subordinated to it. For the eternal destiny of the soul and its supra-temporal goods, this is why the political bodies of the temporal realm should not have an absolute claim on each of us. "Man is not ordained to the body politic according to all that he is, and he has… But all that man

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[190] For this explanation, seeing *SP*, pp. 74-5 and *PG*, pp. 59-61.
[191] See *SCG,* III, 112 and *ST,* I. 65, 2.
[192] For this explanation, seeing *SP,* p. 75.

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is, and can, and has, must be referred to God."[193] Consequently, if any political society attempts to

own people, it will totally face failure, "for example, and to speak madly, *Aryan* mathematics or

Marxist-Leninist mathematics."[194] It also is the same for any individual person who wants to live

an individual life. He cannot be successful because an asocial life is impossible. This tension seems

to be part of our human life, and if we attempt to solve it on one side or the other, we are harming

some things in ourselves. "The pity is that, in killing the individual, they also kill the person. The

despotic conception of the progress of the human being is no whit better than the *anarchistic*

conception."[195] To deal with this tension, Maritain suggests that in reality there is the interior

principle of nature and grace. Education and the progress of the human being both in the moral

and spiritual order are important, but we must remember that the whole function of these

instruments cooperates with the interior principle. The right educational means are simply the aids.

They are to trim and prune the individual and the person, so that within the intimacy of the human

being, the weight of individuality diminishes and that of true personality and or its generosity

increases.[196]

VIII. Conclusion

We have seen from our understanding of Aristotle's hylomorphism that sensible substances are

composites of matter and form. Matter is potentiality and form is the actuality of a body, and thus

the soul is the actuality of a living organism. Matter and form alone are not substances, but they

are principles of a sensible substance's coming-to-be. Form and matter of an individual being must

be relative to each of its components. The relationship of matter and form in individual beings

always contains and includes an element of teleology. "Matter is an avidity for being, without

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[193] *PG*, p.71.n.
[194] *SP*, p. 78.
[195] *PG*, p. 45.
[196] *SP*, p. 70.

determination, an avidity which receives its determination from form."[197] Form is an actual, determining, and active principle. Since form and matter, each of them, had formal act in itself, each could have its own distinct formal cause of being so there can be only one substantial form in any sensible substance. When a complete substance subsists, it is called a supposit. What is called *supposit* at the infrahuman level is called *person* in the human species. For Aquinas, a sensible substance is not identical with its essence, because the essence or nature connotes only what is included in the definition of species. Essence is *that which* a thing is. Suppositum is *that which* has an essence, *that which* exercises existence and action *that which* subsists.

Human being, like any other sensible substance in the world, is composed of form and matter, but he or she is different from all of them by his intelligence and will. To understand Maritain's ontological anthropology, we have seen how Maritain distinguishes between person and individual. An individual is rooted in a material pole and a person in a spiritual pole. Human being exists not merely physically, but he or she has spiritual super-existence through knowledge and through love. With his or her powers of intellect and will, human being can transcend matter. He or she also is able to relate interiorly to himself or herself and can communicate with others and the Other. With his or her love, a person is giving and receiving. The relationship between the lover and the beloved are not of subject to object but are of two subjects. Human being is both individual and person, so there is a tension between a human person as social unit and the social whole in both cases: a person is a whole and the whole person is a part of society. According to Maritain, for by our nature, which involves worldly virtues, a human being is subordinate to society, and so he or she exists for the good of the social whole. By reason of certain things which are in human being, "he [or she] is *in his entirety* engaged as a part of political society" and he or

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[197] Ibid., pp. 65-66.

she is not "part of political society *by reason of himself as a whole and by reason of all that is in him.*"[198] Since there are two different orders of goods established, for absolute or eternal values, human being is above and surpasses the temporal society. The temporal society must recognize the orientation of person to an end beyond time and support him or her to attain it. We will understand how Maritain points out a correlation between notion of the person as a social unit and the notion of the common good as the end of the social whole.

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[198] *PG*, p.71.

Chapter Two: Aquinas: Dignity of Person as Individual Substance of a Rational Nature

> The person is that which is most perfect in the whole of
> nature; that is, something subsisting in a rational nature.
> *ST,* I, 29, 3

I. The Meaning of Person

1. Etymology: Persona and Prosopon (πρόσωπον)

The etymology of "person" in English language comes from the Latin: per (through) and sonnare (to sound). The term *'persona'* has a very long and complicated history. *Persona* has a history in which closely related to the Greek term "πρόσωπον": pro (toward) and sopon (eye). The literal meaning of *persona* and πρόσωπον (prosopon) are primarily little different. *Prosopon* is "face"[199] whereas *persona* is "mask."[200] "*Prosopon* is face" indicates front surface of a thing. Then, *prosopon* was applied to the role played in a drama, a kind of second face, but *persona* already had the original meaning as mask. *Persona* comes from the stage where characters speak through either a tragic or comic mask. One's voice is sounded through a mask. The term *prosopon* did not contain ontological content in the Greek classical world. It suggested a mask, something added to one's being, or it referred to the eyes.[201] Of course, there were actors of independent uniqueness who were assuming or impersonating the character depicted by playwright. Both *persona* and *prosopon* agree that the human face is the central signification of personhood.

Maurice Nedoncelle thus writes that *prosopon* comes to imply an individual human being after much development. An individual human being was first described by the term 'σῶμα' (soma:

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[199] Maurice Nedoncelle, "Prosopon et persona dans l'antiquite Classique," *Revue des sciences religieuses,* 1948, p. 278.

[200] Ibid*.,* 1948, p. 285f.

[201] Stephanus H., *Thesaurus Graeca Linguae,* vol. 6, col. 2048 (quoted from Mary T. Clark, "An Inquiry and Personhood," *Review Metaphysics,* September 1992, p. 11).

body). We can see hints from our modern English the word 'body' to mean an individual such as 'somebody,' 'everybody,' 'anybody,' and 'nobody.'

> When Lycurgus in the 4th century speaks of σώμα (soma) who delivered the city, it is possible to translate: the individual, or even: the personality, the notable of the city. For it was a noble term and it did not primarily apply to slaves. It even happens that he designates the legal individuality, the group of rights which constitutes a free man, a bit like caput (head) in Latin.[202]

When *prosopon* was applied to the role played in a drama, its meaning was then gradually referred to the role played in one's social personality. Finally, *prosopon* means an individual or person. In the world of Ancient Greeks, the full extent of the evolution of the meanings of *prosopon* was found around the period of Polybius (201-120 B.C.). Although the meaning of *prosopon* in Polybius's writings does not yet entirely indicate an individual, it described a role or sometimes an individual who played a role. It can also imply a person who distinguishes one in a group or moral dignity. The *prosopon* must wait until the Christian period to mean an individual or a person.[203]

Why were the ancient Greeks and Romans not concerned about a definition of personhood at all? The philosophers in ancient period seemed to more interested in Being itself, Metaphysics, and nature of human being as distinct from the nature of plants and animals. It was the reason what ancient philosophers called physics, which included all observable things and natural reality. The question of person only arose when philosophers wanted to distinguish the question of "who" as distinct from "what kind of?" They did not directly ask "what does it mean to be a person?" However, they encouraged a philosophical understanding of many aspects of personhood,

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[202] Maurice Nedoncelle, "Prosopon et persona dans l'antiquite Classique," *Revue des sciences religieuses,* 1948, p. 278.
[Lorsque Lycurgue au IVᵉ siècle parle du σώμα qui a livré la cité, il est impossible de ne pas traduire: l'individu, ou même: la personnalité, le notable de la ville. Car c'était un terme noble et il ne s'appliquait pas d'abord aux esclaves. Il arrive même qu'il désigne l'individualité juridique, le groupe de droits qui constitue un homme libre, un peu comme caput en latin].
[203] Michael A. Smith, *Human Dignity and the Common Good in the Aristotleian-Thomistic Tradition,* Mellen University, 1958, pp. 39-40.

"because they never denied the reality of the individual, the Greeks opened the way for the Christian recognition of the eminent worth of the person; not only did they not prevent it or even simply retard it, they did a great deal to forward its success."[204] Although the term *prosopon* was used by Panaetius of Rhodes (185-110 B.C.), who was in those days the head of the Stoa in the second century B.C. in his work *On Duties,* it was not used in a strictly philosophical sense as it was done by the early Christians in the theological unfolding of Christianity's mysteries. However, Panaetius distinguished the aspects of the universal and particular nature of human being and combined them within a universal system of metaphysics.[205]

Prosopon is found in several places in the *New Testament*. For examples, we can see in *James* 2: 9, *Galatians* 2, 6, *Romans* 2, 11 and *Acts of the Apostles* 10, 34. All these places show a reference to a respecter of persons and manifest partiality.

2. Persona

In the beginning *persona* signifies a mask, and then it came to indicate the role played by an actor. It was after this development that *persona* has been understood as an individual human being. As noted above, *prosopon* was not used to imply an individual or a person until the Christian period, but *persona* was earlier. *Persona* was explicitly used to mean an individual or person by Cicero (106 – 43 B.C.) about a half-century before Christ, but it was very natural that an earlier philosophical meaning had to be present to point that in time. In Cicero's *On Moral Duties (De officiis)* I 107, he distinguished between the individual human being and human nature, and he also implied that *persona* was as a rational individual and moral subject.

> We must realize also that we are invested by Nature with two characters (*duabus personis*), as it were: one of these is universal (*communis*), arising from the fact of our being all alike

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[204] Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy,* New York, Scribners, 1940, p. 37.
[205] Cornelia J. de Vogel, "The Concept of Personality in Greek and Christian Thought," *Studies in Philosophies and the History of Philosophy,* vol. 2, ed. John K. Ryan (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), pp. 30-31.

endowed with reason and with that superiority which lifts us above the brute. From this all morality and propriety are derived, and upon it depends the rational method of ascertaining our duty (*ratio inveniendi officii*). The other character is the one that is assigned to individuals in particular. In the matter of physical endowment there are great differences; some, we see, excel in speed for the race, others in strength for wrestling; so, in point of personal appearance, some have stateliness, others comeliness. Diversities of character are greater still.[206]

We have gone through a brief study of the etymological development of *persona* or *prosopon,* but we should also be aware that at the starting point *persona* and *prosopon* were used in Roman law[207] as social and legal term, where it meant a human being with full legal rights as a Roman citizen to be distinguished from slaves, who were human being, but not persons. The Christian thinkers were seen as the first to explore explicitly the reality of personhood. They have concluded that there is something in human beings which makes him radically different from all other living reality.[208] The most urgent pressure came from the early Christians who attempted to understand the mystery of two-in-one which was the mystery of the Divine-human natures of Jesus Christ (one person acting through two natures) and three-in-one which was the mystery of the Trinity (three divine persons in one being). The mystery of the Trinity is believed that God in Himself is one divine nature possessed by three distinct Persons, and Christ through the mystery of the Incarnation is one Divine Person possessing two natures. The distinction between essence and person now had to have more than a merely legal or social meaning, that is, an ontological one in the order of being itself.[209]

Since the term *prosopon* did not have ontological content in the Greek classical word, the Greek Fathers used the term *hypostasis* to replace *prosopon*. The word "*hypostasis"* designates the same

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[206] M. Tullius Cicero, *De officiis* I, 107, trans. Walter Miller, Harvard University Press, 1913.

[207] Gaius, *The Institutes,* I 8-9, I 48, also https://droitromain.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/Anglica/gai1_Poste.htm (accessed February 24, 2020).

[208] Mary T. Clark, "An Inquiry and Personhood," *Review of Metaphysics* (September 1992), p. 11.

[209] Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being: the Aquinas Lecture*, Milwaukee and Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 1993, pp. 25-6.

reality as *suppositum* used as a concrete existent, but they are logically distinct in Aquinas's mind.[210] The *hypostasis* is proper to the first meaning of substance to distinguish with the second in Aristotle's metaphysics.[211] Philosophically, *persona* corresponds to the Greek *hypostasis.* To understand that God is the Trinity (God is Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, never ceasing to be only one God) that means each of the Three Persons really existed. Each Person of the Trinity is the same Substance or Being (*ousia*). In using the term *hypostasis* of the Greek Fathers, which was equivalent to *ousia,* the *prosopon* was provided ontological content. Now the *prosopon* is also equivalent to *persona.* With an ontological content to the word *prosopon* in the Greek tradition, it would help to express one's understanding of faith in the Trinity.[212]

This helps us to understand why the ancient Greeks and Romans were not much concerned with personality.[213] For the ancient people, who do not know and believe in God as a Person, the key to any metaphysics of the personality was therefore lacking. It had to wait until the Christian era when the Christian thinkers addressed the questions of God, human being, and their relationship. The human person, according to *Genesis*, is an image and likeness of God.[214] The early Christian thinkers, both Eastern and Western, taught that by the gift of love (*agape*) communicated by the Holy Spirit, human persons are deified and lifted up to communion in Trinitarian life. The word "image" refers to a concrete, external form of representation, like a carved statue. Human being was only an image of God, and not the divinity itself, but it has been created as God's representative on the world in a unique way. This means that human beings may "contain" God or be c*apax Dei.* The word "likeness" refers more to an internal relationship and similarity to the love

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[210] *SCG*, 4, 38.
[211] It was known from chapter one.
[212] Mary T. Clark, "An Inquiry and Personhood," *Review of Metaphysics* (September 1992), p. 11.
[213] Cornelia J. de Vogel disagrees with this explanation. Seeing in "The Concept of Personality in Greek and Christian Thought," *Studies in Philosophies and the History of Philosophy* 2, ed. John K. Ryan, Washington, D.C.: CUA, 1963, pp. 59-60,
[214] *Genesis* 1, 26 (and seeing *Introduction* of this dissertation).

described through interpersonal relations.[215] If a being is created in God's image and likeness, in function of the analogy existing between God and man, the human being must have its basis in the personality of God. Each human being is a person because he or she has been created by a Person and participates in His Personality. Christian thinkers could develop a metaphysics and philosophy of personality because they believed in the supremely personal God. The proper metaphysics of man cannot be established without the metaphysics of God. The Christian thinker's understanding of man and of the Absolute are closely connected.[216] Thus, it is in God's Will that we have our faculty of choice and self-determination. It is through His Love that we are similar to God in being creative of others by actions that are loving and promotive. It is in His Rationality that we have our faculty of thinking. It is in His Providence that we have our power of using other things for reaching our purposes. Christian thinkers examined the Divine Persons and human persons to distinguish possessors of loving and intellectual beings. In understanding God's Persons and His relations to human beings, they were very successful in contributing to an evolution of personhood. We find this development showing Aquinas' demonstration that the image of God as a point of departure is properly found in rational creatures.

Before we explore Aquinas's thinking on this matter, we should distinguish the two words "person" and "personality." Person is a man as a rational being and moral subject, free and self-determining in his actions, responsible for his deeds. Personality is man's individual character, his uniqueness.[217]

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[215] John R. Sachs, *The Christian Vision of Humanity: Basic Christian Anthropology,* The Liturgical Press, 1991, pp. 15-16.

[216] Gaston Berger, "The Different Trends of Contemporary French Philosophy," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 7, no. 1, International Phenomenological Society, 1946, p. 7.

[217] Cornelia J. de Vogel, "The Concept of Personality in Greek and Christian Thought," in *Studies in Philosophies and the History of Philosophy* 2, ed. John K. Ryan (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), p. 23.

II. Aquinas: Person as the Intellectual Nature and the Special Mode of Existing

1. Aquinas Fulfilled Boethius's Definition of Person

Aquinas understands how the term "person" was used in the Christian doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity, and in the philosophical and theological traditions, better than Boethius, who was the first to give to work out a philosophical concept of personhood.

For Aquinas, to be a person is not enough to only have a complete individual rational nature, according to the well-known and classical definition of Boethius in the early part of the sixth century A.D.: "person is an individual[1] substance[2] of a rational nature[3]"(persona est substantia individua rationalis naturae).[218] Aquinas's definition is also an improvement on that of his Master, St. Albert the Great, who defined person as "*hypostasis proprietate distincta ad dignitatem pertinente*" (a person distinguished by dignity[219] or we can translate as a person distinguished by a property pertaining to dignity).[220] Albert's position is still close to Boethius. It should be noted that Boethius's definition of person is applicable not only to man, in whom the rational nature is not identical with his substance, but also to the angels and the three Divine Persons whose substance is identical with their nature.

For Aquinas, person must be an individual substance of a certain nature, namely rational, which nature accounts for the form or specific difference of the particular substance. "The term *rational nature* is added, as signifying the singular in rational substances," which have control over their

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[218] Boethius, *A Treatise Against Eutyches and Nestorius (Liber contra Eutychen et Nestorium),* chapter 1.
[219] The word dignity is rooted in the Latin *dignus* which means worthy of esteem and honor, due a certain respect, of weighty importance. In ordinary discourse, we use *dignity* only in reference to human persons. The early Greeks, both Plato and Aristotle, held that not all human beings have worth and dignity, most human beings are by nature slavish and suitable only to be slaves. Most people do not have natures worthy of freedom, so the term *dignus* was not used for all human beings, but only for the few. However, it is different in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Judaism and Christianity made human dignity a concept of universal application. (See Michael Novak, "The Judeo-Christian Foundation of Human Dignity, Personal Liberty, and the Concept of the Person," *Journal of Markets & Morality* 1, no.2 (October 1998), p. 109).
[220] Albertus Magnus: *ST*, Tractatus 10, q. 44, 2; cf. Bonaventura: *In Sent*. 1. Dist, XXV, 1.

actions, and are not only acted on as other beings are, but act on their own initiative. It is because to act is proper to singular substances. This is the reason why singular substances with a rational nature are called by a special term: "person." He also argues that "by some the definition of person is given as *hypostasis distinct by reason of dignity.* And because subsistence in a rational nature is of high dignity," "the person was given to signify those who held high dignity."[221] Thus, the dignity of person, like personhood, defines the subject in its individuality whereas its rational nature determines its universal whatness. It is essential to the existence of the individual person. Dignity of the person is only one special characteristic which is capable to act by itself. In Aquinas's *Disputed Questions on the Power of God*, he defined,

> *Person* signifies a certain nature (*quaedam natura*) with a certain mode of existing (*quidam modus existendi*). Now, the nature which *person* includes in its signification is the most worthy (*dignissima*) of all natures, namely, the intellectual nature according to its genus; and likewise the mode of existing signified by person is the most worthy (*dignissimus*), namely, such that something be existing by itself (*per se existens*).Therefore, since all that is most worthy (*dignissimum*) in creatures should be attributed to God, this name *person* can fittingly be attributed to God, like other names which are said of God in a proper way.[222]

According to Aquinas's explanation of Boethius's definition, the dignity (the most worthy or notable) of the person consists in two features: the rational or intellectual nature and a certain mode of existing (*quidam modus existendi*). To understand fully the two features of a person's dignity, we learn how Aquinas interprets the three elements: individuality (1), substance (2), and a nature endowed with intelligence and will (3) in Boethius's definition of person, and then but grounded in a certain mode of existing (*quidam modus existendi*).

1. 1. The Intellectual Nature

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[221] *ST,* I, 29, 1, c.
[222] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Power of God,* 9, a. 3, corp.

1.1.1. Individuality

In Aquinas's understanding of Boethius's definition, in the first sense the term "individual" is related to the nature of "that which is" or *ens*. It means that "which is undivided in itself and which is also distinct from all others."[223] It is the *incommunicable existence* of the real singular. For Aquinas, the metaphysical analysis of person explains the distinction between essence and person and how to identify the root of uniqueness of each person as distinct from the common nature people share: the natures can be share, but personhood is not.[224] The individual in the categories of substances is separated from the individual in the other categories (accidents). The person is the individual substance of man which exists substantially. "The individual …is only in the sense which implies incommunicability."[225] It is not a class of things in which class is a species, a genus or categories. Person was not affirmed of universals, accidents, relations, lifeless bodies or living bodies without sense nor of 'that which is deprived of reason.' "As existents, however, they differ, for a horse's existence is not a man's, and this man's existence is not that man's."[226]

In the second sense**,** the individual is a being in actuality. In Aquinas's explanation, "it is that *individual* is included in the definition of person, in order to indicate an individual mode of existence."[227] Person is to be found within the category of substance, and it is whose individuated substance which has a rational essence. It separates the rational individual substance from the non-rational substance. Rational substance is superior because it acts by its own initiative. Since the individual is the rational nature which is the act principle of the free initiative in action, the individual is capable of acting by itself, not by virtue of another.

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[223] *ST,* I, 29, 4, c.
[224] Norris Clarke, *Person and Being,* p. 3.
[225] *ST,* I, 29, 3, ad. 4.
[226] *ST,* I, 4, 5.
[227] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Power of God,* q. 9, a. 2, ad 5. trans. The English Dominican Fathers, The Newman Press, 1952; *ST,* I, 29, 4c.

In a more special and perfect way, the particular and the individual are found in the rational substances which have dominion over their own actions; and which have dominion over their own actions; and which are not only made to act, like others; but which can act of themselves; for actions belongs to singulars. Therefore, also the individuals of the rational nature have a special name even among other substances, and this name is *person*.

Thus, the term *individual substance* is placed in the definition of person, as signifying the singular in the genus of substance; and the term *rational nature* is added, as signifying the singular in rational substances.[228]

To an objector who is against Boethius's definition, it can seem incorrect that the individual "signifies something singular. Therefore, person is improperly defined." Aquinas responds that "although this or that singular may not be definable, yet what belongs to the general idea of singularity (*cummunem rationem singularitatis*) can be definition."[229] From this point, the objector continues criticizing and points out that "the individual" is not the name of a thing outside of mind (*res*), but rather a logician's intention. The individual is not the same as a real thing, but only of an intention. However, in reality the person is a real thing. Aquinas answers clearly that,

Substantial differences being unknown to us, or at least unnamed by us, it is sometimes necessary to use accidental differences in the place of substantial; as, for example, we may say that fire is a simple, hot, and dry body: for proper accidents are the effects of substantial forms and make them known. Likewise, terms expressive of intention can be used in defining realities if used to signify things which are unnamed. And so the term *individual* is placed in the definition of person to signify the mode of subsistence which belongs to particular substances.[230]

Boethius's definition contains an intrinsic contradiction because it tries to determine the person as individual when it can only point out the universal feature of a rational nature. Thus, for Aquinas, a more adequate definition of person should be this: "a *person* is an actual existent, distinct from all others, possessing an intellect, so that it can be the self-conscious, responsible source of its own action."[231] Here Aquinas obviously goes beyond Boethius's classical definition, "an individual substance of a rational nature," when person is seen as "distinct subsistent in a rational nature"

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[228] *ST* I, 29, 1, c.
[229] Ibid*.,* 29, 1, 1.
[230] Ibid*.,* 29, 1, 3.
[231] Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being: the Aquinas Lecture*, p. 29.

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(*subsistens distinctum in natura rationali*). For Aquinas, "subsistent" indicates an actual existent, existing in itself with its own act of existence.[232] He adds that particularity and individuality are perceived in a still more perfect way in rational substances, which have dominion over their actions, and act not only their own initiative but also are acted on as other beings are. This is the reason why singular substances with a rational nature are given a special name: that of "person,"[233] since "man especially knows the end of his work, and moves himself, in his acts especially is the voluntary to be found."[234]

1.1.2. Substance

As noted in the chapter I, we can see that the substance means what stands under the accidents and which exists in itself and through itself. It does not depend on another, and when an individual substance is a human nature, it is called subsistence.

According to Aristotle, substance has two meanings: the first implies "that nature as subsisting individually" and the second implies the "nature of the genus absolutely in itself." For Aquinas, the division of substance into the 'first' and 'second' substance should not be understood as a division into genus and species, but as a division according to different modes of being.

> When "substance" is divided into primary and secondary, this is not a division of a genus into species – since nothing is contained under "secondary substance" that is not contained under "primary substance" – but rather it is a division of the genus in function of diverse modes of being. For "secondary substance" signifies it as individually subsisting. Hence, it is more of a division of an analogue than of a genus. Thus, therefore, the person is indeed contained in the genus of substance, though admittedly not as a species, but as determining a special mode of existing.[235]

The different modes of being are not applied by analogy to God. God is beyond any kind of genus.

When applied to the Divine Person, substance does not apply what underlies the accidents, since

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[232] *ST*, I, 29, 3.
[233] Servais Pickaers, *The Pinckaers Reader: Reviewing Thomistic Moral Theology,* p. 148.
[234] *ST*, I-II, 6, 1, c.
[235] Aquinas, Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Power of God*, 9, 2, 6.

there are no accidents in God. It means that God exists in itself and by itself.[236] Saint Aquinas

provides some modes of the individual.

> Now the mode of being of things is manifold. For some things have been only in this one
> individual matter; as all bodies. But others subsisting natures, not residing in matter at all,
> which, however, are not their own existence, but receive it: and these are the incorporeal
> beings, called angels. But to God alone does it belong to be his own subsistent being.[237]

In sum, the individual substance means the individual who 'have' as in "have being" or "special

mode of existence" is to subsist through itself and in itself. Since the person is an *individual*

substance, it possesses its proper being in a complete manner, through itself and in itself. It

exercises on its own the acting of existing as a complete whole.

1.1.3. Rational Nature of Human Person

The last element of Boethius's definition of person is *rational nature.* "Persona est substantia

individua rationalis naturae." This definition implies that the nature of being, or an individual

creature is endowed with intelligence. Every human being is a person, for every human being is

an individual of a substance of rational nature. Of course, we know Aristotle's famous definition

that "man is a rational animal." Human being by his nature is an animal, so he must live like an

animal. He must take care of his body and treat to its needs. He cannot dream to live like a

disembodied spirit or an angel. However, human being by his nature is not only animal, but also a

rational animal. He is not just an animal that happened to have evolved from monkeys. This can

be true in terms of the human body, but the rational element of man helps him open to infinity and

transcending all the limits of the space-time universe. Thus, he also must live as a rational nature.

The rational nature is something which is inherent and belongs to human nature. The life of a brute

is not proper to a human being. The non-rational and rational elements of a human being must be

kept in harmony. If a conflict between two elements arises, as happens usually enough, the rational

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[236] *ST,* I, 29, 2, c.
[237] Ibid., 12, 4.

must prevail. 'Rational' implies the specific difference which makes human being different with the rest of living beings. Human beings have an understanding not because he is an animal, but because he is rational, even though both rationality and animality are essential to his being.[238]

In order to be seen as a person, an individual being does not need to be actually rational in itself, as long as it belongs to a rational kind. "Person is defined by its dignity, which results from its rational nature."[239] Rationality is a natural endowment, and it is not something to be added. However, by the rational nature, if one acts against one's rational nature, one's dignity is degrading. One can act as a human person should not act in a way unbefitting of a human person, but one who does not become depersonalized, in the sense of ceasing to be a person. If reason is deposed, the life of a mere animal takes the place of that of a rational animal, but the man still remains a man in nature. He only becomes a brute in conduct. Rationality is demanding and its demands must be lived up to the dignity of a person preventing a human person from acting like the brutes. Aquinas does not imply the act of understanding, but the essence of beings endowed with the faculty of intellectual knowledge and the faculty of will of rational nature. The natural end of the faculty of the intellectual knowledge (or of intellect) is to attain truth.[240] The nature of the faculty of the will is to choose and then give actions which best harmonize with the truth as it is agreed by the intellect, and in proportion with the truth about human nature.

Based on what Boethius puts in his definition of a person, when regarding of person, we must agree that every person must be rational by definition. Aquinas and a lot of later philosophers develop into an account of person which explains that even if an individual human being can show no signs of rationality or self-consciousness, the individual must still be a person. Each human

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[238] Aquinas, *II Scriptum super libros Sententiarum, d. 19, q.1, a.4.*
[239] Servais Pickaers, *The Pinckaers Reader: Reviewing Thomistic Moral Theology*, p. 147.
[240] Aquinas, *In Meta* I, 1, 2-3.

being who exists in nature is essentially defined by rationality, since it is provided and belongs to a rational kind. The nature of rationality is applied to all human beings. It includes those who will perhaps never be able to think or to form projects (for example, handicapped people when they were born) or those who lose the normal use of one's intellect and will, (for example, people in a state of a coma or live in a vegetable life). In this view, the person is neither a thinking being nor a being that is apt to think or to will. Person must be rational in definition. This definition is very common sensible and fits the way the term 'person' is used in the law and ordinary life. It is the reason why mad persons and infants are unquestionably juridical persons. Even though an individual may not show signs of rationality or self-consciousness, but essentially, he or she still must be a person. The reason is because he or she is "endowed," given or provided it, and naturally belongs to a rational kind.

We will learn more about Aquinas's account of what the rational soul does and how it does it. Aquinas divides the rational soul into the intellect and will, the cognitive and appetitive faculties. Since both thought and sense are cognition, wherever cognition is present there is appetite. It is obvious that there must be two kinds of appetite in the human soul: sensitive and rational. The rational appetite is called as the will. Thus, we can know that the rational soul is the first principle of intellect and will.[241] With the powers of rational soul a human being can himself propose the end of his own operation, and he can choose by what means he will act to attain this end.[242] We begin by focusing on the cognitive faculty or the intellect, and then proceed to the will, in order to highlight the dignity of a person.

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[241] We are going to discuss more fully in Chapter II, which will take up the intellect and the will.
[242] *ST,* I, 18, 3, c.

2. The Intellect

2.1. The Immateriality of the Intellect and the Subsistence of the Human Soul

Among all animals in the world, only "man is a rational animal." Men are capable to think while

the others are not. It means that only human beings have intelligent capacities. Aquinas describes

the nature of intellect:

> Intelligent beings are distinguished from non-intelligent beings in that the latter possess only their own form; whereas the intelligent being is naturally adapted to have also the form of some other thing; for the idea of the thing known is in the knower. Hence it is manifest that the nature of a non-intelligent being is more contracted and limited; whereas the nature of intelligent beings has a greater amplitude and extension; therefore, the Philosopher says (*De Anima* III) that *the soul is in a sense all things.*[243]

For Aquinas, intellect is the acquisition of information. It is the perfection of the universe because

it can sum up all creation within itself. It becomes the great bond between brute matter and Infinite

Spirit. He supposes intellect occurs when a *likeness* of the object is produced within the cognitive

power. "For what is understood is in the intellect, not according to its own nature, but according

to its likeness; for *the stone is not in the soul, but its likeness is.*"[244] Therefore, "it must necessarily

be allowed that the principle of intellectual operation which we call the soul, is a principle both

incorporeal and subsistent."[245]

In showing that the intellect is incorporeal or immaterial, Aquinas convinces that the human soul

with intellectual powers is, unlike the souls of plants and animals, a "subsistent form." A subsistent

form means that it has its own being, and its operation also is independent of anything else, even

including the body. By believing the human soul subsistent, Aquinas supposes that it exists in itself

as a substance, not dependent on and inseparable from its matter. By believing it incorporeal and

subsistent, he states that the human soul is a spiritual substance and has a certain infinity.

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[243] Ibid., 14, 1, c.
[244] Ibid., 76, 1, 4.
[245] Ibid., 75, 2, c.

> Our intellect is infinite in power, so does it know the infinite. For its power is indeed infinite inasmuch as it is not terminated by corporeal matter. Moreover, it can know the universal, which is abstracted from individual matter, and which consequently is not limited to one individual, but considered in itself, extends to an infinite number of individuals.[246]

The human soul is the form of the human body, but it is totally different from forms of both all other sensible beings and spiritual beings including God and angels. It is a form capable of existing on its own and unites with the body. The rational soul is in Aquinas's view essentially immaterial, not requiring any bodily organ for its operation.[247]

In the opening of Book VI of *Nicomachean*, Aristotle divides the rational part of the soul into the scientific and ratiocinative elements corresponding to the cognition of contingent and necessary objects.[248] In interpreting Aristotle's rational soul, Aquinas divides it into a first part "by which we examine those beings, namely, necessary beings, whose principles cannot be other than they are," and a second part "by which we examine contingent beings."[249] A first part apprehends "beings whose principles are not in us," while a second part apprehends "beings whose causes are in us."[250] Concerning the basis of this division from Aristotle and some predecessors, Aquinas examines the structure of the intellect and its principal operations.

Intellect is the capacity for understanding and thought, for the kind of thinking which makes human beings different from all kinds of animals in the world. For Aquinas, intellect develops gradually by forming concepts, making judgments and reasoning. It has three operations: apprehension, judgment, and reasoning.

Apprehension is the act by which something is perceived by the intelligence without agreeing or disagreeing with it.

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[246] Ibid., 86, 2, 4.
[247] *SCG*, II. 49-51.
[248] *NE,* 1139a5-15.
[249] Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum,* V, 1, 107-12, S1115.
[250] Ibid, VI*,* 1, fol.81vL.

Judgement is the act of the mind by which it connects in agreeing and disconnect in disagreeing certain predicates of a given subject. "Judgment is not only an operation which takes place following simple apprehension and the formation of the concept; it is the completion, the consummation, the perfection, and the glory of the intellect and of intellection."[251] It is in contrast to Descartes's view, "judgment is an operation of the will, not of the intellect."[252]

Reasoning is the act of mind by which it is from a truth already known to know or give a conclusion to another truth not previously known. New knowledge is constantly added to what is already known.[253] "Since man is subject to change and time in which there is a "before" and an "after," he knows things in succession."[254]

> The human intellect does not acquire perfect knowledge by the first act of apprehension; but it first apprehends something about its object, such as its quiddity, and this is its first and proper object; and then it understands the properties, accidents, and the various relations of the essence. Thus, it necessarily compares one thing with another by composition or division; and from one composition and division it proceeds to another, which is the process of reasoning. But the angelic and the Divine intellect, like all incorruptible things, have their perfection at once from the beginning.[255]

According to Aquinas, the human intellect, both finite and capable of infinity, can be endowed from nothing only by an Omnipotent Creator.[256] This point of departure is the fact that human being is the image of God. There must have the very common points and close relation of the intellect and God. The human person created in God's image according to his rational nature allows a person to share and attain to an imitation of God that could be in a certain special way. Since among all creatures that bear a resemblance to God, only human beings share in intellectual dignity. The human being is seen as "the borderline between eternity and time."[257] We can find

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[251] *EE,* p.14.
[252] Ibid*.,* p.13.
[253] Fulton Sheen, *God and Intelligence in Modern Philosophy*, Longmans, Green and Co., INC, 1954, p.10.
[254] See A. Dondaine, "La letter de saint Thomas à l'Abbé de Montcassin," *St. Aquinas 1274 – 1974 Commemorative Studies,* I, Toronto 1974, p. 108.
[255] *ST*, I, 85, 5, c.
[256] Joseph M. de Torre, *Generation and Degeneration: A Survey of Ideologies,* Manila: SEASFL, 1995, chap.14.
[257] *SCG*, II, 81.

this thought in Plato's *Timaeus* 35 A, where he describes the human soul as a "middle being" between the lower word of matter and the pure upper word of soul or ideas. For Plato, the human soul links two worlds but is also pulled in opposite directions by both. It joins together from the extremes of the spiritual and material world.[258] However, for Aquinas the human person not only integrates within himself all the levels of the universe, but also binds harmoniously into one of the two disparate dimensions of reality: the material and the spiritual worlds. He shares not only being and life, but also knowledge and wisdom of God.

> The nature of an image requires likeness in species…. Whence Hilary says pointedly that *an image is of the same species.*
> Now it is manifest that specific likeness follows the ultimate difference. But some things are like to God first and most commonly because they exist; secondly, because they live; and thirdly because they know or understand; and these last, as Augustine says (QQ. 83; qu. 51), *approach so near to God in likeness, that among all creatures nothing comes nearer to Him.* It is clear, therefore, that intellectual creatures alone, properly speaking, are made to God's image.[259]

The image of God in the human person is not static, because it is the principle of personal action.

Although the image of God in the human person is not perfect, it can grow and perfect itself. It was created by God for specific purposes. It is capable of moving toward God and conforming itself to God through the intellect and will. It is not static that something acquired once and for all. It is dynamic and destined to move from imperfection to perfection through personal action.

> Since man is said to be to the image of God by reason of his intellectual nature, he is the most perfectly like God according to that in which he can best imitate God in his intellectual nature. Now the intellectual nature imitates God chiefly in this, that God understands and loves Himself. Wherefore we see that the image of God is in man… inasmuch as man possesses a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God; and this aptitude consists in the very nature of the mind, which is common to all men.[260]

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[258] Norris Clarke, *The Creative Retrieval of St. Aquinas: Essays in Thomistic Philosophy, New and Old,* Fordham University Press, 2009, pp.133-5.
[259] *ST,* I, 93, 2, c.
[260] Ibid., 93, 4, ad 3.

In the virtue of image of God in human beings, the human intellect is found the capacity to know things[261] and in that sense also to become these things (*intellectus possibilis*).[262] It is the power which grants a part of the proper degree of perfection to the human soul that is the form of body, but the human soul is not an intellect.[263] The intellect is one of the powers of the human soul. It is not identical with the soul. It is the reason why the human intellect is proper to understand forms which exist individually in sensible matter, but not to understand them inasmuch as they exist in this matter.[264] The human soul adds more two other operations: the vegetative and sensitive.[265] If the intellect is a power of the rational soul, is it a power to act on something, or is it a power to be changed?

Aquinas's answer is that the intellect is both possible and agent powers. In the intellect itself Aquinas distinguishes two Aristotelian powers: the agent intellect or the ability to make any being actually intelligible and the possible intellect or ability to have an intellection of any being whatsoever. When the intellect is considered as a possible power, it has the potentiality to receive thoughts of all kinds. Aquinas, after Aristotle, calls it the receptive intellect (*intellectus possibilis*).[266] In contrast with the receptive intellect, it is the agent intellect (*intellectus agens*). The agent intellect is the intellect itself which, being an immaterial form, is actually intelligible, since every agent acts according as it exists in actuality.[267] Thus, if the role of the possible intellect is to give room for thoughts, the role of the agent intellect is to provide furniture for that room, that is to create objects of thought.

> when our mind is considered in relation to sensible things outside the soul, it is found to be related to them in a twofold manner. In one way (1), it is related as act to potency, to the

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[261] Ibid., 84, 3.
[262] Ibid., 75, 5 ad 1.
[263] Ibid., 79, 1, ad 3.
[264] Ibid., 85, 1.
[265] Ibid., 79, 1, ad 3.
[266] Ibid., 79, 2 ad 2.
[267] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Power of God,* q.2, art. 1.

extent that things outside the mind are only potentially intelligible. The mind itself, however, is intelligible in act, and it is on this basis that the agent intellect, which makes potentially intelligible things actually intelligible, is held to be included in the soul. In another way (2), it is related to things as potency to act, inasmuch as determined forms of things are only potentially in our mind, but actually in things outside the soul. In this respect our soul includes the possible intellect, whose function it is to receive forms abstracted from sensible things and made actually intelligible through the light of the agent intellect. This light of the agent intellect comes to the soul from the separated substances and especially from God as from its first source.[268]

Aquinas explains that the material objects of the sensible world are not in themselves fit objects of thought since they are not actually thinkable (*actu intelligibilia*). They are in themselves only potentially thinkable. He gives us an example that colors are perceptible by the sense of sight. Light is required for sight to make colors actually visible. When in the dark, colors are not actually, only potentially, in the daylight colors would be actual, perceivable. However, they are not necessarily actually perceived, if nobody is looking at them. They are only seen when the sense of vision is actuated.[269] Aquinas compares the agent intellect with a light that illuminates sensible bodies and transforms what is potentially intelligible actually intelligible. To make potentially thinkable objects into actually thinkable objects, the agent intellect is analogized as light which lightens the visible world. We can compare the agent intellect with a flashlight a miner wears in his helmet, illuminating the light of intelligibility on the objects one encounters in his progress through the mysterious world.[270] From this comparison, Aquinas concludes that the intellect can form universal concepts which are abstracted from the individual natures of things and help to grasp their natures while sense is cognizant only of singular.

> The natures or forms of the sensible things which we understand are not actually intelligible. Now nothing is reduced from potentiality to act except by something in act; as the senses are made actual by what is actually sensible. We must therefore assign on the part of the intellect some power to make things actually intelligible, by abstraction of the species from material conditions. And such is the necessary capacity for an active agent.[271]

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[268] Ibid., q. 10, 6c. trans. https://isidore.co/aquinas/QDdeVer10.htm (accessed May 8, 2020).
[269] *ST,* I. 79, 3 ad 2.
[270] Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas On Mind,* Routledge, 1993, pp. 46-7.
[271] *ST,* I, 79, 3.c.

The agent intellect is the power with which human beings, unlike other animals, have the capacity to acquire abstract information from sense-experience. "The intellect is cognizant of universals" while "sense is cognizant only of singulars."[272] The fact is that human beings think in universals is sufficient proof of the immateriality of his intellect. Every material thing operates necessarily and always under conditions which are dependent on matter: conditions of concrete singularity, since their perception is made possible only by impression made on the organ of the body. To prove the intellect's universal and immateriality, Aquinas makes a comparison between two powers of the human soul: sense and intellect. Through hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling and touching one can only perceive an individual body: that dog, this triangle and so forth whereas the intellect can form "dogness" in general, triangularity in general and other universals, as natures which apply to indefinitely many individuals. Just as the senses apprehend sensible species, the intellect must also understand only through the intelligible. It is the reason why Aquinas the intellect in itself has the ability to understand without recourse to anything from the body. Through understanding, a human being is in a position to know the nature of all sensible things. The capability to know all sensible things from a position indicates that the nature of all sensible things known cannot be in the same or one nature with the knowing subject, otherwise the form of the object of knowledge would hamper further knowledge of other objects of that nature. Maritain puts this in a beautiful sentence, "There is a nuptial relationship between mind and being."[273] The nature of the intellect's distinctive objects reveals its immateriality. Aquinas writes:

> Our soul possesses two cognitive powers; one is the act of a corporeal organ, which naturally knows things existing in individual matter; hence sense knows only the singular. But there is another kind of cognitive power in the soul, called the intellect; and this is not the act of any corporeal organ. Wherefore the intellect naturally knows natures which exist only in individual matter; not as they are in such individual matter, but according as they are abstracted therefrom by the considering act of the intellect; hence it follows that through

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[272] *SCG*, II, 66, 3.
[273] Norris Clarke, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics*, 2014, p.18.

the intellect we can understand these objects as universal; and this is beyond the power of sense.[274]

By virtue of being universal, the objects of the intellect are not material, because all material things are singular rather than universal. The object of the intellect is a universal which remains what it is being identified with an infinity of individuals. When the intellect can grasp the form of a thing, it must be that the same and in one form exists both in the intellect and in the thing itself. This is only possible since things, in order to become objects of the mind, have been entirely separated from their material existence. The form of "dogness" that exists in our intellects when we think about dogs is the same and in one form that exists in an actual dog. The form of triangularity that exists in our intellect when we think about triangles is the same and in one form that exists in actual triangles themselves. It is the whole universe which can be known by the intellect. The intellect not only looks at qualities, but also proceeds to look at nature that which a thing is.

> From the fact that the human soul knows the universal natures of things, they have perceived that the species by which we understand is immaterial. Otherwise, it would be individuated and so would not lead to knowledge of the universal. From the immateriality of the species by which we understand, philosophers have understood that the intellect is a thing independent of matter.[275]

Intellect has as its object things which can be known through material things, or which are themselves material. Since the intellect can recognize universal natures, the intellect itself cannot be a matter or any material process. The intellect is immaterial, and "by the means of the intellect man can have knowledge of all corporeal things."[276] The intellect can know itself in the same manner as it can know other things. As Maritain puts it, "At the instant when the act of intellection knows, the intellect is, immaterially, the object itself; *the knower in the act of knowing is the known itself in the act of being known.*"[277] This leads him to agree with Aquinas's view:

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[274] *ST,* I, 12, 4, c.

[275] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Truth*, q.10, a.8, also https://isidore.co/aquinas/english/QDdeVer10.htm (accessed May 18, 2020).

[276] *ST* I, 75, 2.

[277] *RR*, p. 14.

knowing consists neither in receiving an impression nor in producing an image; it is something much more intimate and much more profound. To know is to *become;* to become the non-I…. To know consists of immaterially becoming another, insofar as it is another, *aliud in quantum aliud*.[278]

To know something, an intellectual faculty must not have the form to be known. In order to know all the material objects, the intellect must not be part of the human organism, and even it must be free from primary matter. The intellect can grasp all kinds of material nature without any limitation, so it must not depend on the operation of any material organ. It is totally independent from matter.[279] If the act of intellectual power is not material, then power itself is also immaterial. Maritain continues, "The intellect, in order to grasp its object, transfers it within itself, so that this object bathes in the intellect's own immaterial light; unlike the senses, the intellect knows the thing insofar as it exists within the intellect, inside of it."[280] The act of the intellectual power remains in the intelligence itself. It is not an action happening to something extrinsic to it, as heat passes to a surrounding body.[281] It is the object itself possessed intentionally by the mind.[282] "For the object," Maritain observes, "is nothing other than something of the subject transferred into the state of immaterial existence of intellection in act. We know subjects not as subjects, but as objects."[283] Aquinas's argument is that the intellect cannot understand all material things unless, in its act of understanding, it is itself free from materiality and free from dependence on any material operation. If there is any matter in the intellect or in an operation used by the intellect in understanding, this matter will impede the intellect from understanding the natures of other material things. It will affect the intellect's efforts to understand varied natures of sensible things. "Whatever is received into something else is received according to the mode of the receiver."[284]

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[278] *RR*, p. 12.
[279] For further argument of the intellect's independence from matter, we can see in *SCG*, II, 49-51.
[280] *RR*, p. 15.
[281] *ST*, I, 14, 4, c.
[282] *SCG,* I, 53.
[283] *EE,* p. 56.
[284] *SCG*, II, 50, p. 120.

> We see that forms are actually intelligible only when they are separated from matter and its conditions; and they are made actually intelligible only through the power of an intelligent substance, by receiving them into itself and acting upon them. That is why every intellectual substance must be completely free from matter, neither having matter as a part of itself nor being a form impressed on matter, as is the case with material form.[285]

The human intellect not only knows external objects and operations, but it also knows the acts by which the intellect grasps these objects and operations. It knows itself as applying these acts. This is called *self-consciousness,* awareness of oneself both as present and as a source of one's action. The intellect is the object of its own cognitive activity, only in so far as it is actualized by species abstracted from material things by the usual function of the agent intellect. In a concrete way, we not only think other things, but at the same time we know our own thinking as our own, and also know ourselves as thinkers. It is through the mediation and reflection of its own acts that the intellect knows itself. The intellectual operation remains in the intellect as its act and as its perfection. The intellect perfects its own existence immanently, as the term of its generation is in itself and not outside itself.[286] In doing so, the intellect in itself must be both object and subject in the one same act. Aquinas describes this self-consciousness of the intellect in the human person as master of itself. Norris Clarke calls it as *self-possession through self-consciousness* and *through self-determination.*[287] Because when "I am in the act of knowing, I become, or am, the very thing that I know, a thing other than myself, insofar as it is other than myself. And how can I be, or become, other than myself, if it is not in a supra-subjective or immaterial manner?"[288] This cannot happen to material things. No material organ apprehends itself and its operation. Material things cannot be patient and agent in the one act. No faculty of matters operating with material organs can know itself. Moreover, only individual forms can be received in material organs whereas

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[285] Aquinas, *On Being and Essence,* trans. Armand Maurer, chapter 4, 1, p. 52.
[286] *ST,* I, 57, 1, ad 1.
[287] Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being: the Aquinas Lecture*, pp. 42-63.
[288] *RR*, p. 55.

intellect has only to do with the universal. The intellect and its operation have to do with the apprehension of all material forms. Thus, the nature of the intellect must be free from all such forms if it can be able to understand all of them. It is only when the intellect understands itself, which is not possible in faculties which operate through bodily organs.[289]

When the intellect forms universal concepts, it means that permanent truths can be known. According to Aquinas, this leads to Aquinas's famous conception of truth as conformity of intellect and being (*veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*). He approaches this definition in three different ways:

> (1) according to that which precedes truth and is the basis of truth. This is why Augustine writes: "The true is that which is"; still others say: "The true is the undividedness of the act of existence from that which is."
> (2) according to that in which its intelligible determination is formally completed. Thus, Isaac writes: "Truth is the conformity of thing and intellect";
> (3) truth is according to the effect following upon it. Thus, Hilary says that the true is that which "manifests and proclaims existence."[290]

We attain truth in our minds when we are in agreement with reality, to grasp things as they truly are. Truth is the intellect's grasp of being itself. In order to know the truth fully, the intellect not only knows something, but also knows that it knows something truly and conforms to it. Each perceptive judgment has an immediate intra-mental and immediate extra-mental object. The immediate intra-mental object is the act of knowing this something. The immediate extra-mental object is something which is. Maritain describes this idea in the formula, "*Scio aliquid esse,*"[291] I know that something is. It means that the "I" which is known is aware of itself knowing. The intellect knows itself in its act of knowing a material thing. In the act of certifying the existence of a material thing directly perceived there is a consciousness of this knowing act itself. To measure the truth the intellect attains by reflecting on itself. "The intellect has made itself true, the truth

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[289] *ST,* I, 87, 3.
[290] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Power of God,* I, 1, c.
[291] *DK*, pp. 79 – 86.

thus attained possesses objective consistency because it is the vital conformity of the intellect with what exists (actually or possibly) independently of the mind."[292] Firstly, the intellect knows the thing perceived, secondly its own act of cognition, and thirdly its own nature. The second knowledge, the intellect which knows its own act of cognition is direct. This is how Maritain understands *scio* in his formula. The third knowledge, intellect knowing its own nature, is not immediate and direct. However, it derives only from the result of reflection on the act of understanding. It is a reflection in which the essence of principle of understanding is known from its own act of understanding.[293]

We know that there are three elements in the original perceptive judgment which the mind makes for the epistemological investigation: the intellect which performs the act, the act of knowing, and the thing known. This first element, the intellect itself, is subjected to reason's critical reflection. By knowing its own nature as the principle of its operation the intellect becomes absolutely certain of its hold on truth. For "if our intellect, insofar it is human, has as its proportioned or "connatural" object the nature of sense-perceivable things, it tends."[294] The act of reasoning is the movement of intellect from one object of knowledge to another in order to attain intelligible truth. Human beings know intelligible truth by proceeding from one object of knowledge to another. The human intellect seeks to know the essence of sensible things. In order to do so the intellect abstracts the nature from the individual remarks which this essence has in the different individuals belonging to a species. The intellectual operation knows the individuals in their species and brings about unity, since "thought in operation is identical with the objects of thought" (*intelligibile in actu est*

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[292] *RR*, p. 39.
[293] *ST*, I, 87, 3.
[294] *RR*, p. 13.

intellectus in actu)[295] and "the little intellectual light which is connatural to us is sufficient for our act of intelligence."[296]

> For truth is in the intellect as a consequence of the act of the intellect and as known by the intellect. Truth follows the operation of the intellect inasmuch as it belongs to the intellect to judge about a thing as it is. And truth is known by the intellect in view of the fact that the intellect reflects upon its own act—not merely as knowing its own act, but as knowing the proportion of its act to the thing. Now, this proportion cannot be known without knowing the nature of the act; and the nature of the act cannot be known without knowing the nature of the active principle, that is, the intellect itself, to whose nature it belongs to be conformed to things. Consequently, it is because the intellect reflects upon itself that it knows truth.[297]

With the intellectual soul, human beings thus possess science, which has access to truth that is eternal. Even if all material beings were disappeared, truth as such must endure. Science is true in terms of truth itself. It is identifiable with truth. If science is in the intellectual soul, the intellectual soul itself must be immortal, for it is receptacle of science, which is imperishable.[298] With its intellectual soul, the human person alone, among all other sensible beings in the cosmos, has ability to "go beyond" itself and even limits of space and time. This ability opens humanity towards infinite reality and makes the dignity of the human person (the intrinsic value of each person) above the entire physical cosmos.[299] As Greek philosophy discovered an openness to reality without limits is what marks man out from the other animals.[300] Maritain observes,

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[295] *ST,* I, 14, 2; 55, 1, 2.
[296] *SCG,* II, 57, p. 214.
[297] In intellectu enim est sicut consequens actum intellectus, et sicut cognita per intellectum. Consequitur namque intellectus operationem, secundum quod iudicium intellectus est de re secundum quod est. Cognoscitur autem ab intellectu secundum quod intellectus reflectitur supra actum suum, non solum secundum quod cognoscit actum suum, sed secundum quod cognoscit proportionem eius ad rem: quae quidem cognosci non potest nisi cognita natura ipsius actus; quae cognosci non potest, nisi natura principii activi cognoscatur, quod est ipse intellectus, in cuius natura est ut rebus conformetur; unde secundum hoc cognoscit veritatem intellectus quod supra seipsum reflectitur (Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Truth,* I, 9, c).
[298] St. Augustine, *Soliloquia,* II, 13, 24.
[299] Seeing in Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being: the Aquinas Lecture,* chapter 3: "The Person as Self-possessing," pp. 42-63.
[300] Douglas A. Ollivant, *Jacques Maritain and the Many Ways of Knowing,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2002, p. 31.

Greek reason was able to become aware of that glory of the mind which is knowing and of the authentic relation between the mind and the extra-mental being of things ... It was able to see that the human intellect, in identifying itself immaterially, *intentionaliter,* with the being of things, truly reaches that which exists outside our mind…. [301]

2. 2. Will and Intellect

According to Aquinas, the rational soul is not only intellect, but also will. The intellect is a power of apprehension, and the will is a power of appetition. Understanding is an exercise of the intellect and love is an exercise of the will. How do the two of these powers relate to each other?

First of all, we must be aware that according to Aquinas, rationality already includes, as a constitutive feature, will and freedom. Will, or rational appetite (desire), is one kind of appetite. It is the core inclination of a person.[302] The will is characterized as the sort of appetite that follows on rational cognition through which human beings allow them not only to cognize particular goods but to think about them reflectively as good.[303] "In every intellectual being there is will, just as in every sensible being there is animal appetite," "since will follows upon intellect."[304]

For Aquinas, there is an interaction between intellect and will. This interaction is so close and therefore, not easy to distinguish, because anything which has intellect must also have will and the will is in the intellect.[305] The intellect can move the will in more than one way as a final cause, not as an efficient cause, and the will can affect the intellect in different ways.

Good in general, which has the nature of an end, is the object of the will. Consequently, in this respect, the will moves the other powers when we will… The first formal principle is

[301] *TP*, p. 18.
[302] See, for example, *ST,* I, 59, 1.c.
[303] To understand moreAquinas's concept of will, see David M. Gallagher, "Aquinas on the Will as Rational Appetite," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 29, no. 4, October 1991, pp. 559-84.
[304] *ST,* I, 19, 1.c.
[305] Ibid.*,* 59, 1, obj. 1.

universal *being* and *truth*, which is the object of the intellect. And therefore, by this kind of motion the intellect moves the will, as presenting its object to it.[306]

The will is part of a dynamic system that consists of the intellect and will. The acts of these two powers between intellect and will are in fact interaction. Aquinas himself sometimes finds it difficult to make a line between two these powers.

> Since the acts of the reason and of the will can be brought to bear on one another, in so far as the reason reasons about willing, and the will wills to reason, the result is that the act of the reason precedes the act of the will, and conversely… There is an act of the will in so far as it remains in itself something of an act of the reason.[307]

An appetite is an inclination of a being toward what is good or proper for it.[308] The will as a rational appetite is the primary mover of all the powers of the soul except the nutritive powers which are not subject to the will[309] and is the efficient cause of the motion of the body. According to the Aristotelian doctrine of final causes the inclination towards an end has been set automatically in the natural order. For animals this inclination can take the form of sensory appetites as long as animals can be moved towards that which "the sensual movement is an appetite following sensitive apprehension."[310] For rational beings this inclination is *will* or *rational appetite*. These beings can be moved towards that which they rationally apprehended.

> From the intelligible form there results in the intelligent being an inclination to its proper operations and end. This inclination of the intellectual nature is the will, and is the principle of those operations that are in our power, and whereby the intellect operates for the sake of an end. Consequently, in every intelligent being there is a will.[311]

This returns us to the corruption of a person. Each individual, as a "person," has an inclination for the good which he or she knows through reason or intellect, but the will desires necessarily. For Aquinas, the nature of the will in itself is in relation to necessity:

> The word *necessity* is employed in many ways. For that which must be is necessary. Now that a thing must belong to it by an intrinsic principle; - ether material, as when we say that

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306 Ibid., I-II, 9, 1, c.
307 Ibid., 17, 1, c.
308 Ibid., I, 80, 1, 3; and I, 19, 1.c.
309 Ibid., I-II, 9, 1; *ST*, I, 82, 4.
310 Ibid., I, 81, 1, c.
311 *SCG*, IV, chapter 19, p. 85.

everything composed of contraries is of necessity corruptible; - or formal, as when we say that it is necessary for the three angles of a triangle to be equal to two right angles. And this is *natural* and *absolute necessity*. In another way, that a thing must be, belongs to it by reason of something extrinsic, which is either the end or the agent. On the part of the end, as when without it the end is not to be attained or so well attained: for instance, food is said to be necessary for life, and a horse is necessary for a journey. This is called *necessity of end*, and sometimes also *utility*. On the part of the agent, a thing must be, when someone is forced by some agent, so that he is not able to do the contrary. This is called *necessity of coercion…* Therefore, just as it is impossible for a thing to be at the same time violent and natural, so it is impossible for a thing to be absolutely coerced or violent, and voluntary.[312]

Since human being's will is an immaterial or spiritual power, the will operates without the instrumentality of any material organ. For the intellect is not a body and the act of a bodily organ, so it must be the same for the will, since it is in the intellect.[313] "In an intellectual nature, in which something is received altogether immaterially, the essence of a free inclination is found perfectly verified. And this free inclination is what constitutes the essential character of will."[314] Because its character is immateriality, the will has freedom. The will in itself has a free inclination and free choice. Free will is the sign of a being endowed with intelligence. If beings lack intellect, automatically they cannot have free will. Every act of free choice is preceded by a judgement of the reason. Free choice is an act of the will resulting from a judgement of reason.

> Man has free will: otherwise, counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards and punishments would be in vain. In order to make this evident, we must observe that some things act without judgment; as a stone moves downwards; and in like manner all things which lack knowledge. And some act from judgment, but not a free judgment; as brute animals. For the sheep, seeing the wolf, judges it a thing to be shunned, from a natural and not a free judgment, because it judges, not from reason, but from natural instinct. And the same thing is to be said of any judgment of brute animals. But man acts from judgment, because by his apprehensive power he judges that something should be avoided or sought. But because this judgment, in the case of some particular act, is not from a natural instinct, but from some act of comparison in the reason, therefore he acts from free judgement and retains the power of being inclined to various things. For reason in contingent matters may follow opposite courses, as we see in dialectic syllogisms and rhetorical arguments. Now particular operations are contingent, and therefore in such matters the judgement of reason

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[312] *ST,* I, 82, 1.c.
[313] Ibid*.,* II-II, 95, 5, co.
[314] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Truth,* q.. 23, a.1, corp. trans. Robert W. Schmidt, S.J., Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954 also https://isidore.co/aquinas/QDdeVer23.htm (accessed July 1, 2020).

may follow opposite courses and is not determined to one. And forasmuch as man is rational it is necessary that man have a free will.[315]

2. 3. Free Will or Freedom

As an intellectual being, a human person has a will, whether or not this will is free. Will is the inclination of the person while free choice or free judgement, "the act of which is to choose," is a power of the will and is the "faculty of will and reason."[316] It is in the middle place between action and being.

> Although free will in its strict sense demotes an act, in the common manner of speaking we call free will, that which is the principle of the act by which man judges freely. Now in us the principle of an act is both power and habit… Therefore, free will must be either a power or a habit, or a power with a habit. That it is neither a habit nor a power together with a habit, can be clearly proved in two ways… But the free will is indifferent to good or evil choice: wherefore it is impossible for free will to be a habit. Therefore, it is a power.[317]

Since free will is an appetitive power, Aquinas shows us that this power is closely related to the will. Although the will and the free will can be separated, they both belong to the same power. Free will is not a faculty distinct from the will. The will is considered as the end, and the free will as the means. Since the means are desired because of the end, both the will and the free will must be related.

> It is evident that as the intellect is to reason, so is the will to the power of choice, which is the free will. But it has been shown above that it belongs to the same power both to understand and to reason, even as it belongs to the same power to be at rest and to be in movement. Wherefore it belongs also to the same power to will and to choose and on this account the will and the free will are not two powers, but one.[318]

As noted previously in the chapter I, "whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another,"[319] for if God is the first mover underlying all kind of motion that takes place in the world, He must include the motion that results from our voluntary actions. If so, God must be the ultimate cause

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[315] *ST,* I, 83, 1,c.
[316] Ibid., II-II, 24, 1, ad. 3; II-II, 52, 1, ad. 3.
[317] Ibid., I, 83, 2, c.
[318] Ibid., I, 83, 4, c.
[319] Ibid., I, 2, 3.

of those actions. How then can "man [be] master of himself through his free will"[320] or our voluntary actions in fact be free? Aquinas responds that even though God moves the will,

> since he moves every kind of thing according to the nature of the moveable thing, for example, light things upward, and heavy things downward, he also moves the will according to its condition, as indeterminately disposed to many things, not in a necessary way. Therefore, if we should consider the movement of the will regarding the performance of an act, the will is evidently not moved in a necessary way.[321]

God as the creator moves the will towards the intended purpose of the will. God causes each thing to act in accordance with its nature. Because God has created the will as a desirer for the good, every human will by nature desires the good. God moves the will in creating it and as the end that the will should seek. "For as the intellect of necessity adheres to the first principles, the will must of necessity adhere to the last end, which is happiness," because the last end belongs to the will "by an intrinsic principle."[322] Is this to say that the will is forced by God? Aquinas thinks it is not. "A thing moved by another is forced if moved against its natural inclination; but if it is moved by another giving to it the proper natural inclination, it is not forced…. In like manner God, while moving the will, does not force it, because He gives the will its own natural inclination."[323]

To understand the free will of the human will, Aquinas points out that although will is impacted by various external factors such as God, angels, demons and fate, and divides those factors into two principles: from within and outside. The will can be changed in two ways.

> First, from within, in which way, since the movement of the will is nothing but the inclination of the will to the thing willed, God alone can thus change the will, because He gives the power of such an inclination to the intellectual nature…
> Secondly, the will is moved from without. As regards an angel, this can be only in one way, - by the good apprehended by the intellect. Hence in as far as anyone may be the cause why anything be apprehended as an appetible good. Hence in as far as anyone may be the cause why anything be apprehended as an appetible good, so far does he move the will. In this

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[320] Ibid., II-II, 64, 5, ad. 3.
[321] Aquinas, *On Evil,* q.6 c, trans. Richard Regan, Oxford University, 2003, p. 259.
[322] *ST,* I, 82, 1, c.
[323] Ibid., 105, 4, reply to 1.

way also God alone can move the will efficaciously; but an angel and man move the will by way of persuasion, as above explained.[324]

For Aquinas, the will itself is not coerced by any external things to act, although the parts of human body can be impeded by some external causes. Both interior and external impactions come into being because the will wills them. Aquinas does indeed state that free will is 'the power by which a man can judge freely.'[325] He thinks if anything external to the agent which acted coercively on the agent of will would totally destroy the voluntariness. All acts of will always are voluntary. Aquinas holds that all the acts of the will are voluntary, because the will and the intellect are close in relation. "The intellect understands that the will wills, and the will wills the intellect to understand."[326] He calls a voluntary act "an act that is a rational operation."[327] Thus, whatever is voluntary requires both an act of the intellect and an act of the will, whether it is a simple act of the will or command to some other power.[328] If any action that is done without an agent's use of one's intellectual faculties also without the voluntariness of one's action.[329] This is consistent with Aquinas's conviction that what differentiates human beings from non-rational animals is that a human being is master of his acts, in virtue of having intellect and will. "Animals are not persons both because they are not consciously aware of themselves and because, as a consequence, they cannot be masters of their own action, cannot be self-determining through free will, in charge of their own lives."[330] With the power of intellect and will controlling one's actions, human beings are at the source of all morality. It is exactly this control that establishes the perfection of the

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[324] Ibid., 111, 2, c.
[325] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Truth,* 24, 6.
[326] *ST,* I, 82, 4, 1.
[327] Ibid., 6, 1, sc.
[328] Ibid., I-II, 6, proemium.
[329] Ibid., 6, 7, 3.
[330] Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being: the Aquinas Lecture,* p. 126.

person. Therefore, no free will with regard to willing remains for a person who, through madness, for example, has lost the use of his intellectual faculties.[331]

In short, all the voluntary movements of the will must be moved by the intrinsic principle, and it is impossible from any extrinsic principle.[332] For something to be an act of the will, it must come from an intrinsic principle where the will is informed by the intellect. All acts of the will must be acted in free choice. Endowed with free choice man is responsible for his life.

> The act of the will is nothing else than an inclination proceeding from the interior principle of knowledge…. Now what is compelled or violent is from an exterior principle…, but that this violent movement be from its natural inclination is impossible. In like manner a man may be dragged by force: but it is contrary to the very notion of violence, that he be thus dragged of his own will.[333]

III. Aquinas: Person as Being-in-Relation toward the Common Good

All of this brings us closer to the question of human dignity. According to Aquinas, since human beings have the rational soul, they have capacities to know themselves as having dignity. They are aware of themselves as subjects existing by themselves amidst other beings surrounding them. To exhibit a certain mode of existing of human persons, we must locate them in the hierarchy of being, where they have a certain mode of existing, the whole of which is measured by proximity to the cause of beings as beings (God). "Rational animal" manifests human being's place as the highest of the animals and also man, "embodied spirit," manifests human being's place as the lowest of Infinite Spirit. As Pope John Paul II writes,

> The world of existence is the world of objects: amongst them we distinguish between person and thing. A person differs from a thing in structure and in the degree of perfection. To the structure of the person belongs an "inner" in which we find the elements of spiritual life and it is this that compels us to acknowledge the spiritual nature of the human soul and the peculiar perfectibility of the human person. This determines the value of the person. A person must not be put on the same level as a thing (or for that matter as an individual

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[331] *ST*, I-II, 10, 3.
[332] Ibid., 9, 6; and I, 105, 4, 2.
[333] Ibid., 6, 4, c.

animal): the person possesses spiritual perfectibility, and is by way of being an embodied spirit, not merely a 'body' magnificently endowed with life.[334]

Since the spiritual soul of a human being has been as its object, its knowledge extends to everything. "We have the act *to understand*, of which the object is *the true*; and the act to *will*, of which the object is the *good*; each of which is convertible with being; and so, to understand and will, of themselves, bear relation to all things, and each receives its species form its object."[335] Human nature is not closed as that of beings on a lower level, but "it has a greater width and extension."[336] Thus, the very dignity of human nature which must be rooted in his fundamental relations with God (1) and extended to his fellow human beings and other creatures in an order (2). "Every creature subsists in its own being (*esse*), has a form, through which it is determined in species, and has an order to something else."[337]

Aquinas believes that all creatures are in the primary hierarchy of order to their own perfection, and then the less perfect is for the sake of what is more perfect. For natural things have a natural inclination not only toward their own proper good, but also to spread out their own goodness among others as far as possible. Therefore, in treating of universe's perfection as a whole, Aquinas affirms that the whole universe of lesser beings exists for the sake of supporting the life of rational beings and the final perfection of rational beings is the communication among rational beings themselves.[338] All natural things tend toward establishing associations with others into unified system or communities. All processes of the natural things in the world strives to reach actualization and perfection.[339] To reach actualization and perfection a being must be oriented towards relations and ultimately towards community. The more perfect a state of actualization is,

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[334] John Paul II, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. by H.T. Willets (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), p. 121.
[335] *ST*, I 54, 2.
[336] Ibid.,
[337] *ST,* I. 45, 7, c.
[338] Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being: the Aquinas Lecture*, p. 79.
[339] *SCG,* III, 22: "oportet quod intentio cuiuslibet in potentia existentis sit ut per motum tendat in actum."

the more matter tends towards it. Thus, all creatures in the material world must naturally support

the perfection of human beings and are for the sake of them,

> Since man is constituted of a spiritual and a corporeal nature, holding a certain confine of
> each nature, it seems to pertain to him that the whole of creation comes to be for his
> salvation. For lower corporeal creatures seem to fall to the use of man and to be subject to
> him somehow. The higher spiritual creature, however, namely the angelic, has in common
> with man the attainment of the ultimate end, as is clear from what was said above. And so
> it seems appropriate that the universal cause of all things should assume that creature in
> the unity of His person by which He communicates more with all creatures.[340]

And only "the person is that which is most perfect in the whole of nature,"[341] in the world of

material bodies who can lead up to God by their intellect and love.

> If we wish to assign an end to any whole, and to the parts of that whole, we shall find, first,
> that each and every part exists for the sake of its proper act, as the eye for the act of seeing;
> secondly, that less honorable parts exist for the more honorable, as the senses for the
> intellect, the lungs for the heart; and thirdly, that all parts are for the perfection of the whole,
> as the matter for the form, since the parts are, as it were, the matter of the whole.
> Furthermore, the whole man is on account of an extrinsic end, that end being the fruition
> of God.[342]

For Aquinas's view (and Christianity's), God is the ultimate One. He appears as both the

Beginning and the End, the *Alpha* and the *Omega,* and as the Source and the Goal of the restless

dynamism of all finite beings. All creatures including human persons created by God are always

drawn back towards God from whom they originate. We can find these ideas in Saint Augustine's

famous sentence saying of human persons, in whom the longing comes, "Because You have made

us for yourself, and our heart is restless, O Lord, until it rests in You."[343] Aquinas, like many other

medieval Christian philosophers, agrees with Plotinus's thought that "the emanation of all things

from the One-Good and their return thereto by the pull of the same ultimate Good, which pull

actually holds them in existence for him," but he adapts this to the view that all creatures are

emanated from God, not by a necessary law of being, but by a gracious free act of loving self-

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[340] Ibid., IV, 55, n, 3936 a.
[341] *ST,* I, 29, 3.
[342] Ibid., 65, 2. c.
[343] Saint Augustine, *Confession,* trans Henry Chadwick, Oxford 2008, Book I, p. 3.

communication by a personal God.[344] Among all material creatures in this world, the human person alone is created in God's image and he resembles God most in knowledge and love that he can reach up to Him. Only human persons endowed with spiritual intellects and wills can actually reach direct union with God, for they alone can self-consciously know and freely choose to love God. "We speak of a resemblance which is an image of God in human nature in so far as the latter has a capacity for God; I am speaking of man's own operation of knowledge and love."[345]

In order to get a deeper understanding of Aquinas's notion of '*person as being in-relation*' we start with his view about presence in the world as presence in itself and to itself. Aquinas says that all real beings are in themselves highly dynamic and active. Being is consisted of being (*ens)* and acting of existing (*esse*). Both *ens* and *esse* are characteristic of being.[346] He calls the act of existence by which a being is present in itself, the "first act" of the being. And action proceeding from being to others in self-expression, self-communication, etc. which grounds its relationality, is its "second act."[347] Action, which puts it in touch with the rest of the universe, originates a whole web of relations around it by interacting with others. Since beings are and are in action, their action reveals their being. Through one's acting, one both communicates one's self and communicates oneself to another self-present being. Aquinas says that "action is the self-revelation of being," since the operation of a being manifests its existence and means its nature. Every action in some way is self-revelatory of the active center from which it proceeds.[348] Norris Clarke develops the position this way:

> From the very fact that something exists in act, it is active.
> Active power follows upon being in act; for anything acts in consequence of its being in act.

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[344] Norris Clarke, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics,* pp.304-5.
[345] *ST*, III, 4, 1, 2.
[346] Aquinas, *On being and Essence,* trans. Armand Maurer, chap 4, nos. 2, 6, and 8, pp. 52, 56, 58.
[347] Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being: the Aquinas Lecture*, pp. 14-5.
[348] *SCG*, II, 79 and 94.

It is the nature of every actuality to communicate itself insofar as it is possible. Hence every agent acts according as it exists in actuality.

It follows upon the superabundance proper to perfection as such that the perfection which something has it can communicate to another. Communication follows upon the very intelligibility of actuality. Hence very form is of itself communicable.[349]

Action is that which reveals being necessarily communicates their being and that this communication occurs to other beings participating in this communication. Thus, we have a community of beings participating in active communication. All being is always in the unending dialectic in the in-itself and the toward-others at the same moment. On the one side being is the outward-facing act of existential presence in itself: 'the introverted' and the other side is self-manifestation to others: 'the extraverted.' Through spontaneous and constant actions in both the introverted and the extraverted being enters into a web of relationship in itself and with others. All beings tend toward forming associations with others into unified communities. In this way, real being generates relations, by which it actively presents to others, both its receptivity and its self-communication, and relationality becomes a primordial dimension of reality.

To actualize oneself, one must first open oneself to the world of others. This is the relational pole of being. To be truly human person and understand humanly is to see oneself in relation to other human persons, and this involves seeing oneself in relation to the history of one's community.[350] To be means to be recognized by others through action. "Being is not just *present,* but *active* presence, tending by nature to pour over into active self-manifestation and self-communication to others."[351] Through the mediation of the others, one looks at oneself to recognize oneself as self-conscious "I," as a unique human person in relating with other persons, and also to distinguish oneself from the subhuman world around one. To be a person is to be relating and related. To be

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[349] Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being: the Aquinas Lecture*, pp. 6-7.
[350] Diogenes Allen and Eric O. Springsted, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology,* Second Edition, Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, p. 234.
[351] Norris Clarke, *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being-God-Person*, p. 218.

an actualized human person is to live a life of interpersonal self-giving and receiving or loving and

loved.[352] As Maritain puts it, a person exists in its fullness and plentifulness only when does it

reveal itself as

> self-mastery for the purpose of self-giving… Only by love does it attain to its supreme
> level of existence – existence as self-giving. It is the discovery of the basic generosity of
> existence. Subjectivity, this essentially dynamic, living and open center, both receives and
> gives. It receives through the intellect, by super-existing in knowledge. It gives through the
> will, by super-existing in love; that is, by having within itself other beings as inner
> attractions directed towards them and giving oneself to them, and by spiritually existing in
> the manner of a gift.[353]

Here we noted, for Aquinas love in its broadest meaning is defined as "willing good to another for

its own sake."[354] For giving to be truly personalized, a gift must proceed from levels of the person

as person. It must originate from the spiritual roots of the person, that is, as intellectually self-

conscious and free. What a person really has to give of itself to others is wisdom and love. They

are the joy of togetherness both in shared action and simple loving communion. Authentic love is

not really complete unless it is both actively given and actively received. Maritain again

summarizes:

> Thus, it is that when a man has been really awakened to the sense of being or existence,
> and grasps intuitively the obscure, living depth of the Self and subjectivity, he discovers
> by the same token the basic generosity of existence and realizes, by virtue of the inner
> dynamism of this intuition, that love is not a passing pleasure or emotion, but the very
> meaning of his being alive.[355]

Since person is added nothing onto being from the outside, it takes on more intensely the whole

dynamism of existence as expansive, self-communicating act, and then raised to the order of self-

consciousness and freedom. When one person opens both to personal and non-personal beings,

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[352] Each person comes into the indispensable role and unique characteristic of "I-Thou-We" dialogue. We come to
awareness of ourselves as "I" self-consciously and free open to the other, and at the same time the others as another
person responds to us as another self, a "Thou." It is not only as the stimulus response of an impersonal thing but as
another personal "I". It is in contrast with the "I-It" dialogue between a person with impersonal entities. (Seeing further
in Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being: the Aquinas Lecture*, pp. 64-7 and 76-8).
[353] *EE,* pp. 67-8.
[354] Norris Clarke, *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being-God-Person,* p. 218.
[355] *EE,* p. 68.

between outward-facing openness to the other beings and inward-facing self-possession, person does not lose his distinctness and self-identity but in contrast, enriches himself or herself as he or she becomes absorbed deeply in communion and community. We can find this in Jesus's teaching that "only he who loses himself will find himself."[356] At the deepest level of its being and its self-identity the more one person communicates, shares, and reaches out further to others, the more one is plentiful and enriched. The more a person makes oneself truly present to the others, the more one is also present to oneself. Norris Clarke thus claims that for the more one becomes aware of oneself as related by intelligence and will to the whole order of being as intelligible and good, the more one understands oneself as a human person.[357] When one person opens oneself further to others, one can go deeper of one's own self as center of interest, and then let it be transformed by the Great Center as one's own new center of consciousness. This is the call to radical self-transcendence. A transformation of person's life now is happening, so that person can spread forth more and more as image of God's own loving presence to other persons and the world. A person's self-communication to others becomes, mysteriously, more and more of a God-communication through person.[358] Therefore, to *be* is to be *substance-in-relation*[359] and *be-in-communion* with one's fellow existents[360] in God's communion. In short, the highest goal and perfection of the whole universe is the communion among persons, who in turn embrace the whole universe[361] in their consciousness and love, and then bring it back to its Source.[362]

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[356] Pope Benedict XVI, *Palm Sunday 2010 Homily, https://acatholiclife.blogspot.com/2010/03/pope-benedict-xvi-palm-sunday-2010.html* (accessed February 14, 2021).
[357] Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being: the Aquinas Lecture*, p.70.
[358] Ibid., pp. 102-4.
[359] Ibid., p.70.
[360] Ibid., p. 82.
[361] The term universe comes from Latin *uni-versum*, which means "turned toward unity."
[362] Cf. *SCG,* III. Ch.81; *ST* I, 65, 2.

Human persons are in this fullest sense the sole mediators between God and the material universe. This is a fundamental part of a human person's mission on this earth. Each one of us is a *microcosm*, partaking within us of all the levels of being, from matter to spirit to gather make a journey 'returning" to our Source, the Journey Home of the entire created universe.[363] Thus, to *be* a human person fully means to self-transcend toward the Source who is the Infinite.[364] "I am an *image* of God, brought into being by love, and called to transformation and final union with my Source."[365] However, we should not forget that although human persons have a rational nature to reach up to God, they themselves cannot fulfill this capacity without God's help to know, to love and to be personally returned to the supreme Source of all being. The human person's journey to God has no rest on earth, since we have not reached our final destination. "Each creature by itself returns and all together return to their origin, in so far as they have and accomplish a resemblance with it in their being and in their nature."[366] As long as a human person has not reached his final goal he is still on the way. "In each creature endowed with reason the state of being on the way is that in which he falls short of beatitude."[367]

Why does each person need others in an ordered social matrix to develop properly and satisfy one's nature and vocation? Maritain provides two reasons: first, "because of its very perfections, as person, and its inner urge to the communications of knowledge and love which require relationship with other persons" and secondly "because of it needs or deficiencies, which derive from its material individuality."[368] Aquinas himself answers and puts it in a beautiful way that "a certain natural equity obliges a man to live agreeably with his fellow human beings."[369] The human

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[363] Norris Clarke, *The One and the Many: A Contemporary Thomistic Metaphysics,* Notre Dame Press, 2014, p. 306.
[364] Norris Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being: the Aquinas Lecture*, p. 108.
[365] Ibid.*,* p. 68.
[366] *SCG*, II, 46.
[367] *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard (Scriptum super libros Sententiarum)*, 11, 2, 1.
[368] *PG,* p.47-8.
[369] *ST,* III, 114, 2, 1.

person is intrinsically created toward togetherness with other human persons, that is, toward *friendship, community,* and *society.* Thus, for Aquinas a person not only communicates itself to others in acting of existing (*esse*), but also in moving toward goodness. "Things should not only be made good, but also that they should operate for the goodness of others."[370] Maritain agrees: "The human person is ordained directly to God as to its absolute ultimate end. Its direct ordination to God transcends every created common good – both the common good of the political society and the intrinsic common good of the universe."[371] And of course, Aquinas considers God himself as the highest good. God is considered as not only as being itself, but also self-diffusiveness since God is the highest reality, above "being" itself, from which all other realities emanate.[372]

> For natural things have a natural inclination not only towards their own proper good, to acquire it if not possessed, and, if possessed, to rest therein; but also, to spread abroad their own good amongst others, so far as possible…. Thus, then, God wills both Himself to be, and other things to be but Himself as the end and other things as ordained to that end; inasmuch as it befits the divine goodness that other things should be partakers therein.[373]

Relationality is a natural dimension of all sensible being, just as action is from existence. It cannot be separated from being's substantiality. For a being, in a special way, a human person, naturally flows over into self-communicating action toward others, and also receives from them and then establishes a network of relations with all its recipients. Yet, "the human person cannot achieve his fullness alone, but only through receiving certain goods essential to him from society."[374] This is frequently misunderstood, without recognizing that "the good of the body politic is a common good of *human persons* – as the social body itself is a whole made up of human persons – this formula may lead in its turn to other errors of the collectivist or totalitarian."[375] We will move now

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[370] *SCG,* II, 46.
[371] *PG,* p.15.
[372] Norris Clarke, *Explorations in Metaphysics: Being-God-Person,* pp.222-3.
[373] *ST,* I, 19, 2, c.
[374] *SP,* p.71.
[375] Ibid., p.72.

to second part of this dissertation, seeking an account of how the person and common good are

presented by Aristotle and Aquinas, on whose works Maritain builds his own understanding.

Chapter Three: The Human Act is to Attain *Eudaimonia*

> Every act or applied science (*techenè*), every systematic investigation, and similarly every action and choice, seem to aim at some good; the good, therefore, has been well defined as that at which all things aim.
>
> *NE* (opening line)

[*Abstract*: In this chapter, we will distinguish between the human acts and the acts of human being in order to understand the notion of Aquinas's the human act. We will also trace back the roots of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* to understand the way in which Aquinas takes up Aristotle's Ethics and Politics to the common good.]

I. Aquinas: The Structure of the Human Act

1. Two Kinds of Act in Human Person: Human Acts and Acts of a Human Being

In the last chapter, we learn that Aquinas, in following Aristotle, convinces us that real beings include *ens* (being) and *esse* (the act of existing). It is not to be, then to act, but to be is to act. Nature or essence of "to be is to act" is not only toward its own proper good, but also to diffuse its own goodness among others as far as possible. For "perfection or good which is in things outside the soul is thought of, not only according to something absolutely inherent in things, but also according to the order of one thing to another."[376] Since human beings are endowed with rational nature, all the acts performed by a human being are not separable from a rational and free agent. Aquinas makes a distinction between human acts (*actus humani*) and acts of a human being (*actus hominis*). The former are free acts properly applied to acts which proceed from the reason and the will. A human act is precisely act in which we, human persons, know what we are doing and freely do it. "Acts are called human, inasmuch as they proceed from a deliberate will." They are said to

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[376] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Power of God,* 7, 9, c.

be knowingly or deliberately willed. They establish the moral order, "for moral acts are the same as human acts."[377] The latter are any and all operations that can truly be attributed to human beings, but not insofar as they are human, not qua human.

Human acts *(actus hominis)* are activities which can be truly predicated of a human being, but which do not arise from any deliberate intention on his part, but of which he is not a master. These acts which do not proceed from the will "acts of man" (*actus hominis*) and contrast them with voluntary acts which do so proceed. Human acts are not characteristically human when the human person shares activities in common with the lower creation: falling downward like stones, growing larger like trees, digesting food, and dying. Scratching, for example, is never done with attention. It cannot be properly called a human act. It lies outside the field of freedom. Thus, human acts are truly a human being's acts, but to distinguish them from lower acts, we must observe that they proceed from human being's will and the object of the will is the good (*bonum*). This is not true of lower acts by humans, and thus do not constitute human conduct and have no ethical significance.

> Of actions done by man those alone are properly called *human*, which are proper to man as man. Now man differs from irrational animals in this, that he is master of his actions. Wherefore those actions alone are properly called, of which man is master. Now man is master of his actions through his reason and will; whence, too, the free-will is defined as *the faculty and will of reason.* Therefore, those actions are properly called human which proceed from a deliberate will. And if any other actions are found in man, they can be called actions of *a man*, but not proper to man as man, since they are not proper to man as man.[378]

A human act is defined with reference to the will, and Aquinas maintains that in every such act the will is directed towards an end, towards something presupposed to be good. Human action is for the sake of an end insofar as it has a reason for action. It is only the human act, namely free acts proceeding from the will in view of an end understood by reason, which falls within the moral

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[377] *ST,* I-II, 1, 3.
[378] *ST,* I-II, 1, 1.

sphere and are morally good or bad. "Every individual human action that proceeds from deliberate reason must be good or bad."[379] And so, for Aquinas, "human acts and moral acts are the same." Because moral acts are the same as human acts, the physical essence of the human act comprises of voluntary choice and freedom. Human acts constitute human conduct and form the subject matter of ethics. Thus, the human act must have and relate to a moral essence: its goodness or its evil.[380]

2. The Related Elements in Human Acts

If an action is called a human action, it must proceed from both reason and will.[381] "Now certain actions are called human or moral inasmuch as they proceed from reason"[382] and "certain actions are called human, inasmuch as they are voluntary."[383] For a human act is defined with reference to the will and the act of will is always rational, because the will is the rational appetite, Aquinas states the twofold within each human action:

> in a *voluntary* action, there is a twofold action, viz. the interior action of the will, and the external action: and each of these actions has its object. The end is properly the object of the interior act of the will: while the object of the external action, is that on which the action is brought to bear. Therefore, just as the external action takes its species from the object on which it bears; so the interior act of the will takes its species from the end, as from its own proper object.[384]

Thus, the end of the action is the object of the interior act of the will. The object of the external action is the object of whatever power the will is directing in this particular action. How does Aquinas establish the relations in a human action such as between the agent and the act, the end

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[379] Ibid., I-II, 18, 9.
[380] A moral essence depends on the nature of the things. Its nature is what makes an action of a thing good or bad. A scissors is meant to cut well. Its action is bad, if it does not cut well, it is a bad scissors. A human person has natural inclinations to actions which are proper to his nature. Human nature is rational. If actions are proper with reason, these actions are good. If actions of a human person are not proper to his rational nature, they are bad. Thus, if an act is suitable with reason, it is morally good; and if an act is contrary to reason, it acts contrary to human nature. It is evil (morally bad). Seeing *ST*, I-II, 71, 6, 5.
[381] *ST,* I-II, 1, 1.
[382] Ibid., I-II, 18, 5.
[383] Ibid., I-II, 18, 6.
[384] Ibid., I-II, 18, 6.

and the object, and the interior and the exterior? His analysis of human action is found throughout his writing, but mainly in the *ST*, I-II, from questions 18 to 21 where it is the center of his analysis of human action. In the first fourth articles of the eighteenth question, he deepens the traditional morality and establishes the basic understanding of human action, and then the rest of question he develops his own contribution.

2. 1. The Object

In the first article of eighteenth question, Aquinas says that the goodness in human actions depends on their fullness of being. "Every action has goodness, in so far as it has being: whereas it is lacking in goodness, in so far as it is lacking in something that is due to its fulness of being; and thus it is said to be evil."[385] In the second article, he continues that an action receives its species from its object, so "the primary goodness of a moral action is derived from its suitable object" and so "the primary evil in moral action is that which is from object." "The object is not the matter *of which* (a thing is made), but the matter about which (something is done); and stands in relation to the act as its form."[386] The object of the act is what is done; and the object is what the agent does. It is that, which is primarily and directly attained by the act. It is to which the act, by its nature, inclines. It is the essential and intrinsic constructive of the human action. The object is distinguished from the circumstances as accidence of the act. Therefore, the primary and essential morality of a human act is derived from its object. Good and evil primarily come from the object of the act, that which the agent does. The agent performs what he does for some reason, and this reason is the end. We must note that Aquinas does not say that an act is made good or evil, only by its object. In the next two articles of the eight question he adds 'circumstances' and 'end' (intention) as two more moral determinants.

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[385] Ibid., I-II, 18, 1, c.
[386] Ibid., I-II, 18, 2, c.

As the above of *ST*, I-II, 18.1, the fullness of being measures the goodness of an action, Aquinas points out that circumstances and end can be reason for adding or reducing from the basic goodness specified by the object.

> For the plenitude of goodness does not consist wholly in its species, but also in certain additions which accrue to it by reason of certain accidents: and such are its due circumstances. Wherefore if something be wanting that is requisite as a due circumstance the action will be evil.[387]

2. 2. Circumstances

Circumstances relate and contribute to the identity of an act and to its morality at the level of accident.[388] Circumstances are distinguished from the substance of the human act. The substance of the human act includes its essential elements. Although circumstances are accidental to the act, they modify it in some way. Circumstances alone do not make an act good or bad, but they only increase or decrease the goodness or badness contributed by the objects and ends. If the circumstances only contribute to the goodness of act in the accident, it also must presuppose the other aspects of goodness are substantial, not accident. These aspects are derived from the object (proved above) and from the end. The substance of a human act is determined by its relation to its object. Obviously, a thing derives its primary goodness from its form, but many other things can contribute to its total goodness. A human act is good or bad is already determined by the object, but it can be further be modified by circumstances which surround it.[389]

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[387] Ibid.*,* I-II, 18, 3, c.

[388] The word circumstances is derived from the Latin *circumstare,* meaning "to stand around". A circumstance is something which surrounds an act and affects the act in some way. Thus, circumstance is defined as an accident of a human act already constituted in its essence (Francis L. B. Cunningham, *The Christian Life*, Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2010, p. 48).

[389] Aquinas develops this teaching in *ST*, I-II, 18, aa. 2-11. For more detailed exposition of his view, we can see Francis L. B. Cunningham, *The Christian Life*, Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2010, pp. 62-4; Ralph M. McInerny, *Ethica Thomistica: The Moral Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas,* pp. 79-90.

2. 3. The End

In the fourth article of the eighteenth question, Aquinas explains that since human act is always

the action of a subject who acts for an end, the object alone is not enough to determine human act

as good or evil.

> Just as the being of a thing depends on the agent and the form, so the goodness of a thing
> depends on its end. Whereas human actions, and other things, the goodness of which
> depends on something else, have a measure of goodness from the end on which they
> depend, besides that goodness which is in them absolutely.[390]

In order to understand the end's role, we must make a distinction between the interior act and the

exterior act of the will.[391] The former is the commanded act of the will. It is an act of a person of

particular powers which is moved by the will. The latter is the elicited act of the will and under the

command of the will, the act of willing an end. For Aquinas, "exterior acts belong to the *genus*

moris (the moral kind) only insofar as they are voluntary."[392] Thus, the exterior act under the

command of the will is related to the will as a material element, and not only accidentally. Both

the interior act and the exterior act are served by reason as the measure. The end of the action is

the object of the interior act of the will. The object of the external action is the object of whatever

power the will is directing in this particular action. The end is why the agent does it. It is quite

clear that the interior act of the will is the efficient cause of the exterior act.

> The intention (end) may stand in a twofold relation to the act of the will; first, as preceding
> it, secondly as following it. The intention precedes the act of the will causally, when we
> will something because we intend a certain end. And then the order to the end is considered
> as the reason of the goodness of the thing willed.[393]

The object alone, not including the end, is intrinsic to the action. The end itself is extrinsic to it.

"Although the end is an extrinsic cause, nevertheless due proportion to the end, and relation to the

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[390] *ST,* I-II, 18, 4, c.
[391] Aquinas's distinction of the interior and the exterior acts is explained in his *On Evil,* q. 2, aa. 2-3.
[392] Aquinas, *On Evil*, q. 2, a. 2, ad. 13.
[393] *ST*, I-II, 19, 7, c.

end, are inherent to the action."[394] Only the object is essential in relation to reason, and all others,

including the end, is accidental to reason. "A difference of object may be essential in reference to

one active principle and accidental in reference to another."[395] Thus, the end of human act is one

kind of circumstances, but it is the most important and greatest influence of any circumstances.

The end has a twofold relation to the act of the will: the end of the interior act is the end of the

agent in acting and the exterior act is the end of the act. Aquinas thus considers the interior act and

the exterior act as component parts of a single whole. The end of the interior act is the subjective

purpose of the act. It is the end which the person has in his mind when he does the act, or what in

everyday language we call the "motive" for the act. The end of the interior act itself is the very

object of the interior act. It serves as the formal cause of the action as a whole. It is a circumstance

in relation to the exterior act as form to matter.

> Now that [object] which is on the part of the will is formal in regard to that which is on the
> part of the external action: because the will uses the limbs to act as instruments; nor have
> external actions any measure of morality, save in so far as they are voluntary.
> Consequently, the species of a human act is considered formally with regard to the end, but
> materially with regard to the object of the external action.[396]

The end of the exterior act is the objective purpose of the act toward which the act is directed by

its nature. It is not a circumstance but is the object of the act. It and the object of the exterior are

the same thing. For Aquinas, "the exterior acts do not belong to the *genus moris* except to the

extent that they are voluntary. Therefore, if the act of will is good the exterior act is said to be

good, but it will be evil if the act of the will is evil."[397] Aquinas uses the example of almsgiving.

Giving alms is freely supplying material assistance to someone in need. The action of giving alms

is materially good, an exterior act good from its object, but the bad intention gives a form to the

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[394] Ibid., I-II, 18, 4, 2.
[395] Ibid., I-II, 18, 5.
[396] Ibid., I-II, 18, 6.
[397] Aquinas, *On Evil*, q. 2, a. 2, ad. 8 and ad. 11.

human act of almsgiving which makes it morally bad. Thus, moral value of an action depends upon what a person finally wants to attain. This explains why a person and the same action can have a different moral quality.[398] "A thing is said to be good or evil, from its relation to the end: thus, the giving of alms for vainglory is said to be evil."[399]

Obviously, if an act is called the human act, there cannot be an exterior act without an interior act. However, there can be an interior act without what would be a corresponding exterior act. In the act of theft, for example, the will moves the hand to reach out and takes someone's wallet; that movement of the hand is a commanded act of the will. But in many cases, although the will of one is made up to steal a wallet, he never actually does so. Perhaps, because he does not see a good opportunity for doing so, the exterior act of theft never happens. Therefore, when Aquinas argues about a morally good or morally bad act, he prefers interior acts.[400] However, he also thinks that a single human act will be good if both the object and the end for which it is chosen are good. If one of them is evil it would make the act as a whole evil.[401] Thus, in distinguishing between the interior and exterior acts we must note that for Aquinas it is only two distinct aspects of a single human act. The interior and exterior acts unite as a whole to constitute a moral act even while it contains within it these two parts. There is no difference if we speak of an agent willing the object of an act or willing the exterior act. The exterior act and object of the act are inseparable, since the doing of what is done and the done is what doing does.[402]

In short, every human act must include such three elements: the object of the act, the end for which it is performed, and the circumstances which surround it. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

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[398] *ST*, 1, 3, a.d 3.
[399] Ibid., I-II, 20.1.
[400] Copleston, Frederick, S.J., *Aquinas,* Penguin Books, 1955, p. 201.
[401] *ST,* I-II, 18, 4, ad 3; 19, 6, ad 1; 7, ad 3; 20, 2, c.
[402] Ibid., I-II, 20, aa., 1-3.

echoes Aquinas' teaching on this matter, when it says, "Every human choice has three basic components: the intention, the object, and the circumstances."[403] In order for the act to be good, if and only if, it must be good from all three elements:

(1) Has the right object (that is the right kind of act, good by its own nature)

(2) Is done with the right intention (end)[404]

(3) In the right circumstances.[405]

And for it to be bad, it may be bad from only one defect. An act which is good from its object, but it can become evil because of its circumstances or end. Of course, if an act which is evil from its objects, it is impossible to become good from its end, because it is already intrinsically evil. The end does not justify the means. Aquinas summed up his whole teaching on what makes an act good or evil in considering its relevance to the four aspects of goodness.

> 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 (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.[406]

II. Every Human Action for the Sake of the Good to Attain Eudaimonia

1. The Good (*bonum*)

Classical philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas (as opposed to modern) tend to speak of the "good", (as opposed to "value") which on their account is based entirely on the objective. They think of goodness in terms of conformity to the ideal represented by a being's

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[403] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (*CCC*), no. 1750
[404] For human reason is fallible and can make false judgments. Right intention needs to be directed by right reason objectively considered, as enlightened by the eternal law. Thus, it can be enabled to judge rightly of the true good to be pursued and the evil to be avoided.
[405] Moral legalism concentrates only on the first factor, moral subjectivism only on the second factor, and moral relativism only on the last factor (seeing Peter Kreeft, *Summa of the Summa,* Ignatius, 1990, p. 415n122).
[406] *ST,* I-II, 18, 4, c.

nature. This is how good can be convertible with being. "Goodness and being are really the same and differ only in idea."[407] The goodness is there in the nature of every being.[408] It is located in the thing itself. There is no "them" between goodness and being, but there is only thing. Aquinas concludes that there is a distinction between good and being, but only a distinction in reason.[409] Thus, goodness is objective and does not depend on our subjective "value" judgment about it. In this view, every being is good inasmuch as it is being.[410] This coincides with an implication of *Genesis* on divine God creation: "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good."[411]

If good is convertible with being, something is good to the extent that it exists as a case of its kind. As Aquinas puts it, "everything is perfect so far as it is actual. Therefore, it is clear that a thing is perfect so far as it exists; for it is existence that makes all things actual." Goodness and being are the same really, but "goodness presents the aspect of desirableness."[412] Another way to view this: "goodness is that which all things desire."[413] This means that goodness is what we truly desire, and that it is the true object of desire (most desirable).[414] And if "a thing is desirable only in so far as it is perfect," [415] it means that the goodness is the final end which a thing is directed by its

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[407] Ibid.*,* I, 5, 1, c.

[408] For Aquinas, there are many kinds of goodness. The goodness of God is in contrast to all creatures' s; the goodness in the substantial order is in contrast to all the accidental order. The goodness is found in each of the ten categories, and in different natures (*ST* I.q.6,a1,c; q.13, aa 3-6; *Sententia libri Ethicorum* I, lect. 6; *ST* I.q.5, a.6,ad.3).

[409] Aquinas, *On Truth,* q. 21, a.1, c.: "...the good... adds something to the being that is the only reason" (… bonum… addat aliquid super ens quod sit rationis tantum).

[410] For Aquinas, "being is convertible with goodness" cannot be applied to the existence of evil. For if evil exists, it must have being. Because evil is the opposite of good, and if evil exists, its existence is not good. He explains that "it cannot be that evil signifies being, or any form or nature. Therefore, it must be that by the name of evil is signified the absence of the good. And this is what is meant by saying that *evil is neither a being nor a good.* For since being, as such is good, the absence of one implies the absence of the other" (*ST,* I, 48, 1, c). Thus, evil cannot be a kind of being but rather the absence of being. It is called *a privation* by the Scholastic philosophers*,* the absence of some perfection which should exist in a thing given its nature.

[411] *Genesis* 1, 31.

[412] *ST*, I, 5, 1, c.

[413] Ibid.*,* I, 5, 4, c.

[414] Seeing *ST*, I, 5, 1, c; *On Evil*, q.1.a.1, c.

[415] *ST*, I, 5, 1, c.

nature.[416] "All who rightly define good put in its notion something about its status as an end."[417] On this view, goodness is simply the fact of being desired.

Since "goodness is that which all things desire," and the goodness is present in the nature of things. Aquinas names three general categories of good inherent to the nature of a human person.[418] First, like all other living things, we, human persons, have in common with them such as the preservation of our own existence. Second, we share in common with animals, a desire for sexual intercourse, and education of our offspring, and so forth. Third, according to the nature of our reason, "man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society." "All those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance."[419]

In this way, Aquinas argues that the good is always the perfect. But then we have to ask: How will we make our nature reach the perfect good? It cannot be wealth, honor, fame or glory, and pleasure.[420] It cannot be comprised of any bodily goods of any other sort and neither a good of the soul.[421] Our perfect good cannot be found in any created things which "lulls the appetite altogether," and it needs something absolutely perfect. Aquinas says, "this is to be found not in any creature, but in God alone… Wherefore God alone can satisfy the will of man… God alone constitutes man's happiness."[422]

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[416] *ST*, I, 5, 4.
[417] Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Truth*, 21.1.
[418] These goods are ordered in a hierarchy and correspond to the hierarchy of living things. The higher good entails the lower ones, but the lower goods are subordinate to the higher ones.
[419] *ST*, I-II, 9, .2.
[420] Ibid.*,* I-II, 2, 1; 2, 2; 2, 3; 2, 4; 2, 6.
[421] Ibid.*,* I-II, 2, 5; 2, 7.
[422] Ibid.*,* I-II, 2.8.

2. The Perfect Eudaimonia

As we have seen, Aquinas emphasizes the roles of reason in moral conduct.[423] Following Aristotle, he argues that it is the possession of reason which makes human being different from all animals. Each and every human act is rational. We act for the sake of an end insofar as we have a reason for action. "The reasonable man, at least, always acts for a purpose."[424] Each and every human act aims at some good as its end. For a man to act he must first be attracted by some good. When he perceives something as good, there arises in him a liking for it. This is a property of human action proceeding from reason and will. The good possesses the character of an end. The good is what is looked for in action. This is why Aquinas closely relates the human end, the human good, and human desire. All human persons desire their own good, and that good is the end of human life. It is asserted that all "philosophers have rightly declared that the good is what all desire."[425] Therefore, all human persons desire their own end, and it is natural that all human persons want to obtain the best form of life available to them as human persons. However, sometimes a person seeks to reach a first end which, in its turn, is subordinate to a further end. Recognizing this view, Aquinas argues that there has to be one last end of all our actions. If there were not, our acts would never reach final term and we would not come to rest.[426]

We have seen that all human action is grounded in desire. This means that when we seek the end of all of our actions, we also seek what is desirable only for itself. Aristotle thus refers to "an end in the realm of action which we desire for its own sake, an end which determines all our other

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[423] Actions of human person taken collectively make up his behavior or conduct. Behavior is more of a psychological word and is applied both to animals and humans, whereas conduct has a moral meaning and is exclusively for a human person.

[424] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* Book II, chapter 2, 15.

[425] Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics,* I*,* lesson 1, n. 109.

[426] Ibid., *lesson* 9, n. 105.

desires."[427] This end is called *eudaimonia* (human flourishing or well-being)*[428]* at one the ultimate end and the highest good.[429] *Eudaimonia* is "sufficient" in itself and most understand it as the good life. It does not lack any thing and it alone makes life complete. We never seek *eudaimonia* for the sake of something else.[430] It is an overarching ultimate end of all that human persons act. It is the ultimate end or the highest good of human life.[431] Aquinas's position is in agreement:

> There must indeed be one ultimate end for man insofar as he is man because of the unity of human nature, just as there is one end for a physician as physician because of the unity of the art of medicine. This ultimate end of man is called that human good which is happiness. [432]

All human persons direct themselves to the same end. They have a single overarching end that a rationally reflective person should seek. There is only one and the same good which can make human persons happy.[433] Aquinas thinks that the end of human life belongs to its nature rather than being simply chosen. We do not choose our natures, so we do not choose our ultimate end.[434]

According to Aristotle, if there is an end of all things we do, this will be the highest good attainable by human action. He shows us that an ultimate end or the highest good contains two properties. First, it is desired for its own sake. There must be at least one end which is not subordinate to other ends and which we pursue for its own sake. The good is that which is desired for itself, and not as

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[427] *NE*, I, 2, 1094a18-9.

[428] I prefer to keep Greek word *eudaimonia* in this dissertation, which is usually translated as *happiness,* but it is not a good choice. Since "happiness" can be taken as referring exclusively to a subjective psychological state, it is often wrongly thought to be temporary, and the possession of short periods of time. If *eudaimonia* of a human being depends on the satisfaction of his or her desires or the subjective state which person just happens to possess, it may or may not bear any relation to his living a virtuous life. For instance, a person may be generally happy through suffering a temporary grief or unhappy at the moments of joy. *Eudaimonia* is not a passing feeling or emotion, such as joy or gladness, but is a lasting state of being. Aristotle uses *eudaimonia* in one way or another in every major topic discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics,* and its features are to a fair degree captured by the idea of human flourishing, not possession of short periods of time or single days, but it requires a pocession to attain it in satisfying the desires that are necessary for a person to have in order to live a full and rich life. It must be manifested over a whole life and not merely for short periods (*NE*, I, 7, 1098a18-20; I, 10, 1100 a4ff; 1101a14-20).

[429] *NE*, 1097b1; 1176b30-1.

[430] Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, I, lesson 9, n.111.

[431] *NE,* I, 4, 1095a14-30; I.7, 1097a30-b6.

[432] Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics,* I, lesson 9, n. 106.

[433] *ST*, I-II, 1, 7.

[434] Robert Pasnau and Christopher Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas,* Westview Press, 2004, p. 198.

a means subordinate to an end. Secondly, everything else that is desired is desired for its sake.[435] Thus, whatever the ultimate end for human persons may turn out to be that which is done for its own sake and not for the sake of anything outside itself. When this end is attained, a human person is complete and lacking nothing.

Aristotle also characterizes *eudaimonia* as "excellent spiritual or mental activity, or, if there are several forms of excellence, spiritual activity expressing the best and most final excellence."[436] If *eudaimonia* is a spiritual activity and an activity of human person, then of course it must be the activity in accordance with reason. This is an activity of virtue.[437] It is quite clear that the true *eudaimonia* is impossible without moral virtue.[438] "If *eudaimonia* is activity in conformity with virtue, it is to be expected that it should conform with the highest virtue, and that is the virtue of the best part of us."[439]

Although Aristotle holds that true *eudaimonia* of human person is impossible without moral virtue and occurs primarily in contemplation of the noblest objects, he also states that the enjoyment of other goods such as friends and external things are necessary to achieve *eudaimonia*. Since in Aristotle's view, human beings are by nature political animals, they attain *eudaimonia* within society. This means that ethics cannot be separated from politics. Aristotle goes further that the sufficiency of *eudaimonia* and of the good in an individual perspective, to the claim that it becomes

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[435] *NE*, I, 2, 1094a18-9.
[436] Ibid*.,* 1098a16-18.
[437] For the Greeks, *arete* (virtue) means *excellence:* to be virtuous is to be excellent at doing something. This is echoed in Aquinas's teaching, "Human virtue is a habit perfecting man in view of his doing good deeds. Now, in man there are but two principles of human actions, viz., the intellect or reason and the appetite…. Consequently, every human virtue must needs be a perfection of one of these principles. Accordingly, if it perfects man's speculative or practical intellect in order that his deed may be good, it will be an intellectual virtue: whereas if it perfects his appetite, it will be a moral virtue." (*ST*, I-II, 58, 3, c.)
[438] We must gain a clear comprehension of Aristotle's definition of moral (or character) virtue in the *NE*. It reads as follow: "Virtue or excellence is (1) a characteristic (2) involving choice, (3) and that it consists in observing the mean relative to us, (4) a mean which is defined by a rational principle, (5) such as a man of practical wisdom would use to determine it" (Book II, chapter 6, 1106b36-1107a2). Number is put by me in front of each attribute of his definition so that we can know it has five elements.
[439] *NE*, 1177a 12-13.

complete and perfect in relation to others. The self-sufficiency of the good must be put in the political good.[440] The true *eudaimonia* must extend to members of family and fellow citizens. And legislators manage all human actions in a community in terms of the common good of that community's members. For if the common good is the good of all members, it also can be the ultimate good of each member. Legislation must promote the good life so that each member of all community can live happily.[441] On Aristotle's view, legislation is necessary to train people in virtue. The good life presupposes life in common and makes a movement from ethics to politics.[442] Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that everyone acts for the sake of *eudaimonia,* and human happiness consists in the proper exercise of reason. His moral theory is based philosophically on Aristotle's ethical theory, though he adds a theological basis. He adopts Aristotle's conceptions of teleology and eudaimonia and argues that our will is attracted to see something as good insofar as it belongs to the perfect good. The end or the good is the beginning so far as human activities go. "Whatever man desires, he desires it under the aspect of good. And if he desires it, not as his perfect good, which is the last end, he must, of necessity, desire it as tending to the perfect good, because the beginning of anything is always ordained to its completion."[443] For Aquinas, human beings only want something insofar as we find it good for us. We cannot want or desire what is not good or bad, since bad or evil is the opposite of our desire. Here we should make a distinction between the thing sought (the object of the will is good) and the reason for seeking it (proceed from human person's will). Although we seek many different things, each of them is sought because it is good or supposed as good. Our good is what completes us. Thus, whatever man does it must assume that the doing of it is good. Aquinas thinks of goodness as fulfilling. This means that proper human

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[440] Ibid., 1097a35-1097b22.
[441] Ibid., 1094b8-11.
[442] Ibid., 1179b31-1180a13.
[443] *ST*, I-II, 1, 6, c.

action is always a movement to what is fulfilling of the agent whose movement it is. "Because, since everything desires its own perfection, a man desires for his ultimate end, that which he desires as his perfect and crowning good…. The ultimate end must so fulfill the whole desire of man that there is nothing outside it left to desire."[444] Thus Aquinas comes to his understanding of what Aristotle calls eudaimonia:

> Happiness can be considered in two ways. First according to the general notion of happiness: and thus, of necessity, every man desires happiness. For the general notion of happiness consists in the perfect good, as stated above (AA. 3, 4). But since good is the object of the will, the perfect good of a man is that which entirely satisfies his will. Consequently, to desire happiness is nothing else than to desire that one's will be satisfied. And this everyone desires. Secondly, we may speak of Happiness according to its specific notion, as to that in which it consists of. And thus, all do not know Happiness; because they know not in what thing the general notion of happiness is found. And consequently, in this respect, not all desire it.[445]

For Aquinas, the activity of the theoretical intellect (contemplation), is our highest activity, and highest eudaimonia must always include that activity which is proper to human being only. He argues that the highest human good must correspond to the highest human capacity.

Then again, as for Aristotle, the best form of happiness is contemplation. Contemplation, according to Aquinas, is not only intellectual activity, but the activity of theoretical intellect. When a person is doing the contemplation of truth by which he or she must be related with what is above him or her, the person must at least depend on external things. Since the highest fulfilment of a human person can be reached only by what lies above a human person, the object of contemplation cannot be the material world, but it must be the ultimate reality in the entire universe, God. Aquinas argues that nothing could be final except God, since all creatures are effects of God's divine activity in creation. He gives two points to explain this: "First, that man is not perfectly happy, so long as something remains for him to desire and seek; secondly, that the perfection of any power is

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[444] Ibid., I-II, 1, 5, c.
[445] Ibid., I-II, 5, 8, c.

determined by the nature of its object."[446] The first point is clear enough, since whatever is to truly satisfy, as the highest end, must be complete and lacking in nothing. We, human persons as creatures, are never satisfied with our desire until we have come to know the nature of the cause of effects whose explanation we seek. For instance, in desiring to understand the physical world around us, we seek to understand its causes and actually its ultimate cause. This leads to Aquinas's second point that the perfection of any capacity originates from the nature of its objects. As rational beings, what makes the human intellect fully actual is the presence of its object to it, something intelligible. As Aquinas believes that God alone is purely intelligible, so God's presence to human intellect prepared to acquire it makes the human intellect perfect and fully actual.[447] However, according to Aquinas, eudaimonia a person can attain in this life has a certain likeness to true eudaimonia. Direct experience of God is impossible in this lifetime, but knowledge of the divine essence is at least possible.[448] This is why and how Aquinas can find himself in agreement with Saint Paul in the First Letter to the *Corinthians* 13, 12 -13: "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now we know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been full known." Imperfect eudaimonia can be reached by our own efforts, as we can also obtain the virtues, in the practice of which this imperfect eudaimonia consists of.[449] It is a certain preparation for the highest bliss which it makes us desire. Along with all of this, we must also keep in mind that eudaimonia as the fulfilment of our being, implies also fulfilment of our social nature. We will discuss the social nature of the human persons in the latter parts of this dissertation.

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[446] Ibid.*,* I-II 3.8c.
[447] Robert Pasnau and Christopher Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas,* Westview Press, 2004, pp. 210-15.
[448] *SCG,* III, chapters 41-48, 51.
[449] *ST*, I-II, 5, 5.

3. God as Ultimate End

For Aristotle, ethics is about human conduct in this mortal life not in the next life. The moral end is essentially contingent since it is the action of the human being.[450] What Aristotle calls *eudaimonia*, Aquinas calls imperfect eudaimonia and it cannot be the ultimate end, because true or perfect eudaimonia must entirely fulfill our desire.[451] While Aristotle concentrates on *eudaimonia* as the highest goal for human persons, Aquinas thinks in terms of virtues and beatitude. Beatitude relates to knowing and loving God.[452] "What no eyes has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him."[453] We cannot find a strict equivalent term in Aristotle, since Aristotle's view on human action has no relation to God.

> The *beatitudo* (perfect eudaimonia) is understood the ultimate perfection of rational or of intellectual nature…. It is twofold. The first is one which it can produce of its own natural power; and this is in a measure called beatitude (*beatitudo*) or happiness (*felicitas*). Hence Aristotle (*Ethic.* X.) says that man's ultimate happiness consists in his most perfect contemplation, whereby in this life he can behold the best intelligible object; and that is God. Above this happiness there is still another, which we look forward in the future, whereby *we shall see God as He is.*[454]

Moreover, all things here in this world are that, not permanent and we are not prevented from disasters. Aquinas concludes *eudaimonia* attained in this life is imperfect and perfect eudaimonia or *beatitudo* is attainable only in the next life which concludes principally in the vision of God – the possession of the supreme substantial good.[455] The notion of happiness is transfigured. "Happiness is now Beatitude, absolute happiness, absolutely saturating."[456] The nature of beatitude

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[450] Ralph McInerny, *The Question of Christian Ethics,* The Catholic University of America Press, 1993, p. 32.
[451] Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, I, lesion 9, n. 113.
[452] According to Aquinas, the word of God was understood in Christian view.
[453] Saint Paul, *First Corinthians* 2, 9.
[454] *ST,* I, 62, 1, c.
[455] Ibid*.,* I-II, 3, 6, c.
[456] *MP,* p. 75.

is the vision of God: "the supreme joy which derives from it is in itself distinct from that vision but is so nearly identical with it that we can hardly distinguish the joy from the vision."[457]

It is obvious that Aquinas does not deny that we can know God in this life, but what we can know about God during life on earth is not sufficient for perfect eudaimonia. The perfect eudaimonia or beatitude is not to be founded in this present life, because the demands of our present life are impossible to exclude all evil.[458] "Consequently, a human person will no longer be truly happy, if evil be in him."[459] Aquinas assumes the quest for happiness has a cosmic dimension, in so far as all things strive to assimilate themselves to God as their First Cause and coming to know God is the end of all intellectual beings. God could not have created any creature, without directing them to the final end. The will of human being is ordered to its ultimate end by a natural necessity. The human will necessarily desire imperfect *beatitudo*, of human's temporal good, and perfect *beatitudo*. *Beatitudo* must consist principally in the natural knowledge and love of God attainable in this life (imperfect natural *beatitudo*) and in the next life (perfect natural *beatitude*.) The latter can be found only in the vision of God. Thus, we can assert that the concrete human person necessarily desires the vision of God.[460]

However, we must keep in mind that *beatitudo* appears to be a gift rather than it is attained by one's own efforts.[461] Its attainment is made possible only through the grace of God. Aquinas is clearly aware that 'no created being can come to see God in His essence by its natural power'[462] and that in order to attain the vision of God the aid and supernatural elevation are required.[463] In

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[457] Ibid., p. 76.
[458] *ST*, I-II, 5, 3.
[459] Ibid., I-II, 5, 4, c.
[460] Copleston, Frederick, S.J., *A History of Philosophy: Medieval Philosophy,* vol. II, An Image Book, 1993, p. 403.
[461] *ST*, I-II, 1, 4.
[462] *SCG*, III, 52.
[463] Ibid., III, 52-4.

any case, what has been argued should be enough to show Aquinas's view that the ultimate or highest happiness of man is in vision of God:

> Final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than vision of the Divine Essence…. For perfect happiness the intellect needs to reach the very Essence of the First Cause. And thus, it will have its perfection through union with God as with that object, in which alone man's happiness consists, as stated above.[464]

Aquinas identifies God as the reality in whom the notion of the highest good is perfectly realized. The ultimate end, the perfect *eudaimonia,* is not found in any created being, but God alone who is Himself the supreme and infinite Good.[465] "God in His infinite goodness and lovability is the absolute ultimate End, and it is in the vision of God, or the possession of the absolute ultimate End, that beatitude, or the subjective ultimate End of the human being, consists."[466]

> Man is called to an absolutely saturating happiness, and it is the possession or intuitive vision of God Himself which constitutes that happiness; it is the immediate and transforming union with ultimate End of all creation…. It is the direct union with the absolute ultimate End, good in and for itself, which constitutes the subjective End of the human being, his final fulfilment, his perfect and eternal happiness.[467]

The ultimate end of all creatures, including the human person, is God, but it is only rational creatures who can attain the ultimate good by voluntary action – by the way of knowledge and love – make them unique. It is only the human person who can attain the vision of God in which alone perfect eudaimonia is.

> In the first sense, then, man's last end is the uncreated good, namely, God, Who alone by His infinite goodness can perfectly satisfy man's will. But in the second way, man's last end is something created, existing in him, and this is nothing else than the attainment or enjoyment of the last end. Now the last end is called happiness. If, therefore, we consider

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[464] *ST,* I-II, 3, 8, c.
[465] Aquinas provides detailed treatment in *SCG,* III, chapters 24 and 25.
[466] *MP,* p.78.
[467] *ST*, I-II, 5, 7.

man's happiness in its cause or object, then it is something uncreated; but if we consider it as to the very essence of happiness, then it is something created.[468]

III. The Common Good

1. Human Society and the Common Good Willed by God

For Aquinas, every creature has its own end, and some creatures reach their own end necessarily whereas human persons must be directed by their own reason to get to the final end. He emphasizes that intellectual creatures, like all creatures, are ordained to the perfection of the created whole in the intrinsic order and "common good" of the cosmos principally.[469] Moreover, "since man is naturally a social being…. Now a social life cannot exist among a number of people unless under the presidency of one to look after the common good."[470] A human person is born to live in community with his fellows. For Aquinas, the social community is natural to a human person, and he is by nature a social or political being. He cannot be an isolated individual who can obtain his final end simply as an individual by his own individual reason. Actually, he needs a community more than other animals do.[471] He can only reach his full existence together with other persons and with the help of others. In Book I of the *Politics,* Aristotle states "man is by nature *zoon politikon*"[472] and thus, political life is a necessary part of his full development. "He who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a state. A social instinct is implanted in all men by nature."[473] Commenting

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[468] *ST,* I-II, 3, 1, c.
[469] *PG*, pp.16-7.
[470] *ST*, I, 96, 4, c.
[471] According to Maritain, two terms: *community and society* may be used synonymously. Both are not only biological realities but also ethico-social and truly human, However, a community is more of a work of nature and more nearly related to the biological while a society is more of a work of reason, and more nearly related to the intellectual and spiritual properties of man. Both their inner social nature and their characteristics, as well as their spheres of realization, do not coincide (see *MS*, p.2).
[472] Aristotle, *Politics,* I, 2, 1253a 2.
[473] Ibid.*,* 1253a28-9.

on Aristotle's *Politics,* Aquinas says, "the end of natural things is their nature. But the state is the end of the subordinate communities which we have mentioned [i.e.,, household and township] and which we have shown to be natural. The State is, therefore, natural."[474] The most obvious evidence of the social nature of human beings is their faculty of expressing their ideas or notions to other humans through the medium of a system of language which express their concepts completely. This is impossible for other animals, although they can show their feelings only through very general signs.

> Now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals is evident. Nature, as we often say, makes nothing in vain, and man is the only animal whom she has endowed with the gift of speech. And whereas mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain and is therefore found in other animals (for their nature attains to the perception of pleasure and pain and the intimation of them to one another, and no further), the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and the unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of just and unjust, and the like, and the association of living beings who have this sense makes a family and a state. Further, the state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part.[475]

Human beings in their own nature are very fitted for society.[476] If society is natural to humans, government to direct the activities of individuals with a view to the common good is also natural. Wherever there is a group of creatures with a common good to be attained there must be some common ruling power. Since Aquinas believes that the nature of all creatures, including human beings, has been created by God, and if human society and government are natural, it must conclude that they have a divine justification and authority willed by God. God is supreme Lord and Governor of all creatures in that the communal aspect of human life is extended to include the

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[474] Aquinas, *The Book of Politics (Sententia libri Politicorum),* Bk 1, lect. 1.
[475] Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, chapter 2, 1253a6-20.
[476] Perhaps, the Greeks do not have a term for *society* in general but use the term *polis*, city, to imply for both state and society. Plato derives the state from human person's economic needs, which are natural needs (see *Republic,* Book II, 369). Aristotle goes further. He is not only concerned about a human person's economic need, but also focuses very strongly and primarily on the family (See *Politics*, Book I, chapter 2, 1252a24 to 1253a18).

communion of all people under God. He is the first Cause and the final Cause. All authority comes from God and God rules over all creation. God is the common good of the universe and of man. God is believed that He wills what is good for all His creatures.[477]

Obviously, the attainment of God's vision exceeds the powers of human nature, but we should not understand that man has two final ends, a temporal end which is provided by the State and an eternal end which is provided by the Church. Man just has one final eternal end, and his earthly tasks is to facilitate the attainment of God's vision.[478] As a human person is a social being, he needs political society so that his rational nature can be fulfilled. However, because his final end is the attainment of God, his vocation to live in political society must itself be directed in the light of this end for that reason a human person was created. This reminds us that if the rulers or policy governs us to act in a manner unsuitable with the attainment of the final end, we must disobey and find a way to protect ourselves.[479]

2. Relationship between the Human Person and the Common Good

A human society has its own end which is indicated by the terms "the common good." The common good is an end and gives each society its meaning. The common good of the society does not have its own existence apart from that of the citizens. Since "every part is ordained to the whole, as imperfect to perfect; and since one man is a part of the perfect community, the law must need regard properly the relationship to universal happiness."[480] Aquinas goes further arguing that "the good of part is for the good of the whole; hence everything, by its natural appetite and love, loves its own proper good on account of the common good of the whole universe."[481] Thus, the

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[477] *ST*, I-II, 105, 1.
[478] Copleston, Frederick, S.J., *A History of Philosophy: Medieval Philosophy,* II, An Image Book, 1993, pp. 414-17.
[479] *ST*, 96, 4.
[480] Ibid., I-II, 90, 2, c.
[481] Ibid., I-II, 109, 3, c.

part exists for the whole or each individual exists for the common good.[482] This is the nature of man in the original state before the situation of fallen man. After the fallen man the state seems to be in contrary. Many individuals pursue their own good rather than the good of the whole society. However, the fact is that each person will not act in favor of or against the common good without working for or destroying their own private interests.[483]

When an individual citizen is subordinated to the whole of which he forms a part, does the common good benefit all the individual citizens making up the society? Individuals and families are sometimes obliged to submit their immediate interests to the state or society and receive no personal good from it at all. For example, Aquinas claims that it is right for public authority to deprive an individual citizen of life as in war or in the grave crimes on the purpose that the individual is obliged to sacrifice his or her life for the society.[484] If the state or the common good is for an individual, why must he or she die for it?[485]

The common good is common to the parts and the whole into which it flows back and, in turn, must benefit from it. "Individual that seeks the common good of many, seeks in consequence his own good," "because the individual good is impossible without the common good of the family, state, or kingdom."[486] The common good is common because it is received and communicated in persons, not in individuals.[487] Maritain explain: "The person is a reality, which, subsisting

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[482] According to Aquinas, each intellectual substance is created, first, for God, the separated common good of the cosmos; second, for the perfection of the order of the cosmos; third, for itself by which it perfects itself and accomplishes its destiny (see *ST*, I, 65, 2, c).
[483] Leo J. Elders, *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas,* CUA Press, 2019, p. 226-7.
[484] Aquinas, *ST,* II-II, 65, 1.
[485] We know that for Aquinas the human person is not simply a member of society or state. The most important thing about being human is our supernatural vocation.
[486] *ST,* II-II, 47, 10, 2.
[487] Human beings, in so far as he or she is a material individuality, are subject to the determination of the physical world. In so far as We are individuals, each of us is a fragment of a species, a part of this material world, a single point in the immense network of forces: cosmic, ethnic, historic, whose laws we are not free to choose. However, human being is also a person. In so far as are persons, we are not subjects of forces or laws of the physical world since we subsist entirely with the subsistence of our spiritual soul. The person is in human being a principle of creative unity, of freedom (See *SP*, pp. 63-6).

spiritually, constitutes a universe by itself and an independent whole (relative independent), in the great whole of the universe and facing the transcendent Whole, which is God."[488] The entire person is relative to the absolute, in which alone it can find its fulfilment. Its intellectual root is the whole structure of goods having an absolute value, and which serves as a way to the absolute Whole, which transcends the world. "The human person is ordained directly to God as to its absolute ultimate end. Its direct ordination to God transcends every created common good – both the common good of the political society and the intrinsic common good of universe."[489] The common good of city contains within itself a principal value which is compatible with the good of the whole, of the persons to their life of person and as well as the communications of generosity consequent on such expansion. The end of society is the good of the social body, but the common good of society is neither the mere collection of private goods, nor the proper good of a whole which interconnects the parts to itself alone and sacrifices them to itself. It includes the collection of public services and the social integration of civic conscience, political virtues and a sense of right and liberty, of all activities, where they seek material prosperity or spiritual riches. All these things are not only systems of advantages but also goods in themselves or the intrinsically worthy goods.[490] We can divide Maritain's account of the common good into two kinds. The common good contains those elements "necessary for the good life of society in general, with no specific regard for its individual members, and those… specifically necessary for the good life of the person."[491]

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[488] *SP*, p.67.
[489] *PG,* p. 15.
[490] Ibid*.,* pp. 50-3.
[491] Kibujjo Kalumba, "Maritain on 'the Common Good': Reflection on the Concept," *Laval théologique et philosophique*, 49, no. 1, (1993), 97-8.

If the human being is a person, with a value of his own, he is not simply an 'individual.' He is communicated and reverted from all those things of the common good of city. It helps each human person to perfect his life and liberty of person. The person cannot attain his fullness alone, but only through receiving certain goods natural to him from society. Thus, the human person's vocation to goods which transcend the political common good is expressed in the nature of the political common good. And in the natural order, the common good of the social body indicates an intrinsic ordination to something which transcend it.[492]

> The person, as such, is a whole – a whole open and generous. Truly speaking, if human society were a society of *pure persons,* the good of society and the good of each person would be one and the same good. But man is very far from being a pure person…. When such a person enters into society of his fellows, he becomes *a part* of a whole, a whole which is larger and better than its parts, in so far as they are parts…. Because, finally speaking, society, being a whole of persons, is *a whole of wholes*.[493]

In order to pursue the common good, the law must be established. The law is considered primary with the common good rather than with the good of the individual. In our next chapter, we will explore how Jacques Maritain offers a model of Integral Humanism to promote common good.

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[492] *MS,* pp. 148-150
[493] *SP,* pp. 74-5.

Chapter IV: Maritain criticizes Anthropocentric Humanism

> The individual person, the family or intermediate groups are not able to achieve their full development by themselves for living a truly human life. Hence the necessity of political institutions, the purpose of which is to make available to persons the necessary material, cultural, moral, and spiritual goods. The goal of life in society is in fact the historical common good
> *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church,* 168

[*Abstract*: In this chapter, we will understand Maritain's argument that the root of errors in modern philosophy is found in anthropocentric humanism. To understand the errors of modern philosophy, first we must review the fundamental forms of human community. Second, we will see how Maritain points out its errors in the wrong notions of human equality and the process by which anthropocentric humanism alienates us from a proper understanding of God. Finally, to correct these errors, theocentric humanism or integral humanism needs to be recovered.]

I. The Fundamental Forms of Human Community [494]

In order to understand precisely the nature of political society[495] and important related moral issues

we should begin by making it clear how a person relates to basic forms of human community in

the first place. In general, it is necessary to examine relationships that exist between an individual

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[494] Here we need to make a basic distinction between *community* and *society*. These two terms are usually used synonymously. Both community and society are "ethico-social" and truly human, not mere biological realities. However, the former is "more of a work of nature and more nearly related to the biological" while the latter is "more of a work of reason, and more nearly related to the intellectual and spiritual properties of man." (See *MS,* pp. 2-4). A society can be defined as 'a union of intelligent beings acting for an end', or the conscious coordinated activity of persons for a common end' (See Thomas Crean & Alan Fimister, *Integralism: A Manual of Political Philosophy,* Eurospan c/o Casemate Publishers, 2020, p.11).

[495] A further distinction should be made among the notions of *Nation, State*, and *Political Society*. As Maritain tells us, the notions of *Political Society* (or *Body Politic*), *State* and *Nation* are very complex, "now used synonymously, now in opposition to one another." The confusion among them has been a woe to modern history. Thus, when each of them comes to their sociological meaning and to political theory, they need to be sharply distinguished.
(1) The *Nation* is a community, not a society. It is something ethico-social: a human community based on the fact of birth and lineage. In contradiction to the *Nation*, both the *Body Politic* and the *State* relate to the order of society, but they differ from each other as a part differs from the whole. The former is the whole and the latter is part of this whole.
(2) The *Body Politic* is the most perfect of temporal societies and tends to a concretely and wholly human good. Justice is a primary condition for the existence of the *Body Politic,* but friendship is its very life-giving form. The entire human person is part of the political society. All his or her community activities, as well as his or her personal activities, are of consequence to the political whole.
(3) The *State* is part of the body politics that is concerned with the maintenance of law, the promotion of the common good and public order. It is not a human person or a body of human persons. It is only an agency named to use power and made up of experts in public order and instrument in the service of the human person. The State is for man, but not man for the State, whereas the human person as an individual is for the body politic and the body politic is for the human person as a person (seeing *MS,* pp. 1-19). Here in this part, we limit our consideration to the natural order, as distinguished form the domain altogether proper to revealed religion.

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person and forms of human communities. There are three fundamental forms of human community: family, the political community, and the Church. Each form of these communities regard various senses of common good in which the virtues of justice and charity must be exercised. Since justice is the most fundamental idea of political philosophy,[496] can we immediately ask whether there would be any adequate theory without some theory of justice?

1. Family

The community of family is very natural and arises from a natural process, but the unity of the family whole excludes the "otherness" that justice requires. As Pope John Paul said, expressing the Catholic view favored by Maritain, "The human being is single, unique, and unrepeatable, someone thought of and chosen from eternity, someone called and identified by name."[497] The "otherness" of members of the political community must be distinguished from the unity that is provided by the bonds of charity that join unique persons in the community of family, so the exercise of both justice and charity should be at work among members of a family. On the one hand, a child is a person distinct from her or his parents, and obviously, relations between them are sanctioned by law to protect certain rights of the child. However, the child is not completely distinct from the parents, who are prolonged in, and will survive in him or her. As Aquinas puts it, "the son is something of father." Therefore, the parents can do certain things in term of their parental right beyond what we call "the law." On the other hand, relations between husband and wife have their deepest origin in the sacramental bond. Both of them belong to each other, as Saint Paul says: "Husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife

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[496] The term 'political philosophy' appears once in Aristotle's *Politics,* III.1. Political philosophy is a branch of moral philosophy. Moral philosophy in general is the study of human being's life, and its purpose is to help us how to attain the highest good on earth.

[497] John Paul II, *Urbi et Orbi Message,* On Monday December 25, 1978, also http://Maritain.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/urbi/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19781225_urbi.html.

loves himself… and the two will become one flesh."[498] Relations between husband and wife are more distinct than between the child from the father. Husband and wife have freely taken each other as a partner to establish a kind of society. The bond and relations between them are more completely matter of right and justice than those of child and parents.[499]

In sum, strict relations of law and justice must exist in the very interior of the family among its members: child and parents, husband and wife. To distinguish justice among members of the family from others, it may speak of "domestic justice," because relations of family are governed by the common good of the family as their end.[500]

2. The Political Community

Since the end of the political community is the good of human prosperity for the community, the political community represents the highest expression of human society. Aquinas says,

> Aristotle shows that that good to which the city is ordered is the highest among human goods by means of the following argument. If every society is ordered to a good, that society which is the highest necessarily seeks in the highest degree the good that is the highest among all human goods. For the importance of the means to an end is determined according to the importance of the ends.[501]

To achieve a just political order, justice is a central virtue of political community since it is distinguished among the virtues by the fact that it governs relations among human persons.[502] It establishes right relation with others,[503] and so helps us understand how best to develop and maintain human life in community.[504] It is a stable disposition of rational love, and it moves the

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[498] *Ephesians*, 5:18 and 31b.

[499] Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas,* University of Notre Dame Press, 1956, pp. 306-7.

[500] *ST,* I 75, 6; and *SCG*, II, 55, 79.

[501] Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Politics,* (trans. Ernest L. Fortin and Peter D. O'Neill), I.1.11; also https://isidore.co/aquinas/Politics.htm (accessed August 14, 2021).

[502] See Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, 58, 1. Aquinas identifies the virtue of justice with "a constant and perpetual will rendering to each that which is his right."

[503] *ST*, II-II, 57, 1; *Disputed Questions on Truth,* 23, 6.

[504] In his *ST,* Aquinas spends sixty-six questions (II-II, 57-122) for explaining the virtue of justice. In his conception, justice forms part of a larger view of the moral life. Justice itself remains partial unless one considers such themes as natural law. He makes two sets of distinctions: (1) legal or general and particular justice, and (2) commutative and distributive justice.

agent to render to each that which is his or her right.[505] The relations in the political community established by rights among people who are not united to each other by any bond of kinship. The relations which unite them are relations of justice and right.

3. The Church Community

When we consider the human community as a whole, and because of the "terrible confusion of our day," radical individualism weakens the due ordering of human society gradually. Totalitarianism limits the personal dignity that each member of a political community should be enjoyed, so the search for a new common good that is neither radical individualism nor totalitarianism is a matter of highest priority.[506] And, this must be done without ignoring the claims of pluralism, which suggests the coexistence of many things, such as opinions, principles, beliefs, ways of life and different groups of races in one nation. Pluralism is the idea of "respect for diversity" and its principle can be applied in a large range of disciplines and contexts: in society, ethics, politics, education, ethnic relations and legal reform. In the field of ethics, moral pluralism accepts that there are varying ethical principles and theories that they can conflict with each other, but each of them is worthy of respect. The moral pluralists believe that no single philosophical approach can solve or answer all moral problems. Observing social problems of his age, Maritain describes modern civilization as a worn-out garment which can be neither mended nor sent to the cleaners. It requires a total and substantial recasting, a trans-valuation of cultural principles.[507] He believes that a Christian philosophy inspiring Christian values will help to solve problems of modern civilization. Therefore, we need a philosophy deduced from ethical order and oriented towards the highest common good promoted by faith in God.[508] The Church must become a sign–that

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[505] *ST*, II-II, 57 or 58.
[506] *RM*, p. 133.
[507] *IH,* p. 207.
[508] *RT*, pp. 42 and 43.

establishes the "new community" of the elect that charity is present among the members of the "mystical body of Christ." It is also divine, for the supernatural order directs the proper life of the Church.[509] It participates and fosters the ordering of the whole to the common good. "True social justice aims to establish a human community that is readied for participation in the beatific communion of the saints, one which, because of the infused virtue of justice, already appears in some ways among those who belong to Christ."[510] Within the Church the end of all forms of human community must be transformed to attain the stage of perfect happiness or beatitude, the beatific communion of the saints. Thus, in the new community, the new law of evangelical justice must be exercised: "strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."[511]

To fulfill the new law of evangelical justice, the Church serves the forms of human community

> by preaching the truth about the creation of the world, which God has placed in human hands so that people may make it fruitful and more perfect through their work; and by preaching the truth about the Redemption, whereby the Son of God have saved mankind and at the same time has united all people, making them responsible for one another.[512]

As a result, the task of the Christian philosopher is to reconcile the decisions of the political community with the norms of Christian conduct.[513] We will see Maritain as a Christian thinker who attempted to apply his faith to the disturbing and controversial social and political crises of his period. Political Christian philosophers should make a movement from the world of nature to the spiritual realm.

II. Human Equality or Unity as the Origin and Basis of Justice for a Free Society

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[509] *IH,* p. 41.
[510] Romanus Cessario, O.P., *The Virtues or The Examined Life,* Continuum, 2002, p.136.
[511] *The Gospel of Matthew* 6, 33.
[512] John Paul II, "State and Culture," *Centesimus annus*, chapter 5, no.51.
[513] *IH*, p. 42.

We have understood the individual person in relations to the three fundamental dimensions: family, the political community, and the Church. And we must not lose sight of the fact that each person in any of those three forms of relation has the same specific nature. "Men of every color and every condition should be uniformly designated by the same word *man* is a basic fact accepted by everyone,"[514] but we may still ask of what value is the unity or equality in nature among men? Our word "human" (writing many decades ago, Maritain refers to "man") is neither a mere word nor only a logical requirement of an abstract species realized in our mind but is an ontological and concrete reality. Maritain argues that when we speak of living beings of the same species, we necessarily relate them to the unity of their specific nature. All the same species are equal in nature. "The expression "equality in nature" is purely and simply synonymous with unity of nature."[515]

This is the basis from which Maritain criticizes errors of modern philosophy. He wishes to argue for equality in nature among human beings so that we can have a model or a notion for how we live our Christian faith with positive effects for the structures of secularized society.

1. The Errors of the Pure Nominalist Notion and the Pure Idealist Notion

In the first chapter of *Redeeming the Time,* which first appeared in French in 1939, Maritain presents a brief, profound discussion of human equality. Maritain points out the errors of two prominent views: the pure nominalist and the pure idealist notion. Maritain points his opposition to these views because he calls them the "realist and Christian" view. He considers the errors of the first two views as "practical attitudes rather than philosophic schools" since the attitudes drive from "concrete attitudes of the intelligence that are of basic practical importance."[516] The roots of the errors of the pure nominalist or empiricist notion and the pure idealist notion are "unconscious

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[514] *RT,* p. 2.
[515] Ibid., pp. 1-2.
[516] Ibid., p. 2.

process, the origin of which lies in the obscure workings of the will for power, or in the natural ferocity of the defensive instinct"[517] and "restless emotionalism tinged with resentment… detesting and ravaging nature, a bitter passion."[518] In his own view, Maritain finds in the realist idea, the possibility to truly conceive of equality. As we already know, his definition of equality is centered on the principle of the common good. We can also anticipate that this produces a distributive theory of justice.[519]

> I shall, therefore, first discuss the pure nominalist or empiricist notion of human equality, in other words, the philosophy of enslavement. Secondly, I shall discuss the pure idealist notion of human equality, that is, the philosophy of egalitarianism. Finally, I shall discuss the realist notion of human equality; here we shall consider the true philosophy of equality which does not suppress inequalities, but bases them indeed on equality, as something more fundamental, and turn them, by virtue of justice, into an equality concerned with the use and fruition of the common good.[520]

Maritain points out the errors of the anti-Christian philosophy of enslavement in the denial of the equality in nature between human beings. Empiricist and nominalist thought, such as we witness in fascism, has "misunderstood the value and reality of the specific essence itself."[521] They do not recognize that inequalities among people "relate to aggregations (collective wholes) and to average values, not to species and essential values."[522] These views are wrong, since they apply inequalities to aggregations, rather than to persons. They forget that some people within the aggregate "can in [its] turn achieve superior status."[523] For Maritain, "inequalities are inequalities in fact, not in law, and depend in the last analysis only upon divine freedom."[524] The pure nominalist or empiricist notion of human equality is "the pure form toward which tends every kind of moral or social

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[517] Ibid., p.7.
[518] Ibid., p.7
[519] Ibid., p 11.
[520] Ibid., p. 2.
[521] Ibid., p. 4.
[522] Ibid., p. 4.
[523] Ibid., p. 4.
[524] Ibid., p. 5.

empiricism which disregards men's equality as a species in nature and sees in it only a word,"[525] only a mere name. Since the unity of humankind, according to the view of the anti-Christian philosophy of enslavement, is merely a word, it leads to "collective pride which comes into play, the instinct for domination and cruelty."[526]

> This process, pleasing to instinct and passion, first appears of the practical intellect; later it reaches out into the speculative sphere when a pseudo-science, taking for its object of study the pseudo-essences in question, seeks to justify the privileges or domineering ambitions of those categories judged to be superior.[527]

Maritain also points out the errors of pseudo-Christian egalitarianism which he identifies with an approach that is close to the Communism state.[528] "Communism can be considered a reaction against modern individualism. It claims to be directed towards the absolute emancipation of man, destined, in this system, to become the God of history. At its very origin, we find a desperate protest against the dehumanization of the person."[529] The central error of this view is that it denies the reality of natural inequalities. As for idealism, its error

> does not lie in thinking that there is an essential equality in nature between men. It lies in the conviction that all human substance reflows within the abstract species alone, and that the reality and value of those individual inequalities which are inscribed in the world of what is particular and historic are as nothing.[530]

When the pseudo-Christian equalitarianism as in Communism denies the reality of inequalities, it presupposes that there is not a necessary diversity of abilities. In disagreeing with this idea, Maritain explains "individual inequalities… are in themselves as a necessary for the development and flowering of human life as the diversity of parts for the perfection of a flower or a poem."[531] Maritain thinks that "the egalitarian error is at once less hateful and more treacherous than the error

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[525] Ibid., p. 8.
[526] Ibid., p. 6.
[527] Ibid., p. 4.
[528] Ibid., pp. 12-3.
[529] *PG,* p. 93.
[530] *RT,* p. 10.
[531] Ibid., p. 10.

of the philosophy of enslavement; less hateful, because it preserves an element of that which is naturally Christian in the human soul; more treacherous, because it corrupts that very element."[532] Nevertheless, he does think, as we have already said, that the equality in nature among human beings is neither a mere word nor a logical requirement of an abstract species, but it includes human beings' concrete communion in the mystery of the human species;… it is hidden in the heart of the individual and of the concrete, in the roots of the substance of each man."[533] He includes "both that equality in essence which unites man in rational nature and those natural individual inequalities which arise from this very unity or equality."[534] Now we see how Christian equality of humankind is the true idea of equality, as it truly recognizes diversity without giving up positive unity. However, it should not be forgotten that the many contrary secularizing do still threaten Christian values and human freedom. For example, we see the absence of any reference to God in the European Union's constitution, and in 1973 the "atomic bomb" of legal permission for abortion was dropped with the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision. As Maritain argues, a government that fails to respect the right to life can hardly be respected with any other rights, since the right to life is the most fundamental and important of all rights.[535]

2. Christian Equality: The True Idea of Equality

According to Maritain, a free society needs two virtues: justice and charity. These two virtues are the only effective antidotes for the errors of the philosophy of enslavement and the philosophy of pure egalitarianism. Since the philosophy of enslavement (e.g., Fascism), on the one hand, disregards equality of human beings as a species in nature, it needs principally the virtue of justice in order that human beings may have their due. Since the philosophy of egalitarianism (e.g.,

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[532] Ibid., p. 14.
[533] Ibid., p. 15.
[534] Ibid., p. 19.
[535] *CD*, p*p. xi-xii.*

Communism), on the other hand, is the rejection of natural inequalities, it needs principally the virtue of charity in order that human beings may dwell in unity. For free social life and dignity of human being, there must be existence of both equality and inequalities. However, fascism and communism

> interpret the word equality on a plane surface; realism interprets the word it with the dimension of depth as well. Not only should one conceive of equality as something fundamental from which arises an infinite number of differences, but equality itself is a profound thing – organic, intensive, and qualitative.[536]

Equality is primary, inasmuch as it relates to the fundamental rights and the common dignity of human beings and to justice. Inequalities which are consubstantial with social life, flourishing everywhere, are and must be secondary,[537] because "the community of essence is of greater importance than individual difference; the root is more important than the branches."[538] Maritain says, "the inequalities proceed from society more than from nature, whereas social equality proceeds from nature more than from society."[539] "If equality lies at the root and inequality rests in the branches, it is a new kind of equality which, by virtue of justice, friendship, and human compassion and by virtue of the communication they provoke, is realized in the fruit."[540]

It is the natural love of the human being for his own kind which manifests and makes real the unity of species among human beings, and it is identical with the Christian conception of life. The unity of humankind is at the basis of Christianity[541] since the Christian conception of life is concrete, broad, and fruitful of a certainty of equality and community in nature between human beings. At the same time, it also requires the hierarchies which spring from the very center of this intrinsic community, and the distinct inequalities which they necessarily involve. Equality among human

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[536] *RT,* pp. 18-19.
[537] Ibid., p. 20.
[538] Ibid., p. 19.
[539] Ibid., p. 23.
[540] Ibid., p. 25.
[541] Ibid., p. 17 (italics are from Maritain).

beings in nature is a necessary condition for Christian thought and life. It is Maritain's conviction that the realist ideas of equality in nature are legacies of the Judeo-Christian traditions. To assert the equality in nature between human beings is for Christian realism to wish that those fruitful inequalities should flourish themselves whereby the quantity of individuals participates in the common treasure of humanity. Maritain quotes Pope Pius XII's statement that in order to purify the idea of equality of all erroneous associations and implications, we must hold tight to that law of human solidarity and charity, required and imposed as much "*by the community of origin and by the equality of rational nature among all men,* to whatever people they may belong, as by the sacrifice of redemption offered up by Jesus Christ…." The Pope adds,

> marvelous insight which makes us contemplate the human race in the unity of its origin in God; in the unity of its nature similarly composed in all men of a material body and a spiritual and immortal soul; in the unity of its immediate end and of its mission in the world; in the unity of its dwelling place – the earth, the goods of which all men, by natural right, can utilize to sustain and develop life; in the unity of its supernatural end – God Himself, toward whom all should strive; in the unity of the means to attain this end; … in the unity of its relation to the Son of God; … in the unity of its redemption worked for all men by Christ.[542]

For the philosophy of egalitarianism, it is in fact most desirable that all inequality between them should vanish. This idea can be right for a mathematical equality between two units which denies all inequality between them, but equality in nature between human beings does not exclude and even demands individual inequality. For in the world of human beings as in the world of all sensible things, there is no communication, no life or no movement without differentiation and thus inequality.[543] Every person is a person in his or her very essence, but none of us is only generally human in essence.[544] This is a manifest in all the riches of the various perfections of which human being is capable. All the diversity of perfections spreads through the generations of

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[542] Pope Pius XII, Encyclical *Summi pontificates,* October 20, 1939, Italics from Maritain, and I quote from Maritain, *RT,* p. 17.
[543] Cf. *ST*, I, 47, 2.
[544] Cf. Cajetan, in *ST*, I, 6, 3.

human beings in time and space is only a varied participation in the common and inexhaustible potentialities of human being.[545] For Aquinas, "the peak of human person is to love God *lovingly* in a communion of love, in other words, freely to lay oneself open to the fullness of love of the living God descending into us, and overflowing from us to make us continue His work in time, and communicate His goodness."[546] If we treat a human being as a human being, it means that we love and respect the secret that person carries within herself or himself and the good of which the person is capable. In this way, we make fruitful in ourselves her or his closeness in nature to and her or his unity in nature with ourselves.[547] This unity or equality of mankind can be only perfectly found in the Son of God who "knows what there is within man" perceives in each human being all. "In a man are, *virtualiter,* all men."[548]

> For in the Son of God all things in heaven and on earth were created… all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together… For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things…by making peace through the blood of his cross.[549]

III. Anti-humanist Ideologies

When Maritain approaches the key ideas of modern philosophy, he is against those that are applied to human beings by geometrical imagery. He thinks that this method relates to entities as if they are without ontological substance, which is characteristic of mathematical abstraction. Consequently, its application to human reality has many errors, and leads to wrong conceptions of human equality. By such views, it is thought that when two things must be made equal or unequal, they are commonly said to require adjusting. Yet Aquinas does not identify justice with the claims

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[545] *RT,* p. 18.
[546] Maritain, "The Humanism of St. Thomas Aquinas," *Twentieth Century Philosophy: Living Schools of Thought,* ed. Dagobert D. Runes, Philosophical Library, NY, 1943, p. 301.
[547] *RT,* p. 15.
[548] Ibid., p. 19.
[549] Cf. *Colossians* 1. 16-20.

and duties arising between strictly unequal parties. Justice is exercised through activities involving exchanges of all kinds in accordance with a norm of equality determined by some relevant criterion. "Because a man's work is said to be just when it is related to some other by way of some kind of equality, for instance the payment of the wage due for a service rendered."[550] Aquinas says that "justice by its name implies equality, it denotes essentially relation to another, for a thing is equal, not to itself, but to another."[551] He makes the same point in another way: "even as the object of justice is something equal in external things, so too the object of injustice is something unequal."[552] This formula comes from Aristotle's famous discussion of justice in *Nicomachean Ethics*: "the just is equal, as all men suppose it to be, even apart from argument."[553] Aristotle assumes that justice always involves drawing comparisons between or among persons with respect to treatment. In the light of Aquinas, Maritain argues that human equality is the origin and basic of justice for a free society, but this is an equality that does not simply wipe away relative inequality. Human equality is a foundation for understanding his moral philosophy and concept of nature of human being. First, in order to understand and establish a true free equal society for Maritain, we should go some distance into the past in our search for the origin of the ideas which spread and rule the world today.

> We are bound to the past in the intellectual order as in every other, and if we were to forget that we are animals which are specifically political, we should be surprised to discover how historically we think, how traditional we are, even when we are claiming to make all things new.[554]

We have now established the basis from which Maritain begins his social critique. We will turn now to his critique of three reformers. This will enable us to recognize his understanding of some

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[550] *ST*, II-II, 57, 1.
[551] Ibid.*,* II-II, 58, 2, resp.
[552] Ibid.*,* II-II, 58, 2, resp; II-II, 57, 1, resp.
[553] *NE*, 1131a13.
[554] *TR,* p.3.

modern perspectives and social organizations present in European countries during his time (and maybe still today). We can then investigate the integral humanism that for him is the solution for many problems in a secularized society.

1. Egocentricity Three Reformers: Luther – Descartes - Rousseau[555]

During the turmoil in Western Europe following the First World War and Russian Communism, many European thinkers and philosophers began to doubt modern achievements. After his conversion (June 11, 1906) to the Roman Catholic Church, Maritain spent a great deal of his time applying Thomism to the turbulent European situation. He identifies the essence of modern culture and diagnoses the major causes of its degradation through the philosophic guidelines provided by his deepened Catholic faith. He adjusts his moral and political views and then brings them into conformity with the social and political magisterium of the Catholic Church. He realizes that "everything begins in the spirit, and all the great events of modern history have been formed in the inmost soul of few men, in the life of that *nous* which, as Aristotle says, is nothing at all as to volume and mass."[556] These few men, according to Maritain, are Luther, Descartes, and Rousseau – those whose thoughts have come to dominate the modern world and governed all the problems which–trouble it. Each of them plays a different role: a reformer of religion, a reformer of philosophy, and a reformer of morality. All three men are great individualists of modernity. They are the begetters of what is called the modern conscience.[557] However, by constantly referring to a great part of classical antiquity, the predominant orientation of medieval Christianity, and

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[555] In this section, we do not propose to evaluate Maritain's interpretation of the three reformers so much as study that interpretation in order to identify his general criticism of modernity: this is mainly a matter of modern failure to subordinate technological progress to religious, moral values and what Maritain considers to be inhumane in modern life. In other words, we aim mainly to understand certain features of what Maritain sees as a progressive 'secularization' of society in modern times, as he sees them, especially in those Western societies built on the Judeo-Christian religious heritage.

[556] *RT,* p.14.

[557] Ibid*.,* p. 4.

especially Aquinas's description of the order inherent in material and immaterial reality, Maritain shows how each of these reformers takes a turn that leads Western civilization to shift from an ethic of community to an ethic of autonomy. Maritain's point is specifically to identify central errors of each reformer's thought, and where the resulting problems of the modern world thus become rooted. He argues that egocentricity, the turning of human being and consciousness into itself, is one of the most consequential sources of the current historical situation.

2. The Advent of the Self – Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)

According to Maritain, the central problem with Luther is that he places the self at the center of his theology while also declaring faith in opposition to reason. "Luther's self becomes practically the center of gravity of everything, especially in the spiritual order."[558] Philosophically, he shifts from the objective realism upheld by Aquinas toward a subjectivism of mental constructs. "The Reformation unbridled the human self in the spiritual and religious order, as the Renaissance … unbridled the human self in the order of natural and sensible activities."[559]

> What first impresses us in Luther's character is egocentrism: something much subtler, much deeper, and much more serious, than egoism; a metaphysical egoism. Luther's self becomes practically the center of gravity of everything, especially in the spiritual order. And Luther's self is not only his passing quarrels and passions, but it also has a representative value; it is the self of the created being, the incommunicable stuff of the human individual. The Reformation unbridled the human self in the spiritual and religious order, as the Renaissance (I mean the hidden spirit of the Renaissance) unbridled the human self in the order of natural and sensible activities.

The results of Luther's egocentrism are numerous. First, individuality replaces personality.

> In the social order, the modern city sacrifices the *person* to the *individual*. It gives universal suffrage, equal rights, liberty of opinion, to the individual, and delivers the person, isolated, naked, with no social framework to support and protect it, to all the devouring powers which threaten the soul's life, to the pitiless actions and reactions of conflicting interests and appetites, to the infinite demands of matter to manufacture and use.[560]

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[558] Ibid., p. 14.
[559] Ibid., p. 14.
[560] Ibid., p. 21.

According to Maritain, the Protestant Reformation is recognizable for a spiritual and religious individualism. The first result is that "to develop one's *individuality* is to live the egoistical life of the passions, to make oneself the center of everything, and end finally by being the slave of thousand passing goods which bring us a wretched momentary joy."[561]

A second result is that the will, what the ancients called in general the appetite, the concupiscible appetite, and especially the irascible appetite, is thought to conquer the intellect. "Intelligence and will have never succeeded in being reconciled in modern philosophy, and the conflict of these two spiritual faculties cruelly rends the minds of men of this age."[562] Luther is at the source of modern voluntarism. 'There comes a spectacle which we witness: an *irrational* tidal wave. It is the awakening of a tragic opposition between life and intelligence. This opposition was begun by Luther and was carried on by Rousseau."[563]

A third result is that the self's freedom replaces content of character. Consequently, "truth and life must be sought only within the human subject; everything in us that comes from what is not ourselves, is a crime against the spirit and against sincerity. And thus, everything extrinsic to us is the destruction and death of our interior."[564] Here we face the heart of what Maritain calls the "immanentist error." The error of this idea consists in believing that liberty, inwardness, spirit is in opposition to what is not the self. Since everything brought from outside is seen as oppression and force, it is necessary to shut everything up in our spirit so that it is not able to receive anything from outside, including God. It can be seen as reason for the birth of a new notion of God. It is God in evolution. God becomes. In the beginning was not the Word, but it is Movement. From this movement God is born by successive creations. As the world is in process of becoming, God

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[561] Ibid., p. 24.
[562] Ibid., p. 38.
[563] Maritain, "Integral Humanism and the Crisis of Modern Times," *The Review of Politics* 1, No.1 (1939), p.3.
[564] *RT,* p. 46.

progresses. Human being is a necessary step in the evolution of God. "Men will be like God." The modern God was born the day that "beast," intellectualism, was killed. "Nature is itself dormant thought: in nature God is in process of becoming: and man will be the final stage of evolution at which that same nature will attain to self-consciousness."[565]

3. The Incarnation of the Angel – René Descartes (1596 – 1650)[566]

According to Maritain, error of Descartes's system is "a sin of *angelism*" since Descartes "conceives human Thought after the type of angelic Thought." Maritain sums Descartes's error in three words: "what he saw in man's thought was *Independence of Things;* that is what he put into it, what he revealed to it about itself."[567] In order to understand this charge, we must be aware that angelic knowledge is intuitive, innate, and dependent of things as to its nature.[568] The ideas of the angel are innate. They do not derive from objects like human beings' abstract ideas. The angelic cognition is independent of objects, from which it does not draw its ideas, and which are not its formal rule. It only depends on the knowledge of God. The ideas are infused into angel, received at the beginning like a power of light. Maritain writes,

> The angel neither reasons, nor proceeds by reasoning: he has but one intellectual act, which is at once perceiving and judging: he sees consequences not successively from the principle, but immediately in the principle; he is not subject to the progressive actualization of knowledge which constitutes logical movement properly so called; if his thought travels, it is by intuitive leaps, from perfect act to perfect act, from intelligible fullness to intelligible fullness, according to the discontinuity of wholly spiritual time, which is not a succession of instants without duration, (like the time, also discontinuous, which Descartes attributes to our world) but the permanence of a stable instant which lasts motionless so long as it does not give place to another motionless instant of contemplation. That is the ideal limit, the pure type of reason conceived in the manner of Descartes.

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[565] Ibid., p. 50.

[566] As Maritain tells us, according to St Thomas Aquinas' doctrine, the human intellect is the last of the spirits, and the most remote from the perfection of the divine Intelligence. The rational animal is a transitional from between the corporeal world and the spiritual world. In the order of beings, there are countless multitude the pure spirits named angels. These are thinking substances, pure subsistent forms, who surely get existence from God, but they are not existence as God is. They do not have matter and are free from it (see *RT*, pp. 55, 77).

[567] *RT,* p. 54-55.

[568] Ibid., p. 57.

The fundamental error of Descartes thus is the separation of object and thing. He applies to the certainties of reason and science the classical solutions of the traditional thought about the formal motive of faith: "*veritas prima revelans,* the authority of God revealing." He shows that "rational cognition is a sort of *natural revelation,* and that our ideas, like the infused species of the angel, have their immediate pattern in God, not in objects."[569] For Descartes, a pure idea must be self-sufficient, and the philosophizing intelligence cannot have recourse to the senses. Our ideas are no longer determined by the means of the senses in things, whose data have no longer anything but pragmatic and subjective value. Sensible being no longer plays any role in knowledge. We must approach being, or deduce it, or beget it, from an ideal principle discovered in the depths of thought. Descartes detaches knowledge from the past, which are dependent on whether we recognize it or not. This shows that Descartes's reason is independent in regard to external objects. Human reason becomes the measure of all things. The existence of objective truth is denied. Though it still receives its contents from external objects, it is now supposedly grounded in itself. It has separation between the intelligence and the senses by which intelligence is in continuity with external objects. Thus, according to Maritain, Cartesian evidence is subjective evidence, and it is not in the propositions maintaining the progression of our certainties, "it is in *notional objects,* the term of the analysis of things, that it is manifested to our mind. There are *ideas* which are self-evident and perfectly penetrable by our thoughts. These ideas are the matter of science. All the others must be reduced to them or be eliminated."[570]

Descartes's angelism is only the deepest spiritual and metaphysical intention of his thought. With this absolute intellectualism, we have a world which is imagined as in pure act of intelligibility, and all things including God are replaced to the level of human ideas and the world of rationalism.

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[569] Ibid., p. 68.
[570] Ibid., p. 74.

Maritain concludes "the result of a usurpation of the angelic privileges that *denaturing* of human reason driven beyond the limits of its species… to lead us to claim for our intelligence the perfect autonomy and the perfect immanence, the absolute independence, the *aseity* of the uncreated intelligence."[571] Because it no longer understands the life which belongs to it as a created spirit, and because it wants an absolute and undetermined liberty for itself, human thought refuses to be measured objectively. As we are no longer measured by anything, subject to everything including subject to Being once made its partaker, Descartes is in a very high sense at the origin of the individualist conception of human nature. He paves the way for nature of human being of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

4. Nature's Saint – Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712 - 1778)

Maritain sees Rousseau as an important progenitor of what is wrong with his contemporary problems. The central problem of Rousseau is that he completes the failure of Luther in the field of natural morality, instead of religion. "Rousseau really did a work in the sphere of natural morality of the same type as Luther's work in the evangelical sphere… But Luther's assault was on the high realms of grace. Rousseau attacked the sensitive and animal element in the human being."[572] Maritain compares Rousseau's return to nature as similar to Luther's doctrine of salvation without works. "What is peculiar to Jean-Jacques…. All moral labor is tainted, from its source and by definition, with pharisaical hypocrisy: the last state of salvation works!"[573]

According to Maritain, Rousseau makes steps moving from the stage of Descartes's rationalism to the stage of sentimentalism. "Cartesian man, naturally good in so far as he is reason, will later become the man of Rousseau, naturally good in so far as he is sentiment, and instinct, and whom

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[571] Ibid., p. 79.
[572] Ibid., p. 95.
[573] Ibid., p. 98.

social life and reflection corrupt."[574] Rousseau's turn leads to voluntarism abandoned by Descartes. "Jean-Jacques Rousseau is no mere theorist of the philosophy of feeling… He himself – and how intensely! – is all feeling."[575] However, "the rationalist itself had wanted to be self-sufficient. It refused to lose itself in the abyss of God, where it would have found itself, and now it can only seek itself in the abyss of sensitive nature, where it will nevermore find itself… Rousseau's man is Descartes's angel acting like a beast."[576] For Rousseau, "you must be yourself…meant: you must be your feeling, as God is His being."[577] Thus, according to his thought man is believed naturally good and salvation lies within. He was to be redeemed and set free, not by Christ, but by the essential goodness of human nature. "This salvation is purely and exclusively temporal; this salvation is accomplished naturally *without God*, since man is truly alone and acts truly alone only if God does not exist; and even *against God.*"[578] He is by nature free and good, so that he has only to follow his own impulses to whatever they may lead him.[579] He believes that to live by instinct is natural and thus right. The Gospel had been replaced by human Reason or human Goodness, where Human Nature would promise and deliver what had been expected from the virtue of God giving Himself to His creatures.[580] Now man becomes as God Himself. He is united to Nature by goodness. Rousseau's God is an immanent God. His God is mixed up between the Divine Being with the being of created things. It is opposed to the school of Aristotle and Aquinas. According to Aristotle and Thomas, God is known by the natural reason analogically and is absolutely distinct from all creatures, so we perceive the divine perfections without mixture of

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[574] Maritain, *The Dream Descartes, together with some other Essays*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison, New York: Philosophical Library, 1944, p.183.
[575] *RT,* p. 96.
[576] Ibid., p. 100.
[577] Ibid., p. 99.
[578] *SP*, p. 16.
[579] *RR*, p. 185.
[580] Ibid., p.186.

any kind between created beings and God.[581] For Rousseau natural goodness is the state of grace. Man is naturally holy, and through his effort the divine purpose will be achieved.

> He is holy: his holiness consists *in loving himself without comparison…* He is the good man *par excellence,* the best of men; not that he is *virtuous…* since he yielded completely to his dream-self and by that became holy – but because he is *good,* because he embodies in himself the Goodness of Nature.[582]

For Rousseau man detaches from everything except from his exorbitant individuality. He is only the material individualist, and totally separates from person. "The way in which Jean-Jacques is himself is the final resignation of personality. By dint of following the endless inclinations of material individuality, he has completely broken the unity of spiritual self. The stuff no longer holds together."[583]

As to the social state, man enters society for himself alone. He himself attains his own freedom by participating in a social contract which means absorption into the General Will. Maritain calls Rousseau's notion of the General Will the myth of political pantheism. "*The General Will* (which must not be confused with the sum of the individual wills) *is the Common Self's own will, born of the sacrifice each has made of himself and all his rights on the altar of the city.*"[584] The social state must be built of self-sufficing individuals. "The first author of society is not God, the Author of natural order, but the will of man, and that the birth of civil law is the destruction of natural law... In the social state there could be no right but from the agreement of free wills."[585]

According to Rousseau, the myth of the General Will animates, moves the social body, and shown by numbers. "*Law will then be defined as the expression of the General Will, and it will no longer proceed from reason but from numbers.*"[586] The General Will is the will of people. The state of

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[581] *IP*, p.192.
[582] *TR,* pp. 108-9.
[583] Ibid., pp.99-100.
[584] Ibid., p.134.
[585] Ibid., p.133.
[586] Ibid., p.136.

society is not natural but artificial. It is not rooted in God but in the free will of the people itself.

"*Sovereignty, then, resides essentially and absolutely in the people, in the shapeless mass of all individuals taken together.*"[587] Rousseau's notion of the General Will is easy to trace forward to the establishment either of anti-Christian philosophy of enslavement or of pseudo-Christian of egalitarianism that "the lawgiver is the superman who guides the General Will."[588] It is also easy to think of it as a result of the movement from the individual's absorption into

> immanent social God, common self, which is more I than myself, in whom I lose myself and find myself again and whom I serve to be free – that is a curious specimen of fraudulent mysticism. Note how Jean-Jacques explains that the citizen subject to a law against which he voted remains free and continues to obey only himself: men do not vote, he says, to give their opinion; they vote that, by the counting of votes, the general will may be ascertained, which each wills supremely, since it is what makes him a citizen and a freeman.[589]

For Maritain, it is obvious that the tyranny of mass culture in democratic countries misled by anti-Christian philosophy of enslavement or pseudo-Christian of egalitarianism, both owe something to Rousseau. Joseph Anthony Amato summarizes the influence of contemporary individualism on collective behavior and society in a manner that closely resembles Maritain's analysis of the errors of Luther, Descartes, and Rousseau:

> As Rousseau's individualism translated itself into collectivist political theory, so too modern individualism had prepared a rendezvous with nineteenth and twentieth century collectivism. Again, anticipating the essence of Mounier's critical analysis of the modern world, Maritain argued that the relationship between individualism and collectivism constituted the destructive dialectic which had formed the last five centuries of Western history. That is, the individualism which was spiritually created by Luther, Descartes, and Rousseau, destroyed man's natural and spiritual ties with other men, and left him defenseless before the new collectivisms of state, society, economics, and ideology which appeared en masse with the French Revolution.[590]

Though Maritain criticizes the three reformers: Luther, Descartes, and Rousseau, he does not seek a return to the medieval world, but rather seeks to build the future with the material currently

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587 Ibid., p.136.
588 Ibid., p.138.
589 Ibid., p.134.
590 Joseph Anthony Amato, *Mounier and Maritain: A French Catholic Understanding of the Modern World,* University of Alabama Press, 1975, p.71.

available. Christian philosophy tells us that the person is "a complete individual substance, intellectual in nature and master of its action," *sui juris, autonomous,* in the authentic sense of the word."[591] Thus, we can understand why Maritain was enthusiastically to promote the integral humanism.

IV. Recovering Theocentric Humanism

In the above, we understood the relationships between an individual person and forms of the human communities: family, the political community, and the Church. We also identified what Maritain considers to be important errors of modern philosophy, where the nature of human being was not accurately understood in relations with others and with God. As a result of reformers' philosophical errors, and the Enlightenment understood human being as not needing 'grace, revelation, but as instead made virtuous and just by his own good nature,' so that an 'anthropocentric humanism'[592] emerged, taking human being as the shaper of one's own destiny and the savior of oneself.[593] Considering all of these together, Maritain sees these errors as a progressive secularization of society in modern times, especially in those Western societies based on the Judeo-Christian religious heritage. He criticizes a great deal of contemporary philosophy by developing aspects of the pre-modern views of Aquinas. He argues that the Christian thought and perspective of the Middle Ages had been replaced by an anthropocentric humanism in modern period where the 'cult of man' had dominated until distorting what Maritain asserts as healthy

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[591] *TR,* pp.19-20.

[592] In *IH,* which published in 1936, Maritain perceives the fundamental problem of our age as egocentrism, which he now calls "anthropocentric humanism." Maritain argues that this arises from both the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. It is the source of our confusion of individuality with personality. As we will see, Maritain develops what he calls 'theocentric humanism' to oppose "what we may call an *anthropocentric* conception of man and of culture. I am aware that this word is not too felicitous, but I have used it for want of a better. We might say the error in question is the idea of nature as self-sufficient [that is to say self-divinized, for this nature has infinite longings"] (See *SP,* trans. Mortimer J. Adler, Image Books, 1960, p. 12).

[593] *RR*, p. 186.

human living.[594] From the Catholic tradition, Maritain's social and political philosophy seeks to reconcile the Judeo-Christian ethics of faith and morals with science, which is to say the industrial and technological revolution, in order to promote a true or integral humanism and an authentic democratic society. He hopes for an age of integral humanism, the advent of a fraternal commonwealth and of true human emancipation, like a springtime of splendor and renovation.[595]

1. Certain Cultural Processes Deny Theocentric Humanism

First of all, according to Maritain, in order to break with the spirit of the Renaissance, integral humanism must reject not only Communism, but also non-Marxist social humanism and even various non-atheist humanisms in our present age. In doing this, we must make some remarks concerning the whole process of what may be called the dialectics of anthropocentric humanism. Maritain points out three inseparable aspects of the dialects of anthropocentric humanism that developed within modern period.

The first may be characterized as an inversion of the order of ends. In this moment God still was transcendent but imprisoned in his transcendence and no longer able to interfere in human affairs. God became mainly or only the guarantor of man's domination over matter. Since God in this way became a decorative God for human being, our end is changed. Instead of being oriented to its proper end, which is towards eternal life, we are, if we follow anthropocentric humanism, to seek our final end in ourselves: our proper end is now domination over matter.[596]

The second aspect is a powerful imperialism about the forces of matter. Maritain tells us that with Romanticist philosophy and the Idealist metaphysicians, God became an idea. God was an immanent God "engulfed in the dialectical progress of the self-asserting Idea and the evolving

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[594] Ibid., p. 200.
[595] Ibid., pp. 87, 179, 204.
[596] Ibid., p. 96.

world."[597] From this point of view, we are to think that all is contained within the bosom of human being and its history. However,

> the true values of immanence can only be saved by the affirmation of Divine transcendence and the Incarnation, because an unlimited progress of spiritualization until death for everyone, and until the end of the world for the generations, is possible only if there is an Uncreated Spirit, a Subsistent Love to whom everyone may be united in tending more and more towards sanctity, and whose manifestation is secretly prepared by the movement of history.

Instead of consenting to the conditions of nature and seeking to control it only according to the powers and limits that belong to the human person, anthropocentric humanism seeks to change nature's condition to control it by an artificial process, and to give us a world that fits our material life. There is no dependence on an order superior to our own. Man removed God from the center of picture and put himself there instead. "It is I who am queen of the universe; all that is outside of me is inferior to me, and I do not depend upon any majesty."[598]

The third aspect includes a progressive movement back of man by matter. To dominate over nature, man must subordinate himself more and more to inhuman and technical necessities. The powers of the natural order are naturally created to serve human beings, but now are invading the human world. More than ever, human beings desire to control and rule over their own nature. To do so, anthropocentric humanism is oriented towards a mean external to man, by using technology. This orientation leads to "the great struggle of our age, the struggle between freedom by technique, and freedom by asceticism."[599] Instead of orienting us by the law of reason aided by grace, anthropocentric humanism seeks to promote a different orientation and a different morality, an anti-ascetical morality that is essentially technological. We need only an appropriate technique and the machine to satisfy our desires for the possible conveniences. However, without changing the

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[597] Ibid., p. 96.
[598] Maritain, *Some Reflections On Culture and Liberty,* University of Chicago Press, 1933, p. 6.
[599] Ibid., p. 9.

heart, without an interior transformation of ourselves, this morality does not really liberate human being but makes us into consumers of goods provided by science and technique. Humanity is literally lost. We are made into slaves of all the atoms of the universe, and thus our misery only increases. "Modern man believed in liberty – without the mastery of self or moral responsibility, for free will was incompatible with scientific determinism.... The law of the machine, which is the law of matter, will apply itself to him, and enslave him."[600]

Since this new orientation of morality is exclusively technological, and if the technique and machine are not forcefully subjected to human good or entirely subordinated to a religious ethic, it begins with a new start in moral activity: the complete giving of self to some earthly "Great Being" and at the same time the relation to the absolute Good which the moral good essentially implies are abolished, changed and replaced by an idol. Moral good, duty, and virtue necessarily become demands of our own satisfaction seen as an absolute center. Moral good, duty, and virtue lose their true nature.[601] And, anthropocentric humanism also forgets that in the order of being and of good it is God who has the first initiative. When a human being wishes to control and rule over his or her own nature: "man alone, and through himself alone, works out his salvation."[602] Such a salvation is purely and exclusively temporal, and not eternal. And then we also want to define and enact our own movement as creature, as if this would be the absolutely first movement, so that we give to our own freedom, as creatures, the first initiative toward the good. Thus, separated from God, we demand everything for ourselves as if we own all and are the heirs of God. Anthropocentric humanism now is no longer a pure philosophical ideology, but a lived religion, even though this new religion is nothing.

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[600] *RR*, p. 187.
[601] Ibid., pp. 84-5, 98.
[602] *SP*, 16.

It is often agreed that a human being is a naturally religious animal. Since the nature of human being is therefore religious being, there can be no integral idea of one which rejects God. We know that all the existing religions in the West, the Judeo-Christian religions, are theocentric.[603] Maritain observes that if all these religions are not true, it is necessary for anthropocentrism to work actively to release all their humanity. However, this seems to be impossible for anthropocentric humanism, and especially Communism, because to enrich humanity it must first reject and deny the heritage to which its whole history is related. For anthropocentric humanism all the theocentric religions must by hypothesis be destroyed and abolished, and because religion seems undying in all kinds of humanism, "a new religion" must be founded. However, this new religion would have to serve anthropocentric humanism in a way that is separated from the Incarnation and stripped of all the heritages of theocentric culture. "The anthropocentric humanism… now no longer constituted solely as philosophical ideology but as a lived religion. This development arises from the unfolding of all the consequences of the principle that man alone, and through himself alone, works out his salvation."[604] Maritain believes that this new religion of anthropocentric humanism "cannot be separated from atheism, which is religious and metaphysical position."[605] Thus, he confirms that "Communism is the final state of anthropocentric rationalism."[606] This leads him to define communism as it exists, as

> a complete system of doctrine and life claiming to reveal to man the meaning of his existence, answering all the fundamental questions posed by life, and manifesting an unparalleled power of totalitarian envelopment. It is a religion, and a most imperious religion, certain that it is called to replace all other religions, an atheistic religion for which dialectical materialism is dogma and of which Communism as a regime of life is the ethical and social expression.[607]

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[603] This is except Buddhism. As we know in Buddhism a person can reach nirvana, the final destination, in which one is released from the effects of karma and the cycle of death and rebirth, through one's own efforts, not need the divine grace.

[604] *RR*, p.190.

[605] *IH*, p.36.

[606] *RR*, p.192.

[607] *IH*, p.36.

Maritain concludes that "the radical vice of anthropocentric humanism has been its being anthropocentric, and not its being humanism"[608] and agrees with Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* when he quotes that "it is easy for a Russian to become an atheist, easier than for any other inhabitant of the globe! And ours do not simply become atheists, they believe in atheism as in a new religion, without realizing that this is to believe in nothing."[609] As Maritain sees it, this possibility, which cannot be ignored or ruled out, but must be accepted as real, highlights the fact that integral humanism is necessarily to call for a more radical substantial transformation. The new Christendom asks, "a radical change not only in the material but also in the moral structure and in the spiritual principles of the economy."[610] Practically, the vices of anthropocentric humanism are "solved only by an effusion of sanctity. It exacts a heroic detachment testifying to the primacy of the spirit… and also its absolute refusal in regard to the forms of idolatry which spring from Race, Class, or the Nation or State, when they are elevated into absolutes."[611]

Having at last recognized the point where Maritain's integral humanism emerges, let us now try to understand how he proposes to solve the problems of modernity, from a conviction that "the only way of regeneration for the human community is a rediscovery of the true image of man and a definite attempt toward a new Christian civilization, a new Christendom."[612]

2. Defining the Notion of Integral Humanism

First, we need to clarify that, according to Maritain, in order to define the proper relation between humanism and Christianity, one must first make precise the notion of humanism. At present (in Maritain's time), the notion of humanism is confused because it still exhibits a certain affinity with

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[608] *IH*, p.27.
[609] Maritain, *Some Reflections On Culture and Liberty,* University of Chicago Press, 1933, p,5.
[610] *IH*, pp. 190-91.
[611] *SP*, p. 232.
[612] *RR*, p.193.

the naturalistic current of the Renaissance. At the same time, there is also work to be done freeing

the notion of Christianity of traces of Jansenism and Puritanism.[613]

> We are thus led to distinguish two kinds of humanism: a theocentric or truly Christian humanism; and an anthropocentric humanism, for which the spirit of Renaissance and that of the Reformation are primarily responsible, and of which we have just been speaking.
> The first kind of humanism recognizes that God is the center of man; it implies the Christian conception of man, sinner and redeemed, and the Christian conception of grace and freedom.
> The second kind of humanism believes that man himself is the center of man, and therefore of all things. It implies a naturalistic conception of man and of freedom.
> If this conception is false, one understands that anthropocentric humanism merits the name of inhuman humanism, and that its dialectic must be regarded as the *tragedy of humanism.*[614]

Here, according to Maritain, is the theocentric humanism of which Aquinas and St. John of the

Cross are the great teachers, and which is totally different from the Christian humanism of

naturalism[615] which came from Renaissance.[616] The integral humanism is taken as synonymous

with culture or civilization. Culture or civilization means the common good of human being in the

temporal order. It is the unfolding of a life that is properly human, including not only its material

development, but also the moral development that defines truly human development. This sense

of humanism is inseparable from civilization or culture. It is the force in history that "tends

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[613] Maritain, *Some Reflections On Culture and Liberty,* University of Chicago Press, 1933, pp. 1-2.

[614] *IH*, pp.27-8.

[615] Brendan Sweetman, in the Introduction of *The Failure of Modernism*, gives us a brief idea about naturalism. He defines naturalism as the view that everything that exists is physical and has, at least in principle, a scientific explanation. Naturalism is simply welcomed as the gospel truth today in large sections of the academic atmosphere. It is accepted not so much for its good and valid arguments, but for its standards within which many contemporary philosophers can work. It is supposed that all knowledge-gathering is proved by the scientific method. When all knowledge is strengthened by a powerful impression of superficial empiricism, it results in an anti-religious, anti-tradition and anti-authority tendency. Naturalism also is consistent with moral relativism, the view that the choice of moral values is not objective and denies ethical absolutes which can be known. It is relative either to the individual or the culture. Morality would not depend on objective moral knowledge, and so it would not be appropriate to judge others. Human beings are social not by nature, but just by choice. Tolerance is highly recommended toward one who has different views of morality. The obvious contradictions in and among many of moral views are usually ignored (see Brendan Sweetman, *The Failure of Modernism: The Cartesian Legacy and Contemporary Pluralism,* The American Maritain Association, 1999, p.4).

[616] Maritain, *Some Reflections On Culture and Liberty,* University of Chicago Press, 1933, pp. 2-3.

essentially to render man more truly human, and to manifest his original greatness by having him participate in all that which can enrich him in nature and in history."[617]

An authentic or integral humanism must serve all the needs of the whole human being, whether they are physical, emotional, and mental or spiritual. Maritain argues that secular forms of humanism are anti-human insofar as they fail to recognize the whole person. Once the spiritual part of human nature is denied, human being no longer has an integral definition. Such a humanism is only partial, one which denies a fundamental characteristic of the human person.

Maritain's claim for integral humanism includes the idea that it must be heroic,[618] aware of the superhuman and being in accordance with the transcendent orientation which is proper for human being, but without doubting that an entire culture and mindset is working against it.[619] This is a question of upholding a vision of what is best for us. An authentic humanism is salutary for man and human things and assimilates the whole of things human to "the folly of the Cross and to the mystery of the Ecce Homo, Behold the Man: this humanism knows that man conforms to the God-Man by human participation in the divine Life."[620]

According to Maritain, the conflict which divides our contemporaries, and which requires all of us to make an act of choice, is between two conceptions of humanism: a theocentric conception and an anthropocentric conception. To make an act of choice in accord to the integral humanism that

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[617] *IH*, p. 2 or *SP,* p.11.
[618] Maritain argues that the Heroic Humanism of those who promote an authentic Christian humanism must do so with great courage in the Western societies. Courage and heroism are needed to surmount the errors in Europe (such as the betrayal of Philippe Petain in France, who served as the Nazi-imposed Vichy president during the war), where suffering and betrayal have prevailed for a very long time if a proper view of human being is promoted. Maritain encourages those who defending humanism can look to the case of the United States, where there has been a teaching about the equality of human beings that has pervaded much of society. The "mainspring of American civilization is this dignity of each one in daily existence." Americans so strongly believed in this humanism that the United States abandoned its previous stance of isolationism and defended the rights of others in foreign lands. All peoples can take this example and engage in a heroic defense of humanism, which requires sacrifice and virtuous action, but not necessarily martyrdom. Maritain concludes that heroic humanism is needed "if we want civilization to survive" (See *CD, pp. 56-62).*
[619] *IH*, pp. 3-5.
[620] Maritain, *Some Reflections on Culture and Liberty,* University of Chicago Press, 1933, p.3.

is theocentric it is necessary to "the age that was an age of anthropocentric humanism. For it ended in human devastation." If civilization is to be saved, the new age must be an age of theocentric humanism. The coming of age must be an age of spiritual as well as social integration. The task of the emergent civilization "will consist in refinding and refounding the sense of that dignity, in rehabilitating man in God and through God, not apart from God."[621]

> The new humanism must reassume in a purified climate all the work of the classical period; it must re-make anthropology, find the rehabilitation and the 'dignification' of the creature not in isolation, not in the creature shut in with itself, but in its openness to the world of the divine and super-rational…[622]

3. The Philosophical Foundations of Integral Humanism

We can sum up the position of modern anthropocentric humanism by saying that its errors are due to the fact that when it separated human being from God it produced a conception of human being that demands everything for itself as if we own all, as the heirs of God. How can we drag human being back into its proper position and dignity in the universe?

In chapter II of *Integral Humanism,* Maritain contrasts integral humanism with inhuman systems in which human being is seen as basically corrupt and totally devoid of dignity outside the election of divine grace. Maritain insists on a *"rehabilitation of the creature in God* which I see as characterizing a new age of Christendom and a new humanism."[623] The creature (human being) is "truly respected *in* its connection with God and *because* receiving everything from Him; humanism, but theocentric humanism, rooted where man has his roots, integral humanism, humanism of the Incarnation."[624]

Maritain thus foresees and works for a new age that would be essentially different from that of anthropocentric humanism. It belongs to the humanism born in the Renaissance that our self-

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[621] *RR*, p. 93.
[622] *SP*, p. 18.
[623] *IH*, p.73.
[624] Ibid., p.72.

consciousness is identified with the attitude of the hero or the classical "honest gentleman" while integral humanism identifies our self-consciousness with the attitude of the saint.[625] "For we believe that only one form of humanism can descend deep enough into the inner recesses of the human being, the humanism which stems from the wisdom of the saint while ensuring and integrally respecting the order and dignity of nature."[626] As he sees it, the integral humanism is also able to reverse the spirit of Renaissance toward polarizing the sacred and the profane. "During this modern age the Christian world wounded by dualism has obeyed two opposite rhythms, a religious rhythm for the time of Church and of worship, a naturalist rhythm for the time of the world and of profane life."[627] Such a polarity is found essentially in a world that does not know Christ, either because He had not yet come or because he has been abandoned. In Maritain's view, Christianity, with its Gospel, was able to "baptize" the rift created by pagan antiquity. This means that it can also "re-baptize" the rift revived by Descartes and followers. This can occur only with the help of what Christian spirituality calls the means of the cross, the cross in the heart, by which all that is injured, or turn can be received into the healing bosom of existence. "Only an evangelical consciousness of self can conquer the tragedy of the naturalist consciousness of self."[628]

In following Aquinas, who successfully synthesized together divine wisdom and human wisdom, faith and reason. Maritain believes in the law of the Incarnation, by which God descends to meet human experience and need. "In the mystery of the Incarnation," Aquinas says, "the descent of the divine plenitude into human nature is of greater import than the ascent of human nature, taken as pre-existent, toward Divinity."[629] As divine wisdom or wisdom of saintliness, wisdom of salvation,

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[625] *IH*, p.73.
[626] Maritain, "The Humanism of St. Thomas Aquinas,*" Twentieth Century Philosophy: Living Schools of Thought*, Ed. Dagobert D. Runes, New York: Philosophical Library, 1943, p.303.
[627] *IH*, p. 78.
[628] Ibid.*,* p.74.
[629] *ST*, III, 34, 1, ad. 1.

it is an expression of the supremacy of God and not of human beings. It proceeds not from an

ascending movement by the creature, but from a descending movement of the Creator. The wisdom

of salvation, like the wisdom of the Gospel that announces it, originates from the height of

uncreated love to descend into the most intimate depths of the creature. [630]

Similarly, here Maritain also rediscovers Saint Paul's teaching concerning the law and grace: it is

not by our own effort that we become just, but it is by the power of God who loved us first, and

who descends into us through faith and love, that we are born again to eternal life and can bear

good fruit into our weakness.[631] For Maritain, this good news permeates every moment of the

Christian's earthly activity.

> The man engaged in this secular or earthly order of activities can and must, like the man
> engaged in the sacred order, tend toward sanctity – both in order himself to attain to divine
> union and in order to draw toward the accomplishment of the divine intentions the entire
> order to which he belongs.[632]

He suggests for a new modern Christendom there must be "the *holy freedom* of the creature whom

grace unites to God,"[633] and "the temporal task of the Christian world is to work on earth for a

socio-temporal realization of the Gospel truths."[634] For the integral humanist, temporal society is

personalist (free, fully integrated) and communal (for the realization of every human being).[635] All

human beings in society are commanded to a goal that does include some temporal good, but each

and every person's spiritual worth is an essential factor for this orientation. The new Christendom

is therefore imagined as being necessarily pluralist in this sense: it builds on and serves the good

of each single person. "A Christian body politic in the conditions of modern times can only be a

Christian body politic within whose walls unbelievers and believers live together and share in the

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[630] *MP*, pp.71-4.
[631] *Second Corinthians* 12, 9-10.
[632] *IH*, p.124.
[633] Ibid., p.163.
[634] Ibid., p. 42.
[635] Ibid., p. 165.

same temporal common good."[636] The end of temporal society is not to bring its citizens to spiritual perfection, but to promote the growth of each person "to a level of material, intellectual, and moral life in accord with the good and peace of the whole, that each person will be positively aided in the progressive conquest of his full life as a person and of his spiritual freedom."[637] Maritain reminds us that "for a genuinely revolutionary spirit does not kneel before History, it presumes to make history."[638]

This leaves us with the question of how Maritain's integral humanism works well in a pluralist society in a manner that is truly different from the approach of medieval Christendom? This question arises from the fact that the unity of the body politic in the modern temporal world is weak, with minimal spiritual unity, by contrast to the maximal unity of the medieval period.[639] Maritain does not give us clear roads for applying a different juridical status for each non-Christian spiritual family in the body politic, but his goal of pluralism is clear: to sustain a vitally Christian orientation in the new political order and at the same time maintain justice and freedom for non-Christian groups within that order,[640] or vice versa for the Christian group, in cases where a body politic is dominated by non-Christian groups. He suggests that "civic fraternity" or "civic friendship" would be inspired by Christianity, even though all the individuals of this fraternity would not necessarily acknowledge the Christian faith.[641] "*Civic friendship*, which is a virtue of the natural order [...], must, however, be leavened by charity."[642] The nature of the civic political fraternities must bring together in the service of the same earthly common good for human beings

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[636] Ibid., p. 166.
[637] Ibid., p. 134.
[638] *RR*, p.108.
[639] *IH*, p. 172.
[640] Ibid., p. 168.
[641] Ibid., p. 171.
[642] *RT,* p.111.

who belong to different spiritual families, and must respect the principal differences between the secular and spiritual domains.

According to Maritain, it is impossible to expect a political system to remake all human beings in the mold of Christian charity, but we can still hope that the political system may assure justice, freedom, and equality by creating laws[643] that are motivated by the Gospel and that naturally direct human energies toward the realization of its necessities. Whereas for many centuries, it was a theological problem that divided the civic society and the Church. Currently, the problems are social with the polarization between the sacred and the profane. The most lasting and widespread controversies are about marriage, sex and society. These controversies happen everywhere, from the private to the public places. Maritain points out the root of moral and social 'wars' or issues in our time is found in "philosophies which do not recognize the spiritual and eternal element in man cannot escape error in their efforts to construct a truly human society because they cannot satisfy the requirements of the person, and, by that very fact, they cannot grasp the nature of society."[644] To grasp the nature of society as a society of persons, we must recognize the "spiritual and eternal element in man, recognize also the aspiration, immanent in the person, to transcend, by reason of that which is most sublime in it, the life and conditions of temporal societies," so that, according to Maritain, at that moment, "the temporal society can be erected in accordance with the proper laws of its own nature."[645]

In summary, we initially examined the relationships that exist between an individual person and the three forms of human communities that help us to form who we are as an individual person. Then, as an individual person, there is a certain level of human equality that must be attained in

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[643] Maritain follows Aquinas, saying that law is 'an ordinance of reason for the common good made by one who has care for the community and that is promulgated'.
[644] *PG,* pp.100-1.
[645] Ibid.*,* p.101.

our social community to achieve justice for the basis of our fundamental rights as a human being. We also see the struggle between the secularization of society and our religious community. In the end, we must maintain as Maritain suggests basing our values on Christian principles so that we may achieve a more just, free and equal society for all. In the next chapter, we will discuss God as ultimate authority of all authentic laws, and natural law as moral law to establish the fundamental principles for a society with Christian values.

Part III**: TOWARD A SYNTHESIS: THE NATURAL LAW AND THE NEW LAW**

Chapter Five: The Ethical Meaning of Natural Law and The Human Natural Rights

> This therefore is the first precept of law,
> that good is to be done and pursued,
> and bad is to be avoided.
> And on these all-other precepts of the natural law are founded.
> *ST,* I-II, 94, 2

I. The Need of the Natural Law in Circumstances of Our Society

As we have understood from the previous chapters, Maritain's integral humanism is based on Aquinas' philosophy. He draws from this source a basis for criticizing various structures of social organization and philosophy in modern time, and then lays out general principles as a guide to the formation of a new Christian Society. Maritain clearly realizes that simply taking the unifying principle of the Middle Ages into Western society is impossible, and now tells us what it is about the Middle Ages that cannot be taken unto western society. Instead, he hopes for and suggests a new Christian society: "a unity of orientation, which proceeds from a common aspiration … to the form of common life that is best in accord with the supratemporal interests of the person."[646]

According to Maritain, the main problem with modern philosophy – the feature that lies at the root of many difficulties – is that it removes God from the center of the picture and places human being there instead. The crisis and problems of modern time can be cured only by a renewal of the most profound energies of the religious conscience, arising in the temporal existence, so that the new humanism should not be anthropocentric, but must be theocentric.[647] The new humanism can avoid what Maritain considers the cardinal vices of modern philosophy as results from theories about the nature of man which originated from the spirit of Renaissance and were continued by Reformers.

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[646] *IH*, p.168.
[647] See *SP*, pp. 28-31.

> One of the worst vices of the modern world is its dualism, the dissociation between the things of God and the things of the world. The latter, the things of the social, economic and political life, have been abandoned to their own carnal law, removed from the exigencies of the Gospel.[648]

The task of the new humanism must radically transform the temporal order, a task which would tend to substitute for "bourgeois civilization, and for an economic system based on the fecundity of money, not a collectivistic economy, but a 'personalistic' civilization and a 'personalistic' economy, through which would stream a temporal refraction of the truths of the Gospel."[649] The modern civilization seems to be moving toward contrasting forms of misery and increased materialism. It has resulted in each human being's placing his hope in force alone and in the efficacy of hate. In contrast, integral humanism promotes a political ideal of brotherly love alone in which can strengthen the work of genuine social regeneration: "the love of your neighbor may first be necessary."[650] It is true that love rather than threats of violence must be extended to our civilization. Therefore, what Maritain hopes to achieve in promoting in integral humanism is

> universal value can reconcile, even in the temporal and cultural sphere, men of all conditions, that their will for social restoration will come to its fruition. Through the formation of such a humanism they will achieve the freedom of grown-up persons, the freedom and personality not of a class absorbing man in order to crush another class, but of man communicating to the class his proper human dignity.[651]

Obviously, Maritain fully realizes that the world has changed and the difficulty of getting Christians and vast groups of non-Christians to agree in the body politic. If it is difficult to get agreement among Christians, it can be doubly difficult to get agreement among Christians, non-Christians, and even atheists for an authentic democratic society. However, we all know that the main point of agreement between two people is the belief that they can cooperate to pursue mutual

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[648] *SP*, p. 29.
[649] Ibid., p. 28.
[650] Ibid., p. 29.
[651] *IH*, p.239.

freedom and human rights, even if their desire to develop a democratic way of life is grounded in

many different philosophical and religious beliefs:

> A renewed democracy will have its own concept of man and society, and its own philosophy, its own faith, enabling it to educate people for freedom and to defend itself against those who would use democratic liberties to destroy freedom and human rights. No society can live without a basic common inspiration and a basic common faith.[652]

If we have difficulty promoting a notion of the common good, this is partly because the world and

Western society all have changed. The secular order has emerged in attempts to cast out every

remnant of the sacral regime. At the same time, with the development and control of science and

technology, civilization now has outgrown the boundaries of the Western society and becoming

truly universal. "Christianity now faces an absolutely vital problem of *spiritual universality…* also

faces the problem which, upon the plane of temporal civilization."[653] Nevertheless, Maritain

argues, the essential task of the new Christian society must be not only to reintegrate Western

civilization, but also all other civilizations.[654] The spiritual reintegration of the masses into

Christianity is "a primordial requirement for the healing of civilization."[655] How can Christianity

animate or heal, and change which concern not only in the midst of the crisis of Western

civilization itself, but also all other civilizations in their action for one another when Christianity

itself has a great deal of lost ground?

"To begin with, one can consider Christians and non-Christians simply *insofar as they are men,"*[656]

and insofar as all people, believers or non-believers, are human beings, the dignity and rights must

be a first concern. According to Maritain, the true philosophy of the dignity and rights of the human

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[652] *RR*, p.167.
[653] *SP*, p. 232.
[654] Our present age at one and the same time coexists civilizations of different origins and ages. We can agree that there are five civilizations which we are dealing with here as: of *pre-medieval* origin: civilizations of China, the Far East, Hindu, and Islamic; civilizations of *medieval* origin: Western civilization and forms which have arisen to establish a *new* civilizations (see *SP*, p. 217).
[655] *SP*, p. 231.
[656] *TP,* p. 65.

person must be based on the idea of natural law. This is because he believes that the natural law provides us with assurance that moral knowledge is applicable always and accessible everywhere and for everyone, not just to Christians but to all. It applies to all persons of good will, without exception for anyone, for the rightness or wrongness of particular moral actions. By means of applying the natural law, one shows great respect for human goodness and trusts the human capacity to know and choose what is right. Maritain asserts the natural law as the basis law pertaining to a just society, and for the relationship between morality and civil law. He refers repeatedly to the importance of the evangelical impulse through the door of the natural law and the same natural law asserts fundamental duties and rights of human beings. "Under the evangelical impulse, this same awakening was little by little to spread forth, with regard to the requirements of natural law, over the realm of man's life here on earth."[657] This raises an important question: As Christians and as modern men, what do we really mean by natural law?

II. Understanding the Natural Law according to Aquinas, Followed by Maritain

1. A Brief Notion of Law

1.1. Definition of Law

According to Maritain's definition, a law in general is a rule and measure of conduct of an obligatory character directing us to perform certain actions or refrain from them.[658] It is a rule regulating acts of human beings.[659] When we mention the word law, what we think first of all is the law of the state.[660] This is what Aquinas gives us in his classical definition of law. "Law is

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[657] *CD*, p. 109.
[658] ST, I-II, 90, 1.
[659] Leo J. Elders, *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019, p. 198.
[660] The Greek word for law, *νόμος*, originally indicated established properties and possessions, rule, custom, whereas in Latin word *lex* has the meaning of calling a mobilization, and later it is signified a decree.

nothing else than an ordinance of reason for the common good, promulgated by him who has care of the community."[661]

From Aquinas' definition, law can be also applicable in a wider sense. A law is called an ordinance because it is not only mere advice, but also an order, a mandate imposing the superior's will on the inferior's and expressing moral necessity. A law must be a product of reason.[662] "It is essentially the work of reason… It is addressed to the intellect of those for whom it is destined and who learn from the law which acts are ordered to their real good."[663] The importance of reason can be seen in the fact that only it can make a law in view of an end appropriate to human nature. Law is rational, both in its origin and in its end. Law is a product of insight and the will to order, but it is not of power. Its end is the rationally understood benefit to the community of making human beings good.[664]

Since all our actions are directed to the highest end, the law must necessarily be directed to the common good. The law in its proper sense orders primarily the common good, issuing laws is the task of the whole society or of those who are governing it, and not for the benefit of individuals as such. In order for the law to be forced, it must first be promulgated to those whom it binds. Its promulgation is a necessary condition for its being obligatory. After a law is passed, regulations are promulgated to clarify and develop procedures in order to implement it. The law must be

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[661] *ST*, I-II, 90, 4.
[662] The notion of the term "reason" is different from Aquinas to modern period. It has changed drastically. For Descartes, "reason" has meant primarily *ratio,* not *intellectus, dianoia,* not *epistèmè*. It is not understanding, but calculation. This is why many people seriously concern what difference there is between artificial intelligence and natural intelligence, or whether computers and robots can think. Computers and robot, like symbolic logic, are impossible to begin with the first act of the mind. They do not understand anything at all, but only automatically follow the fixed programs. For Kant, "reason" has meant something psychological and subjective when he says, "reason is a law-giver to Nature." It is something we do in our minds rather than something in nature. Ultimately, the notion of modern reason denies the objectively real natures to understand. (See Dagobert D. Runes, *Dictionary of Philsosophy,* Littlefield, Adams & Co, 1962, pp. 264-5; Peter Kreeft, *C.S. Lewis for the Third Millennium,* Ignatius, 1994, pp. 98-9).
[663] Leo J. Elders, *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019, p. 198.
[664] *ST,* I-II, 92, 1.

promulgated, since its purpose is for the guidance of its subjects for the common good.[665] Laws are established as the result of a societal need. Law must come from one who has care of the community, from a legislator having authority or jurisdiction. Aquinas notes that human law tends to be made by the people through their representatives.[666] That law is promulgated by an authority. The need for promulgation in the definition of law is a normal thing throughout the history of legal philosophy. Thus, the definition of a law must include these elements: mandatory in form, reasonable in content, community-serving in purpose, promulgated in manifestation, and authoritative in source. Without all these elements or lacking any one element, it is not a genuine law and has no binding force.

Aquinas also argues that since God is the one who gives a nature for each thing in an order, to violate that order is to act unjustly toward God.[667] For him, the concept of a just law is one which serves the common good, and has a "possibility of fulfilment by the people."[668] For *non-free* beings, the law which directs them to their ends by the necessitation of their nature is physical law. "Those things that do not have cognition do not tend toward a goal unless they are directed by a knowing and intelligent someone, like an arrow by an archer."[669] For *free* beings, the law which directs them to their ends by imposing moral necessity is moral law.[670] As Aquinas says, "The principles of reason are those things that are according to nature; for reason, having presupposed the things that are determined by nature, disposes other things in a concordant way. And this is apparent both in the speculative and in the practical order."[671]

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[665] Ibid., I-II, 16; I-II, 17.
[666] *ST*, I-2, 96.
[667] Ibid., II-II, 154, 12, 1.
[668] Thomas E. Davitt, "Law as a Means to an End - Thomas Aquinas," VanderbiltLaw Review, 1960, 69.
[669] *ST*, I.2.3.; also see I-II.1.2, I.59.1.
[670] Austin Fagothey, *Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice,* The C.V. Mosby Company, 1976, pp. 108-9.
[671] *ST*, II-II, 154.2.

1. 2. God as Ultimate Authority of All Authentic Laws

We can apply the notion of lawgivers with Aquinas' general metaphysical doctrine of a substance and its properties. The properties themselves are not substances but rather accidents. They flow from the nature of the substance. Such a flowing forth presupposes a formal succession between the source as source and the resulting quality. In addition, properties flow from a substance in an order, some being closer in essence to the substance than others. In some ways, one property can be seen itself as the source of another.[672] Regarding the source of laws, Aquinas believes that all laws which are authentic or just laws must be directly or indirectly caused by God or God as lawgiver of all authentic law.

> The eternal law of God does not move the world directly and immediately, but mediately, i.e., through the operation of secondary causes or causes residing in nature itself; and therefore, it is not to be expected that in the moral world the eternal law will be operative without some such intermediate natural principle.[673]

On the question of God-revealed law, obviously, God is the "Divine Law-maker" or Lawgiver. "In order to establish the authority of those men through whom the divine revelation on which this sacred scripture or doctrine is based, has come down to us,"[674] Aquinas agrees with the position that holds that a good law is determined by the eternal, natural, and divine laws. Divine and natural laws are revealed to human persons, and it is through these revealed laws that human persons are able to make a positive law or human law. As we have already seen, for Aquinas, a law is "nothing else than an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of community, and promulgated." For a law is a rule of action put into position by one who has care of the community, and as God has care for the whole universe. God himself has granted that human

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[672] Lawrence Dewan, *Wisdom, Law, and Virtues: Essays in Thomistic Ethics,* Fordham University Press, 2007, pp. 213-5.

[673] Michael Cronin, *Science of Ethics,* vol. 1, p. 213, quotation taken from Edward Feser, *Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide,* A Oneworld Book, 2019, p. 191.

[674] *ST,* I-I, 1, 2, Reply 2.

beings can act freely but, at the same time, in accordance with principles of natural human reason. In other words, God has put a natural law into human reason. Hence, the relationship between man-made law and God-made law is resolved when the person desires to live within a society. The individual has certain obligations imposed on him to stabilize the preservation and to develop his community. The relationship between individual persons within community and society must be mutual and necessary in order to be balanced. On the one hand, the individual must work within a community to support society. On the other hand, the preservation of order is essential for the benefit of the individual, whose purpose has the higher goal of living and acting more closely to the divine lawmaker. The aim of human laws is to bring the citizens to the desired goal, in manner that is analogous with the way God leads people to the end he himself is by what we call the eternal law.[675] Thus, "Whatever the regime of political life may be, authority – that is, the right to direct and command – derives from the people, but has its primary source in the Author of nature."[676] Through this point of view, the relationship between man-made law and God-made law is resolved, and the pure content of law can be determined. It is that the necessity for human beings both to live in an effective community and to grow up as the individual is the source of ideal human law.[677] The idea of looking to the essence of human person as the source of legal obligations has been endorsed by many classical philosophers and, as we have seen, Aquinas, but it is also followed by John Locke. God is seen as the source of law. He is seen as the entity which has created and sustains order of all existence.[678] Locke insists that there is a natural law in the state of nature. Its source is ownership of God in us. Since we have been created by God, all our properties are His.

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[675] Leo J. Elders, *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019, p. 198.
[676] *MS,* 127.
[677] *ST,* I-II, 3; and I-II, 21.
[678] John Locke, *Essays on the Law of Nature,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954, p. 193.

We do not have any authority to harm another human being in his life, liberty, and possessions. And, strictly speaking, we do not even have any authority over ourselves, with respect to these matters, but rather it is only God who has all authority. All properties of all creatures belong in God's authority alone.[679] Locke follows the same tradition and view of natural law.[680]

> By the 'bond of law' we must mean here the 'bond of natural law' whereby one is bound to discharge a natural obligation, that is, to fulfil the duty which it lies upon one to perform by reason of one's nature, or else submit to the penalty due to a perpetrated crime.[681]

For Locke, the law of nature is not absolute, but rather will be different from place to place and from time to time.[682] This reflects the spirit of modern moral philosophy, whereby it is the nature of human being, derived from the divine order, that enforces the content of law. It is summed up best in Locke's essential saying the source of natural law.

> Certain essential features of things are immutable, and certain duties arise out of necessity and cannot be other than they are. And this is not because nature or God (as I should say more correctly) could not have created man differently. Rather, the cause is that, since man has been made such as he is, equipped with reason and his other faculties and destined for this mode of life, there necessarily result from his inborn constitution some definite duties for him, which cannot be other than they are.[683]

Although the divine order is still respected, certain modern philosophers seem to focus primarily on the nature of human being as the source and content of natural law. This notion is similarly found in Kant's famous characterization of men as "end in themselves," "self-legislators," and autonomy (*autos* self + *nomos* law) in the sense of self-governed.[684] The view is clearly so anthropocentric in a way that Aquinas' view is not. We see this especially in the high degree of

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[679] Edward Feser, *The Last Superstition: A Refutation of The New Atheism,* St. Augustine's Press, 2008, p.210.
[680] In other ways, John Locke is nonetheless quite different from the position held by Aquinas. While for Aquinas and the classical tradition consider the natural condition of human person to be living in a community, the natural condition is as part of a community, for John Lock human being in the "state of nature" is essentially isolated. It means that for John Locke the primary interest is in respect to individual rights. The main reason for forming communities is for the preservation of the right to own property (See John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government,* section 124, quoted in C.B. McPherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 197-8).
[681] John Locke, *Essays on the Law of Nature,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954, p. 181.
[682] John Locke, *Second Treatise on Government,* in McPherson, *op. cit.*, 193ff.
[683] Ibid.*,* 199.
[684] James C. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought: from the Enlightenment to Vatican II,* Macmillan Publishing Co., 1971, p. 3 and pp. 68 – 76.

authority and right given to the individual.[685] This would be blasphemous to Aquinas, since for him, God alone, as the "first cause and last end of all things," is the source of moral law and an end in himself.[686] Aquinas believes that we, human persons, are not here for ourselves, but for God's glory, and because this is the purpose set for us by nature. It is in God alone that we can reach our true happiness.[687]

2. Natural Law in Relations to the Different Kinds of Law[688]

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[685] It seems to be that nowadays individualism has become very strong. Certain civil lawgivers generally avoid the private moral life of citizens from what the law should regulate. Evidence is that if one considers recent legislation in several countries allowing, within or even without any certain limits, the use of drugs, abortion or euthanasia along with civil law of homosexual partnerships. Legislators do not think themselves who have competences to relate the private moral life of anyone. Obviously, they only want to provide a certain protection to generally acknowledged values but ignore the opposed practices. They just point to what is called a development in the moral thinking of the citizens. This attitude of a legislator is dangerous. They might ignore the fundamental element of law: "if things do not forbid, it can do." In the classical view of legislators, the law must help and make the citizens acting virtuously. The state and its law must be the crucial means teaching the citizens and then helping to make their life better. Whatever form a state's law or constitution has, it must be a good means to support the citizens to achieve their highest end. In contrast, nowadays certain norms of citizens' behavior do not base on law or constitution, but strongly effected and influenced by public opinions as emotions and media. This opinion might even condone and foster racism, murder, and cruel oppression. The moral sense of citizens is far removed from being a safe standard for judging a good or bad behavior. The objective factors of law which promote the moral responsibility of citizens are ignored and diminished. At the same time, legislators and jurisprudence make them possible to enforce a minimum of social solidarity. (Seeing Leo J. Elders, *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019, pp. 202-3).
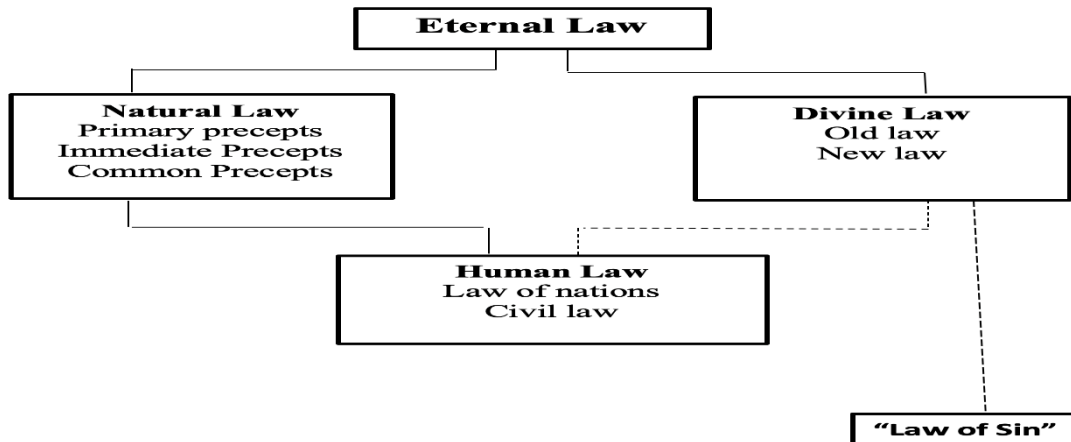
[686] *ST,* I-II, 62.1.

[687] Edward Feser, *Aquinas: A Beginner's Guide,* A Oneworld Book, 2019, p. 192.

[688] Here I should summary a very brief history of natural law before we understand Thomas Aquinas's structured system of law. Natural law theory has its root in Aristotle and the Stoics but was most fully developed by Thomas Aquinas. The first classical natural law theory is found in Cicero. He approaches the identification of true law on the assumption that all things have been the work of a divine entity.

> True law is right reason conformable to nature, universal, unchangeable, eternal, whose commands urge us to duty, and whose prohibitions restrain us from evil. Whether it enjoins or forbids, the good respect its injunctions, and the wicked treat them with indifference. This law cannot be contradicted by any other law, and is not liable either to derogation or abrogation. Neither the senate nor the people can give us any dispensation for not obeying this universal law of justice. It needs no other expositor and interpreter than our own conscience. It is not one thing at Rome, and another at Athens; one thing today, and another tomorrow; but in all times and nations this universal law must forever reign, eternal and imperishable. It is the sovereign master and emperor of all beings. God himself is its author, its promulgator, its enforcer. And he who does no obey it flies from himself, and does violence to the very nature of man. And by so doing he will ensure the severest penalties even if he avoid the other evils which are usually accounted punishments. (Cicero, *Republic,* in Marcus Tullius *Cicero's Tusculan Disputations,* Book III, section 22).

Approaching in this way, Cicero identifies human person as the highest of the divine creations and the preservation of the welfare of human person is the primary purpose of natural existence. Succeeding from both Plato and Aristotle, Cicero explains the essentially social nature of human person to determine the content of law. The principle of preservation of the order of human person is the single most important principle governing the determination of law. The same approach can be found in the works of St Augustine but his own contribution to natural law theory is not direct. He, in defining evil, looks at the divine order. For him, all order has been come from God. Evil is seen as the

After defining the law and the ultimate authority, we now propose to examine the way in which Aquinas presents a classification of the kinds of laws. The following diagram represents the grand structure of laws according to his distinction of different kinds:[689]

This sort of distinction of the different types of law is necessary to understand Jacques Maritain's notion of natural law. Maritain envisages a political society under the rule of law, and so he distinguishes four types of law: the eternal, the natural, the "common law of civilization" (*droit des gens* or *jus gentium*), and the positive (*droit positif*). Let us briefly consider each of the five boxes in turn:

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privation of the good from the divine order. Thus, law of human person must be supported for avoiding evil and helping and preserving the divine order. St Auguistine's approach was highly influential on Thomas Aquinas's works, especially in his *Summa Theologica.* Obviously, Thomas Aquinas was substantially influenced by both the classical philosophers including Greek and Roman, and the early Fathers of the Church in his ideas. Thomas Aquinas' work is a systematic analysis of law. His work is the first comprehensive analysis of the source and content of law and makes it into a structured system. We see Thomas Aquinas' structured system of law in the main text. If we all act according to reason, we all agree to some overarching general rules (what Aquinas call *primary precepts*). These are absolute and binding on all rational agents.

[689] Budziszewski J., *Written on the Heart: The case for natural law,* InterVarsity Press, 1907, pp.59-64.

2. 1. Eternal Law

According to Aquinas, the first and most fundamental law is the eternal law[690] identified with God himself.[691] He asserts that all things are governed by divine providence and directed to the end that God has put on them. The order which is evident throughout all things is observable to all human beings and proves that all things must be governed by order. This order also demonstrates the existence of a divine orderer. "It belongs to the Divine goodness, as it brought things into existence, so to lead them to their end: and this is to govern."[692] "The entire community of the universe is governed by the divine reason. Hence there is in God, as in one who governs the entirety of created beings."[693] Thus, the eternal law is active in all things. It is the duty of human beings to live in agreement with it. God's plan which directs all creatures to their good is called the eternal law, because God's reason conceives eternally, always presently and not temporally.[694] The eternal law exists in all beings, directing them by their natural desires to their ends. Aquinas defines Eternal Law as "nothing other than the exemplar of divine wisdom insofar this wisdom directs all the actions and movements of things."[695] And "since all things are ruled and measured by the eternal law, we must conclude that they participate in this law insofar as they derive from it the inclinations through which they tend naturally toward their proper operations and ends."[696]

Only God can know the eternal law as it is in itself, and the human person, as a rational being, can know it only in its participations. The natural light of a human person's reason by which he or she can see what is good and what is bad, is a participation in God's knowledge. We can analogize

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[690] God is always present. He comprehends all times and history, knows no succession and sees all events of past and future as present. God is eternal, so His thought and plan on all creatures also are eternal. His plan which directs all beings to their good is called eternal law (Seeing, *ST*, I-II, q.91. a.1.).
[691] *ST*, I-II, q.91.2; 91.1.a.3.
[692] *ST*, I, 103.
[693] *NL*, p. 40.
[694] *ST*, I-II, q. 91, a.1.
[695] Ibid., I-II, q. 93, a.1.
[696] Ibid., I-II, q. 91, a. 2.

God as the sun and the eternal law as the sunlight. Without the sunlight, nothing could be visible at all. Moreover, the sun is too bright, and our eyes cannot look at it directly. Thus, all other laws must derive their authority from eternal law. All laws known to us are an application of God's eternal law in so far as they rest on right reason. We participate in the eternal law by taking care of ourselves and others. All kind of laws including natural law and divine laws are revealed to human persons, and it is through these revealed laws that the people of the community make positive law. Aquinas thinks that it is a proper act for human persons to act according to reason. A law which deviates from right reason is not a genuine law, but a violation of it. The participation in the eternal law is in the very structure of the created rational mind, directing it to our natural good. "Thus, the rational creature by its very rationality participates in the eternal reason, and because of this participation has a natural inclination to the actions and ends proper to it – inclinations of knowledge; rational and intellectual inclinations."[697]

2. 2. Natural Law (lex naturalis)[698]

Traditional natural law theory begins with the idea that all created being has a natural function that serves to achieve desirable end. We can recognize all things with the exception of human persons, that if they act within their natural law, "should" act, though they have no free will in the matter. The natural law is what Maritain calls normality of function. The natural law is inseparable from

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[697] *NL*, p. 41.

[698] C.S. Lewis tells us that we should not confuse "natural law" with those other "laws of natures" that are the generalization of natural science. Nowadays when nature of law is mentioned, it means things like gravitation, or heredity, or the laws of chemistry. Scientific laws are descriptive generalizations of fact. The laws of natural science are descriptive laws. These laws describe how nature behaves. For example, gases expand with their containers and when heat is applied. However, for the older thinkers "the Law of Nature" is called Law of Right and Wrong. They really meant the Law of Human Nature. It was explained that just as all other creatures must obey the law of gravitation, and organisms from biological laws, so the human creature with his reason also possessed his own law. Creature without reason it would be impossible to choose obeying or disobeying the law of gravitation, but a human person is able to choose either to obey or to disobey the Law of Human Nature. This law was named the Law of Nature since human persons believed that all people knew it from their very nature, and it did not need to be learned. (See C.S Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* Macmillan Publishing Company, 1943, pp. 3-7).

the idea of essence or nature. "What I mean is that every being has its own natural law, as well as it has its own essence."[699] Natural law "is *within* the being of things as their very essence is."[700]

> Natural law is not to be conceived after the pattern of a *written* code, applicable to all, of which any just law should be a transcription, and which would determine *a priori* and in all its aspects the norms of human behavior through ordinances supposedly prescribed by Natura and Reason, but in reality, arbitrarily and artificially formulated.[701]

And "natural law is but part of the immense network of essential tendencies and regulations involved in the movement of the cosmos."[702] In a sense, a natural law is found in all beings. Of course, there is a huge gap of the natural law between human being with free will and things without free will. Because there is an "ontological structure" in all things, it means that how a thing "should" act will be determined by natural law even in cases, where there is no free will in the matter. Ontologically, natural law is related to existence. Any existing being has its own natural law, its own natural law, its own normality of functioning. It has to do with the normal functioning of nature in an existing world of contingent actions. "Human situations are something existential."[703] We can consider an example from Maritain. We never ask whether a horse has actions in accord with its nature or not because we do not need to consider the possibility of action that wrongly exercises free will. There is never a question of the horse being immoral:

> The individual horse who fails in that equine natural law only obeys the universal order of nature on which the deficiencies of his individual nature depend. If horses were free, there would be an ethical or moral way of conforming to the specific natural law of horses. But a horsy morality is a dream because horses are not free.[704]

Since a human being

> is endowed with intelligence and determines his own ends, it is up to him to put himself in tune with the ends necessarily demanded by his nature. This means that there is, by very virtue of human nature, *an order or a disposition which human reason can discover and*

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[699] *MS*, p. 86.
[700] Ibid., p. 82.
[701] Ibid., p. 83.
[702] Ibid., p. 87.
[703] Ibid., p. 88.
[704] Ibid., p. 87.

according to which the human will must act in order to attune itself to the necessary ends of the human being. The unwritten law, or natural law, is nothing more than that.[705]

The natural law is a moral law because man obeys or disobeys it freely, not necessarily, and because human behavior pertains to a particular, privileged order which is irreducible to the general order of the cosmos[706] and tends to a final end superior to the immanent common good of the universe.[707]

Moral law is a prescriptive law. It "lays down our most fundamental duties, and by virtue of which every law is binding, is the very law which assigns to us our fundamental rights" and is coextensive with morality. It tells us how we ought to behave. The natural law is the moral law that requires us, human persons, to act in accordance with our nature. It tells us that actions are just because they are natural, and wrong because they are unnatural. The natural law or moral law explains why moral duties apply to everyone, no exception. "Universal law is the law of nature. For there really is, as everyone to some extent divines, a natural justice and injustice that is binding on all men, even on those who have no association or covenant with each other."[708] Human persons are good or bad to the extent that how those people fulfill their true nature. The more they fulfill their authentic nature, the better they are. The more they fail to fulfill their authentic nature, the worse they are. We can determine whether actions are moral, by seeing whether they fulfill our human nature.

> There is, first of all, inherent in man, an inclination toward the good according to that nature in which he has something in common with all substances, according namely as every substance whatsoever has appetite for the conservation of its own being in accordance with its own nature. And according to this inclination there pertain to the natural law those things through which the life of man is conserved and the contrary impeded.[709]

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[705] *RM*, p. 61.
[706] *MS*, p. 95.
[707] *NL*, p. 29.
[708] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.13.1373b5.
[709] *ST*, I-II, 94, 2.

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According to Aquinas, human nature is what makes each of us human persons. Human nature is seen as the objective standard of morality. If we human persons do right, our acts essentially manifest human nature. In contrast, if we do wrong, they violate it. Natural law is the moral law written into nature itself by God. What human persons ought to do, according to natural law, is determined by considering certain aspects of nature. Natural law is nothing other than a participation in the eternal law present in human nature. Thus, morality does not depend on human opinion, as so many philosophers think, but rather it depends on the eternal laws existing in human nature. Aquinas's point is that the natural law transcends any time or place. It is eternal, the same today and tomorrow, and the same everywhere. It originates from God himself. Aquinas holds that 'all rational creatures share in and make their own the eternal reason through which they have a natural inclination to due acts and purposes, and this sharing is what is called natural law.'[710] "Natural law is law only because it is a participation in Eternal Law."[711]

Natural law theory argues that we, human persons, must find a way to live well together, since

> each thing, among natural things, which naturally as its very being belongs to another, is more principally and more intensely inclined toward that to which it belongs to itself. And this natural inclination is shown from those things that are naturally done, because each thing, as it naturally acts, just so is it naturally suited to [or inclined to] act.[712]

It is basic to natural law that a human being with reason possesses the capacity to ask himself what he is and what he is meant to be and to do. However, his capacity of self-understanding is only in community with other persons. It is impossible to possess self-understanding in isolation. Therefore, when the natural law is spoken, it is the experience and co-reflection of a person in community who is enriched by his own environment. Communication and communion must be a basic element of continuity and progress.[713]

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[710] *ST*, I-II, q.91, a.2.
[711] *MS*, p. 96.
[712] *ST*, I, 60. a5.
[713] Bernard Häring, CSsR., *Morality Is For Persons,* NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971, p. 151.

Since the natural law participates in the Eternal Law, like all other forms of law, the natural law must be backed by a lawgiver, and this lawgiver is God. The natural law is governed by the natural order of the God who promulgates the natural law. According to Aquinas, this is "By the very fact that God instilled it into man's mind so as to be known by him naturally."[714] Thus, natural law is the order of our tasks and obligations as acknowledged by reason naturally. For Maritain, the most dangerous implication of modern philosophies concerning human rights is their tendency to emphasize the rights in the absence of any proper concern for their concomitant obligations.[715] From the idea that natural law comes from eternal law might seem to convince that morality ultimately depends on God after all. This explains that only God rather than pleasure, power, wealth, etc., could be the ultimate good for us. It is that why Maritain has this in mind when he defines natural law as "an order or a disposition that the human reason may discover and according to which the human will must act to accord itself with the necessary ends of the human being."[716] Our reason is inspired by our nature to see and understand what is needed to live morally, and it formulates it and considers it as binding. Natural law is seen as the order that is established and prescribed by natural reason. If we act according to reason, we are partaking in the natural law.[717] In this way, reason appears as a light which shines in us and by which we know what is morally good and what is bad: right use of reason expresses and obeys "the law written on the heart"[718] – exhibiting the deep structure of all moral knowledge. Thus, the natural law consists of moral precepts which are formulated by reason. It "prescribes our most fundamental duties"[719] and is coextensive with morality.

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[714] ST, I-II, 90, a.4.
[715] *RM*, pp. 65-6.
[716] *MS*, p. 86.
[717] Leo J. Elders, *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019, p. 208.
[718] Mentioned in the letter of Saint Paul to *Romans* 2, 14-15.
[719] *MS*, p. 95.

Aquinas classifies its precepts into primary and secondary, then subdivides the secondary precepts, resulting in three groups in all.[720] He distinguishes between very general precepts which are known to all and secondary rules which go into details. The primary precepts, which are called "first principles of practical reason," as moral principles, can never completely disappear from our mind, although it can happen that a person is blinded and does not apply a general rule to a concrete situation.[721] The first principle of the natural law is "good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided."[722] With this, Aquinas is not saying that by the first principle of natural law is just self-evident that we ought to be morally good. Rather, he argues that natural law is self-evident in that whenever we act, we pursue something that we take to be good in some way and avoid what we take in some way to be evil.[723] Maritain states, "natural law deals with the rights and duties which are connected in a necessary manner with the first principle: 'Do good and avoid evil'.[724] It is in this strict sense an unwritten law. All other precepts depend on this. "This is the preamble and the principle of natural law; it is not the law itself. Natural law is the ensemble of things to do and not to do which follow therefrom in *necessary* fashion."[725]

> There belong to the natural law, first, certain most general precepts, that are known to all; and secondly, certain secondary and more detailed precepts, which are, as it were, conclusions following closely from first principles. As to those general principles, the natural law, in the abstract, can nowise be blotted out from men's hearts. But it is blotted out in the case of a particular action, in so far as reason is hindered from applying the common principle to a particular point of practice, on account of concupiscence or some other passion, as stated above (q.77, A.2). But as to the other, i.e., the secondary precepts, the natural law can be blotted out from the human heart, either by evil persuasions, just as in speculative matters errors occur in respect to a necessary conclusion; or by vicious customs and corrupt habits, as among some men, theft, and even unnatural vices, as the Apostles states (Rom. 1), were not esteemed sinful.[726]

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[720] *ST*, I-II, 100, 11.
[721] *ST*, I-II, 77, a. 2.
[722] Ibid., I-II, 94, a. 2.
[723] *MS*, p. 90.
[724] Ibid., pp. 97-8.
[725] Ibid., p. 90.
[726] *ST*, I-II, 94, a. 6.

Quotation from the article 6 of question 94 can be illustrated by the below diagram:

Since natural law has its roots in human nature, it must be universal and permanent.[727] It is the same for everyone and is known by all. Everyone must act according to right reason and all desires and urges must be governed by the intellect.[728] Since the natural law is universal and invariable, it deals with "the rights and duties which are connected in a *necessary* manner with the first principle… This is why the precepts of the unwritten law are in themselves or in the nature of things."[729] Maritain holds that it is not founded merely on human nature, but it is rooted in the Divine Reason and in a transcendent order. It has been written into human nature by the Divine Reason. This is how it gets its obligatory character.[730]

2.3. Divine Law

The reflection of eternal law in God's revealed Word directs human persons to faith in Christ as the only possible means of our reconciliation with God. If natural law only directs us toward our natural good, Divine Law directs us not only our natural good in this life but also to God Himself in heaven.[731] According to Aquinas (and the teaching of the Catholic Church) God gave two different editions of Divine Law: the old law in the Old Testament and the new or evangelical law in the New Testament. The old law prepares for the new law and is completed in the promised Savior, Jesus Christ, who saves us and takes away sins of the world.[732]

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[727] Ibid., I-II, 94, a. 2.
[728] Leo J. Elders, *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019, p. 214.
[729] *MS*, p. 97-8.
[730] Ibid., p. 96.
[731] *ST*, I-II, 91, 4.
[732] Ibid., I-II, 98 – 108 (questions 98-105 deal with the old law; questions 106-8 deal with the new law and its relations to the old law).

2. 4. Human Law

Firstly, we might think of human law as what we sometimes nowadays call positive law, the law actually enacted and put in force in our human communities. Aquinas follows Cicero in saying that "human nature originally sprang from nature. Then things became customs because of their rational benefit. Then fear and reverence for law validated things that both sprang from nature and were approved by custom."[733] In the view of the classical tradition and Aquinas, human laws reflect both the natural law and the developed expansion of these laws in the customs, cultures and positive laws made by human beings. The human laws are said by Maritain to include the common law of civilization or the laws of nation (*droit des gens* or *jus gentium*) and the positive law.[734]

2. 4. 1. The Law of Nations

The law of nations is an extension of the natural law to the circumstances of life in society. It is a sort of a middle ground between the natural law and merely human positive law. Though the law of nations is able to share the manner in which it is known with the positive law, it also shares the immediate source of its existence with the natural law. The *jus gentium* is an "intermediary between natural law and positive law."[735] It "is known, not through inclination, but through the conceptual exercise of reason. This is the specific difference distinguishing the law of nations from the Natural Law."[736] The law of nations is concerned with human persons as social beings. The content of the common law of civilization is seen in two places.

In the first place, it may include regulations pertaining to the Natural Law. These regulations are based on human nature and are connected necessarily with the first principle of natural law: "do

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[733] *ST*, I-II, 91, 3.
[734] Seeing *NL*, p. 49 to understand more about the language of political science and political philosophy in using the terms: "right of nations," "positive rights" and "natural right."
[735] *NL*, p. 63.
[736] Ibid., p. 48.

good and avoid evil." They may be known on the one hand through inclination, and the other hand through the conceptual exercise of reason.

In the second place, the content of the common law of civilization may concern things which, although universally obligatory and necessarily connected with the first principle of natural law, are known only as the result of the conceptual exercise of reason. It is a deduction made by the common reason of humanity. Thus, the common law of civilization belongs at once to the moral order and to the juridical order. "It is based on the natural order of morality, but it originates necessarily from this order as the first formal juridical order." It presupposes a moral obligation appealing to conscience, before the legal obligation.[737] The *ius gentitum* binds human persons both morally and legally. It is for this reason that Maritain to argues that the *ius gentium*, whether written or not, is "first of all formulated in the common conscience by human reason in its legislative role, making the law known through its own conceptual means."[738]

2. 4. 2. The Human Positive Law[739]

The human positive law is pure human law. It is human in both its source and its knowledge. It concludes the system of rules and regulations involved in assuring general order within a particular society. It is various according to the stage of each different social development within that community and also according to the specific activities of individuals within it.

> The positive law in force in any particular social group…has to do with the rights and duties which are bound up in *contingent,* not a necessary, manner with the first principle of the practical intellect… It has as its author not the divine reason but the human reason.[740]

The positive law depends uniquely on the human reason. It obliges human persons in conscience because it obliges in terms of the natural law, or the legal obligation that established is also a moral

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[737] Ibid., pp. 49-51.
[738] Ibid., p. 51.
[739] Maritain did not discuss law as revealed by God in the Mosaic ritual law and in the New Testament in the institution of the Sacraments.
[740] *NL*, pp. 51-2, and p.64.

obligation. Consequently, we can conclude that an unjust law is not a law. This also helps us to understand why Aquinas argues that an unjust law does not oblige us while the just law binds in conscience because it is linked to the natural law.[741]

Neither the law of nations nor the positive law is not deducible from natural law alone. However, they are an extension of natural law. The positive law, like the *ius gentium*, is "a prolongation or an extension of natural law, passing into objective zones which can less and less sufficiently be determined by the essential inclinations of human nature."[742] It is by virtue of natural law that the common law of civilization and positive law take on the force of law, and impose themselves on the conscience. However, in fact "if at any point human law deflects from the law of nature, it is no longer a law but a perversion of law."[743] According to Aquinas, human laws are authentic laws when they are devised by human reason,[744] must necessarily be adapted to particular geographical, historical and social circumstances. We know the first rule of reason is the law of nature.[745] Consequently, every human law must be derived from the law of nature. All law is directed to the common good, and human law is no exception.[746] According to Maritain, for a human law called a good law "should be a good for everyone, just as a true proposition is true for everyone."[747] Thus, it must be in virtue of their relation to natural law that the law of nations and positive law "have the force of law and impose themselves on conscience."[748]

Now we take a look at the above diagram on page 186 .A dotted line connects Divine law with human law, while a solid line connects natural law with human law. Since human law is an

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[741] Ibid., p. 53.
[742] Ibid., pp. 64-5.
[743] *ST*, I-II, 95, 2.
[744] Ibid., I-II, 91, 3.
[745] Cf. *ST*, I-II, 95, 2.
[746] Ibid., 90, aa 2,3,4.
[747] *NL*, p. 55.
[748] *CD*, p. 110.

application of natural law to the circumstances of particular human society, it should direct society to its natural rather than its supernatural good. Thus, the enforcement of Divine Law should not enforce on nonbelievers, but at the same time the human law should not violate natural law. Because of these reasons any authority human law has must come ultimately from God. In Aquinas' view if the human law or civil authority commands something contrary to either Divine or natural law, its command is not a law but an act of violence. When a positive law acts against the natural law, it is, strictly speaking, not a law.

2. 5. The "Law in the Fomes of Sin"

In the strict sense "law in the fomes of sin" (literally, the tinder of sin, therefore the toxic cause or condition that is sin) is not really a law but a penalty or consequence resulting from Divine law for man's turning his back on God. Aquinas points out that the term law is used in two senses: first as a command and second as the penalty or consequence one suffers as result of disobeying a command. The "law in the fomes of sin" is a law in the second sense.[749] According to man's proper natural condition, human law is that in which he should act in accordance with reason, but when he falls under the influence of his sensual impulses, the more he deviates from the path of reason and the more he is led by the impulses of sensuality. This very inclination of sensuality in human persons is seen as a deviation from the law of reason. "This impulse of sensuality, whereby he is led, in so far as it is a penalty following from the Divine law depriving man of his proper dignity, has the nature of law."[750] Thus, there is "a law in the fomes of sin" in us which battles against the law of God and the law of nature in our minds.

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[749] Budziszewski J., *Written on the Heart: The case for natural law,* InterVarsty Press, 1907, pp.63-64.
[750] *ST*, I-II, 91, 6.

III. The Ethical Meaning of Natural Law

Since every law is a work of reason, and since every being has its own natural law, it has its own essence and desirable end. All created beings have a natural function that serves to achieve a desirable end, so a natural law is found in all sensible beings and for human being, the natural law is a moral law. Maritain holds that for human beings the moral law is natural in *two senses*: ontological and epistemological. The moral law is natural in the view that it is related to human nature in terms of human functioning and human ends. The natural law is immanent in human nature, and it is not deducible solely from human nature. Maritain also holds that the natural law is natural because of how it is known. This means that the natural law is natural in light of its epistemological character.

> The genuine concept of Natural Law is the concept of a law which is natural not only insofar as it expresses the normality of functioning of human nature, but also insofar as it is *naturally known,* that is, known through inclination or through connaturality, not through conceptual knowledge and by the way of reasoning.[751]

1. The Ontological Element

We all agree that since there is an ontological structure in all things, there is a proper manner for how a thing "should" act. Every being has its own nature, as well as it has its own natural law, and there is a human nature that exhibits itself in an individual man and it is the same in all human persons. In short, all beings have an "ontological structure," which is universal though it is manifested in a particular individual. The ontological structure of each nature lets us know the end that each individual of a nature shares with all other individuals that are a member of that nature. Human being is "possessed of a nature, or an ontological structure which is a locus of intelligible necessities."[752] Thus, human nature must possess with it an "ontological structure" and this ontological structure is part of human being. A human being regardless of his individual

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[751] *RR*, p.26.
[752] *MS*, p. 86.

characteristics has an end that is obviously connected to his human nature and so shares with all other human persons.

> Since man is endowed with intelligence and determines his own ends, it is up to him to put himself in tune with the ends necessarily demanded by his nature. This means that there is, by the very virtue of human nature, an order or a disposition which human reason can discover and according to which the human will must act in order to attune itself to the essential and necessary ends of the human being. The unwritten law, or natural law, considered in its ontological aspect, is nothing more than that ...[753]

We can state this differently. For Maritain, any kind of being existing in nature has its own natural law, that is ontologically part of its nature. "The *normality of its functioning,* the proper way in which, by reason of its specific structure and specific ends, it "*should*" achieve fulness of being either in its growth or in its behavior."[754] We also agree that a human person is a being granted with reason, and who acts with an understanding of what he is doing. Because it has a nature, which is a "locus of intelligible necessities," its end can be known. This ontological structure is the center of an order that can be grasped by human reason. It informs us that each human person "possesses ends which necessarily correspond to his essential constitution and which are the same for everyone."[755] Thus, since each human person is endowed with reason and has capacity to determine or pursue his own ends, he is free to put himself in harmony with the end necessarily demanded by his nature. Of course, each person is also free not to do so. By endowing us with human reason to freely choose moral obligations and congeniality, the natural law holds open the possibility that a person's choice and behavior makes that person a good or vicious.

According to Maritain, natural law is something both "*ontological* and *ideal*."[756] It is ontological, because the human nature is grounded in our being expressing itself in the normality of functioning, human being's "normality of functioning" is what Maritain identifies as the

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753 Ibid., p. 86.
754 Ibid., p. 87.
755 Ibid., p. 86.
756 Emphasis Maritain's.

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ontological element of natural law. The ontological reality is something that does not exist separately, but it exists in every human person. In the same way natural law in general exists as the ideal order of development of a given being. It is something ideal, because it is "grounded on the human essence and its unchangeable structure and the intelligible necessities it involves."[757] Thus, in its ontological aspect, the natural law is "an *ideal order* relating to human actions… which depends on human nature or essence and the unchangeable necessities rooted in it."[758] It is in terms of the 'normality of the functioning' of human beings that we can know what we should do. This is coextensive with the whole field of natural moral regulations. However, we should be aware that because the natural law for human being includes both intellect and free will, is does automatically control our lives, either individually or as a species. Thus, we live under an obligation to work at our own flourishing, individually and collectively.

For Maritain, moral progress originates from "asking questions of that essence,"[759] whether it is to my essence, or as to my neighbor's nature, or a result of a relation between those two natures. No single human person can know all the answers all at once. The fact that there has been progressive development of the natural law, or perhaps more accurately, a progressive development in the knowledge of the natural law, reminds us that the human community strives together and through history. "Man's knowledge of natural law has increased little by little as man's moral conscience has developed… The knowledge men have had of the unwritten law has passed through more diverse forms and stages than certain philosophers or theologians have believed."[760] One must learn, both individually and across the span of time. One understands that "the human knowledge of natural law has been progressively shaped and molded by inclinations of human nature, starting

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[757] *NL*, p.31.
[758] *MS*, p. 88.
[759] Ibid., p. 88.
[760] Ibid., p. 90.

from the most basic ones."[761] A human person is not an angel, but lives in time and space, and his material body is limited by its material conditions: "An angel who knew the human essence in his angelic manner and all the possible existential situations of man, would know natural law in the infinity of its extension. But we do not. Though the Eighteenth Century believed they did."[762]

Therefore, we can conclude with Maritain that "natural law is something both *ontological* and *ideal.*" It is something *ideal*, because it is based on the human nature; and it is something *ontological*, because the human nature is an ontological reality.

2. The Epistemological Element

The second basic element contained in the natural law is gnoseological or epistemological. Maritain means that "the natural law as known, and thus as measuring in actual fact human practical reason, which is the measure of human acts."[763] Like all human knowledge, according to Maritain, we know and obtain our understanding of natural law bit by bit through time. Our knowledge of natural law has been obtained only with intellectual efforts.

> Men know the natural law with greater or less difficulty, and in different degrees, running the risk of error here as elsewhere. . .. That every sort of error and deviation is possible in the determination of these things merely proves that our sight is weak, our nature coarse, and that innumerable accidents can corrupt our judgment.[764]

Knowledge of natural law, and of its lawgiver, is natural but not innate. Yet it is easily picked up just by the experience of living. It is within us "as a self-evident principle, intellectually perceived by virtue of the concepts involved."[765] It is a self-awareness that reveals our own natures to ourselves. We do not have to reason the matter out to recognize what our legs, hands and eyes are for, what our intellects and wills for. We use all parts of our body without asking that it is right to

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[761] *NL*, p. 35.
[762] *MS*, p. 89.
[763] Ibid., p. 89.
[764] Ibid., p. 90.
[765] Ibid., p. 90.

use them. It can be in the same way that a person needs not to have studied ethics to know right from wrong. Human persons sought food before they studied the functions of nutrition. They spoke without the field of linguistics and lived moral lives without a formal study of ethics. We can discover the exigencies of nature through the experience of both sensitive and rational desire. We can satisfy those desires by grasping their objects. To cognitively grasp particular goods is to begin to recognize the natural law.[766] However, it is a wrong perspective to believe that morality does not need to be trained. Like all other human skills such as learning to paint, integral calculus… or training for a marathon, knowledge of natural law also needs to be trained. Knowledge of natural law or morality must be subject to some effort and some development.[767] Though knowledge of natural law is progressive, the natural law itself does not change or progress. The progress does not mean that it has a change in principles, but rather it is a growth, in understanding of those principles through the operation of reason and experience. "We become aware of the fact that the knowledge which our own moral conscience has of this law is doubtless still imperfect, and very likely it will continue to develop and become more refined as long as humanity exists."[768]

Moreover, the principles of natural law are fundamentally unalterable through all periods of time: "the only practical knowledge all men have naturally and infallibly in common,"[769] but they must be adapted to changing in other circumstantial contingencies and different societies. Sometimes the adaptation to different contingencies is misread as the natural law itself. "Montaigne remarked

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[766] Fulvio Di Blasi, Joshua P. Hochschild, and Jeffrey Langan, ed., *Ethics without God?,* St. Augustine's Press, 2008, p. 120.

[767] One of the most wonderful and fascinating things about human nature is its openness to what Plato calls "second nature": "Or have you not observed that imitations, if continued from youth far into life, settle down into habits and second nature in the body, the speech, and the thought?" (*Republic* III, 395d, Trans. Paul Shorey, in Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 196, p. 640). We human persons are structured in such a way that things that are not part of our nature can be so habitual that they seem as our natural things.

[768] *MS*, p. 90.

[769] Ibid., p. 90.

that, among certain peoples, incest and thievery were considered virtuous acts."[770] Errors by human beings, and even by the whole society or cultures, do not deny the reality of the natural law. "All this proves nothing against natural law, any more than a mistake in addition proves anything against arithmetic, or the mistakes of certain primitive peoples, for whom the stars were holes in the tent which covered the world, prove anything against astronomy."[771] Therefore, the natural law and our knowledge of the natural law are two different things. Our knowledge of a law is fundamental to the law, because law as known is essential for it to be kept and bound among people. "The law has force only when it is promulgated. It is only insofar as it is known and expressed in assertions of practical reason that natural law has the force of law. The gnoseological element is therefore fundamental in natural law."[772] How then do we come to know natural law? According to Maritain, following Aquinas, human reason does not discover natural law through the application of conceptual, discursive knowledge. Rather it is discovered "through the guidance of the *inclinations* of human nature… in which human reason knows natural law is not rational knowledge, but knowledge *through inclinations*."[773] For Maritain, inclination or connaturality (coming with our nature),[774] a particular kind of knowledge, is in a much deeper and more precise fashion than is usual. This knowledge is non-logical, non-conceptual knowledge. Maritain explains:

> Knowledge by inclination or by connaturality is a kind of knowledge that is not clear, like that obtained through concepts and conceptual judgments. It is obscure, unsystematic, vital knowledge, by means of instinct or sympathy, and in which the intellect, or order to make

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[770] *MS*, p. 90. [Reference is to Montaigne's *Essays*, specifically, "An Apology for Reymond Sebond," 2:12., trans. and intro. M.A. Screech, London, 1993].

[771] Ibid., p. 90.

[772] *NL*, p. 33.

[773] *MS*, p. 91.

[774] The Notion of knowledge through connaturality or inclination is classical in the Thomist school. Aquinas refers this notion to Aristotle's *NE,* book 10, chapter 5, where it is said that the virtuous person is the rule and measure of human actions, and to the Pseudo-Dionysius on *Divine Names,* chapter 2. Thus, the notion of knowledge through connaturality or equivalent ideas had a long history in human thought before Aquinas. It is possible to trace it back into such philosophers as Ramanuja, and the Indian school of *bhakti* (See Maritain, *RR,* pp. 22-23).

its judgments, consults the inner leanings of the subject – the experience that he has of himself – and listens to the melody produced by the vibration of deep-rooted tendencies made present in the subject. All this leads to a judgment – not to a judgment based upon concepts, but to a judgment which expresses simply the conformity of reason to tendencies to which it is inclined.[775]

Knowledge by inclination or by connaturality[776] is not only an act of the intellect alone but of the intellect plus the affections and appetites, the emotions and the will. It consists of the head and the heart, and the head consults the heart.[777] It is internal, amorphous feeling, yearning, or impulse.

> It is through connaturality that moral consciousness attains a kind of knowing – inexpressible in words and notions – of the deepest disposition – longings, fears, hopes or despairs, primeval loves and options – involved in the night of the subjectivity. When a man makes a free decision, he takes into account, not only all that he possesses of moral science and factual information, and which is manifested to him in concepts and notions, but also all the secret elements of evaluation which depend on what he is, and which are known to him through inclination, through his own actual propensities and his own virtues, if he has any.[778]

This raises the question of how we can distinguish between authentic knowledge and inauthentic knowledge of natural law, or whether something is natural law or not? Maritain explains natural law is that law which is "*naturally known*, or, more exactly, . . . *the knowledge of which is embodied in the most general and most ancient heritage* of mankind."[779] Therefore,

> those inclinations *were really genuine* which, in the immensity of the human past, have guided reason in becoming aware, little by little, of the regulations that have been most

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[775] *NL*, p. 34-5.

[776] Aquinas speaks of inclination or connaturality in some different level of related meanings. First, beings which are the same nature can be connatural to each other. For example, Three Divine Persons of The Trinity have the same connaturality and co-eternity (*ST*, I, 93, 6, ad 3). All human beings are of one species, so they have one connatural mode of understanding (*ST*, I, 108, 1, ad 3). Second, relationships of connaturality are asymmetrical. This kind of connaturality is the connatural principle of being of the other. For example, the relationships of parents to children. It is that the nature of the children is originated from the nature of the parents. Or we also have the connatural principle of governments of others. A country is to its citizens. It is that the citizens have their nature of citizens because a country is constituted under government (*ST*, II-II, 101, 3). Third, a being is called to be connatural with a thing when the thing is essentially suitable to the being. It is that by nature the being is drawn to the thing. For example, connaturality of the appetitive subjects is to with the object of its appetite, or connaturality of a heavy body is to with the center (*ST*, I-II, 26, 1, cor., ad 3; and I-II, 31, 8, ad 2).

[777] What does Aquinas mean by natural inclinations? He does not give us a clear explanation, but there are three possibilities. First, what Thomas Aquinas could call passions of the soul that are referred to inborn emotional desires. Second, he might mention natural desires of the will. The will is seen like the passions. It is considered to be a conscious desiring power. The last, Aquinas can refer to nonconscious inclinations. (Seeing Steven J. Jensen, *Knowing the Natural Law: from Precepts and Inclinations to Deriving Ought,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015.pp. 44-7).

[778] *RR,* p.26.

[779] *MS,* p. 92; (Emphasis Maritain's).

definitely and most generally recognized by the human race, starting from the most ancient social communities. For the knowledge of the primordial aspects of natural law was first expressed in social patterns rather than personal judgments. This knowledge was developed from inside, within the double protecting tissue of human inclinations and human society.[780]

Natural law covers only the field of the ethical regulations of which human beings have become aware through inclination or connaturality. Through carefully examining the data of anthropology, it would show that the fundamental *dynamic schemes* or frameworks of natural law are subject to a much more universal awareness: everywhere and in every time. It is the "natural law … which nature teaches all men" what they should do.[781]

These sorts of knowledge are universally known and gained by inclination or connaturality. Since natural law is participation in the Eternal Law, the divine reason is involved. The human reason is not the creator of natural law. Thus, through knowledge of natural inclinations the divine reason imprints its light on human reason. This helps to explain why the notion of knowledge through inclination is fundamental to the understanding of natural law, for it brushes aside any intervention of human reason as a creative factor in natural law.[782]

Over the course of history, human reason "has expressed its knowledge even of the most basic aspects of natural law." "Natural law essentially involves a dynamic development, and knowledge of natural law has progressed from the age of the cave-man."[783] However, here we need to realize clearly that for Maritain, the progress of knowledge's natural law is apparently assured by natural means alone and does not need help by any supernatural powers. "Such knowledge is still progressing; it will progress as long as human history endures. That progress of moral conscience

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[780] *MS*, p. 92.
[781] Voltaire, *Ouevres*, XXV, p. 39; XI, p. 443, quoted in Carl L. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth- Century Philosophers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 52; Becker's translation.
[782] *NL*, p. 43.
[783] *MS*, p. 93-4.

is indeed the most unquestionable instance of progress in humanity."[784] The most authentic

example of progress in human history is the progress of moral conscience, by which the human

person has come to an increasing inclination of the mind and heart toward the proper functioning

of the human person. The notion of progress which is a progress without Christ will be the subject

of our later discussion where we will see Maritain uses as his starting point to effect some sort of

synthesis with classic natural law and modern natural right. Still, Maritain does not deny the

important role of grace.

> Nature has its own reality, its own dignity, its own finalities; yet it is not an absolute; distinct from grace, it is neither separate nor independent from grace; grace is added to it not like a cap stuck on top of some professor's head, but like a divine graft which at once makes man participate in a supernatural life and exalts his natural life itself within the very order of this natural life.[785]

From this point of view on natural law and the notion of progress, Maritain tries to combine the

classical Thomist doctrines of natural law with the Enlightenment doctrines of human rights.

> It is that in the ancient and medieval times attention was paid, in natural law, to the *obligations* of man more than to his *rights*. The proper achievement – a great achievement indeed – of the 18th Century has been to bring out in full light the *rights* of man as also required by natural law. That discovery was essentially due to a progress in moral and social experience, through which the root *inclinations* of human nature as regards the rights of the human person were set free, and consequently, *knowledge through inclination* with regard to them developed.[786]

Again, though knowledge of natural inclination is progressively known, it is never known

completely. Thus, the natural law is never exhausted in any particular articulation of it.[787]

However, progress over the course of history in human consciousness does not prevent Maritain

from holding that this law is objective and binding. Because natural law's character is objective

and binding, "moral obligation essentially relates to the structure of human nature and to the

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[784] *MS*, p. 94.
[785] *RT*, p. 182.
[786] *MS*, p. 94.
[787] William Sweet, "Persons, Precepts, and Maritain's Account of the Universality of Natural Law," *Études Maritainiennes—Maritain Studies* 14, 1998, 141–165.

practical function of reason, to the fact that human beings are endowed with reason and that reason has the idea of good and evil and commands us to do what is good and to avoid what is evil, that is to act in conformity with reason itself."[788] It is the reason for us to defend how natural law is as an antidote for the moral crisis in our present age.

Before we can defend natural law as an antidote for a secular society, we need to understand Maritain's view on the human person's natural rights.

IV. Natural Law and Human Rights in Maritain's View

Maritain holds that the rights of the human person are based on natural law. "The dignity of the human person? The expression means nothing if it does not signify that by virtue of natural law, the human person has the right to be respected, is the subject of rights, possesses rights."[789] He gives main arguments that the human person is by nature endowed with rights:

> The human person possesses rights because of the very fact that it is a person, a whole, master of itself and of its acts, and which consequently is not merely a means to an end, but an end, an end which must be treated as such. The dignity of the human person! The expression means nothing if it does not signify that, by natural law, the human person has the right to be respected, is the subject of rights, possesses rights. These are things which are owed to man because of the very fact that he is a man. The notion of right and the notion of moral obligation are correlative. They are both founded on the freedom proper to spiritual agents. If man is morally bound to the things which are necessary to the fulfillment of his destiny, obviously, then he has the right to fulfill his destiny; and if he has the right to fulfill his destiny, he has the right to the things necessary for this purpose.[790]

Since the natural end of each human person is to achieve moral and spiritual perfection, it is necessary to have the means to reach this perfection. To do so it must have rights which, since they serve to realize and fulfill a human person's nature, are called 'natural.'[791] "If man is morally

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[788] *BP*, pp.178-9.
[789] *RM*, p. 37.
[790] Ibid., p. 65.
[791] We cannot find an explicit account of natural rights in Aristotle or Aquinas. However, later Scholastic philosophers develop gradually the idea that human beings have certain rights by nature and not just by legal convention (See Leo J. Elders, *The Ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019, p. 209).

bound to the things which are necessary to the fulfilment of his destiny, obviously, then, he has the right to fulfil his destiny; and if he has the right to fulfil his destiny he has the right to the things necessary for this purpose."[792] Thus, natural right is an aspect of natural moral law. While the natural law or the moral law consists of all that is good, natural right is applied to that which is just, the juridical order between human person and human person, between groups and individual, between community and community, between nation and nations.[793] Moreover, it is applied to all creatures.

> It is because we are enmeshed in the universal order, in the laws and regulations of the cosmos and of the immense family of created natures (and finally in the order of creative wisdom), and it is because we have at the same time the privilege of sharing in spiritual nature, that we possess rights vis-à-vis other men and all the assemblage of creatures.[794]

According to Maritain, there is no separateness between natural law and human rights, since human rights have been originated from the soil of natural law. "The same natural law which lays down our most fundamental duties, and by virtue of which each law is binding, is the very law which assigns to us our fundamental rights."[795] However, morality or duty is more extensive than right, because the natural right is only an aspect of the moral obligation. Right can be enforced, but the natural law is impossible to be enforced because it is rooted essentially in the human person's inner disposition.[796]

Since there is no separation between natural law and human rights, and while natural law necessarily includes God and the eternal law, human rights must be based on all the fundamental foundation of the natural law. "The philosophical foundation of the Rights of man is Natural Law."[797] Furthermore, when it is a matter of authentic human rights, there are no contradictions

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[792] *RM*, p. 37.
[793] Bernard Häring, CSsR., *The Law of Christ,* trans. Edwin G. Kaiser, vol. I, The Newman Press, 1961, p.238-9.
[794] *NL*, pp. 58-9.
[795] Ibid*.,* p. 58.
[796] Bernard Häring, CSsR., *The Law of Christ,* trans. Edwin G. Kaiser, vol. I, The Newman Press, 1961, p.239.
[797] *NL*, p. 53.

between laws and rights. For duties or moral obligations correspond to rights. Where there is no duty, there is no genuine right. There are no contradictions between duties and rights, because "the notion of right and the notion of moral obligation are correlative. They are both founded on the freedom proper to spiritual agents."[798] Because both human rights and obligations are based on the natural law, they are originated from a common source. Maritain provides us a summary of fundamental natural rights predicated on the natural law:[799]

1. Right to existence (life).[800]

2. Right to personal freedom (liberty) or to conduct one's own life as master of oneself and of one's acts, responsible for them before God and the law of the community.

3. Right to the pursuing of the perfection of moral and rational human life (happiness).[801]

4. Right to keep one's body whole.

5. Right to private ownership of material goods (belongs) which is a safeguard of the liberties of the individual.[802]

6. Right to marry according to one's choice and to raise a family which will be assured of the liberties due it.

7. Right of association.

8. Respect for human dignity in each individual, whether or not he represents an economic value for society.

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[798] *RM*, p. 37.
[799] *NL*, pp. 75-80.
[800] Paul II defines the rights of human life in his *Evangelium Vitae:* "in the natural law written in the heart (cf. *Rom* 2:14-15) the sacred value of human life from its very beginning until its end and can affirm the right of every human being to have this primary good respected to the highest degree. Upon the recognition of this right, every human community and the political community itself are founded" (number 2).
[801] Maritain views that the "pursuit of happiness" is nothing other than the "pursuit of the perfection of moral and rational human life." The "pursuit of happiness here on earth is the pursuit, not of material advantages, but of moral righteousness, of the strength and perfection of soul, with the material and social conditions thereby implied; the right to the pursuit of eternal good (without this pursuit there is no true pursuit of happiness)" (*NL*, pp. 77 – 8 & n.38).
[802] *NL*, p. 65.

However, the most dangerous problem of modern philosophies of human rights, and even of our present time, is their tendency to emphasize the rights of human beings without proper concern for their concomitant obligations. The human rights of modern philosophies come from its subjective origins in Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau which were based on the will alone. What Raymond Dennehy properly called "the ontological status of human rights"[803] remains impossible in a will theory of rights. Actually, the human rights of modern philosophies are not natural rights. They are only civil rights in which determined by the state's will presupposed to nothing but for its own will. In this point of view, constitutions are explained.[804] Thus, in circumstance of modern philosophy of human rights, Maritain offers that Thomist philosophy maintains a wonderful balance between these two elements of natural law. He even asks to pay attention to the distinction between possession and exercise of inalienable rights.[805] For Maritain, "the human person possesses rights because of the very fact that he is a person, a whole, master of himself and of his acts, and which consequently is not merely a means to an end, but an end, an end which must be treated as such."[806] The question is what is a right? Right is not merely "virtual," but it obtains a "formal and actual" meaning.[807] He specifies:

> a right is a requirement that emanates from a self with regard to something which is understood as *his* due, and of which the other moral agents are in conscience not to deprive him. The normality of function of the creature endowed with intellect and free will [*i.e.,* the natural law] implies the fact that this creature has duties and obligations; it also implies the fact that this creature possesses rights, by virtue of his very nature – because he is a self with whom the other selves are confronted, and whom they are not free to deprive of what is due him. And the normality of functioning of the rational creature is an expression of the order of divine wisdom.[808]

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[803] Raymond Dennehy, "The Ontological Basis of Human Rights," *The Thomist* 42, July 1978, pp. 434-63.
[804] Peter A. Redpath, ed., *From Twilight to Dawn,* American Maritain Association, 1990, pp.10-11.
[805] *NL*, p. 68-9.
[806] *RM*, p. 37.
[807] *NL*, p. 47.
[808] Ibid.*, p. 60 n.27.

According to Maritain's view, since the philosophical foundation of the rights of human person is based on natural law, and since every creature acts by virtue of its Principle, the authentic rights of the human person is bound by virtue of the right possessed by God, "so too every right possessed by man is possessed by virtue of the right possessed by God, Who is pure Justice, to see the order of His wisdom in being respected, obeyed, and loved by every intelligence."[809] Therefore, human rights are inextricably linked to natural law, which is inextricably tied to eternal law as a chain from eternal law down to natural law and human right (See image on the right).

Natural human rights that directly come from natural law are inalienable. "They are inalienable since they are grounded on the very nature of man, which of course no man can lose."[810] This does not mean that they are absolute, infinite, without some boundary in the same way as are the infinite rights of God. They are bounded by the common good since they have an "intrinsic relation to the common good."[811] Since natural human rights are bounded by the common good, there is a variability of natural human rights by virtue of what freedom of restriction that the body politic can place on the individual exercise of a natural human right. However, for Maritain there are natural human rights that are absolutely inalienable even if they are inalienable only substantially. Even absolutely inalienable natural human rights are liable to limitation, if not to their possession, at least with respect to their exercise.[812] We must always take care to distinguish the possession and the exercise of inalienable natural human rights in concrete circumstances. Even though they are in one important sense absolutely inalienable rights, the exercise still is

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[809] *NL*, p. 60.
[810] Ibid., p. 67.
[811] Ibid., p. 67.
[812] Ibid., p. 67.

"subject to conditions and limitations dictated in each case by justice."[813] Contingencies of social

structures may also restrict the exercise of inalienable natural human rights when these rights "can

be contrary to justice to claim the use of this right for each and all *hic et nunc* if that can only be

realized by ruining the social body" or "encroaching upon major rights."[814] The exercise of the

inalienable natural human rights in such a context can be unjust, if it does not serve as a sort of

spur to social progress.

> The basis for the secret stimulus which incessantly fosters the transformation of societies
> lies in the fact that man possesses inalienable rights but is deprived of the possibility of
> justly claiming the *exercise* of certain of these rights because of the inhuman element that
> remains in the social structure of each period.[815]

Since none of the absolutely inalienable natural human rights are unconditional, or infinite, it is a

fundamental mistake, to attribute to any one particular human right the unconditionality that should

be given only to a divine attribute. Therefore, Maritain reminds us that "the philosophical

foundation of the Rights of man is Natural Law" but *not* the "natural law" of Jacobins, French

philosophies, Kant, and Hegel. It is the "natural law" of Cicero, St. Paul, St. Augustine, and, of

course, St Aquinas. The Classical and Scholastic philosophers of natural law tend to focus on the

concept of a divine source while modern and contemporary philosophers tend to give greater

weight to the influence of human reason as the source of law.[816] It is important to remember that

the modern philosophers of natural law, in contrast with the Scholastics, view natural law as the

ideal, but think that it is not enforceable, in the sense that positive law is enforceable. This view is

agreed with by Maritain, who sees natural law as fundamental for normative values, but not

directly enforceable.[817]

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[813] Ibid., p. 68.
[814] Ibid., p. 68-9.
[815] Ibid., p. 68.
[816] John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980, p. 135.
[817] Andrew Woodcock, "Jacques Maritain, Natural Law and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," *Journal of the History of International Law 8*, no. 2 (2006), p. 248.

In the Aristotelian-Thomist view of natural law, Maritain is careful to dispel the philosophical errors about the human rights that enlightenment, rationalist era jurists and philosophers attached to it. There was a change in the concept of natural law beginning in the 17th century, when God and the eternal law were separated from the natural law. God was placed as a sort of distant, Deistic guarantor of last resort. The resulting view of nature and human reason became to be thought of as "Nature with a capital N and Reason with capital R, as abstract divinities sitting in a Platonic heaven."[818] As a result of thinking Nature and Reason in an independent, idealistic place a human act "was traced from a ready-made, pre-existing pattern which infallible Reason had been instructed to lay down by infallible Nature, and which, consequently, should be immutably and universally recognized in all places of the earth and at all moments of time."[819]

Because certain philosophers of enlightenment "misused the notion of natural law to such a degree, either for conservative or for revolutionary purposes,"[820] they saw natural law as a *written* code of *a priori* rules for human conduct, but in reality they were arbitrarily and artificially formulated.[821] "This philosophy of rights ended up, after Rousseau and Kant, by treating the individual as a god and making all the rights ascribed to him the absolute and unlimited rights of a god."[822]

In Maritain's view these philosophers' notion of natural law was in fact a "fatal mistake." Maritain criticizes philosophers such as Rousseau, Leibniz, and Kant, for failing to return human nature and human reason to their eternal source and instead proposing to

> replace God in actual fact as supreme source and original of Natural Law. Natural law was to be reduced from the so-called autonomy of the Will… The rights of the human person were to be based on the claim that man is subject to no law other than that of his own will and freedom.[823]

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[818] Ibid., p. 53.
[819] Ibid., p. 55.
[820] Ibid., p. 53.
[821] Ibid., p. 56.
[822] Ibid., p. 56.
[823] Ibid., pp. 56-7.

According to Maritain, this amounts to defending natural law as self-law, which is no law at all. It is also an argument for self-right, which is no right at all. Such doctrines are fatal to law and to the notion of right. By these views, human persons do not have certain rights by nature, but instead only in relation to legal convention. Consequently, "the human Will or human Freedom" was raised to "Platonic self-subsistence in that intelligible, though unreachable, empyreal world."[824] Maritain continues, with reference to Kant and Rousseau:

> "A person," Kant wrote, "is subject to no other laws than those which he (either alone or jointly with others) gives to himself."[825] In other words, man must "obey only himself,"[826] as Jean-Jacques Rousseau put it, because every measure or regulation springing from the world of nature (and finally from creative wisdom) would destroy at one and the same time his autonomy and his supreme dignity.

If a person "is subject to no other laws" and "every regulation springs from world of nature," then there is nothing by reference to which it can be judged objectively "right or wrong." This does not seem to follow any natural law theory based on Aristotle's formal and final causes. If there are no formal and final causes, then there is no universal human nature nor any natural purposes by reference to which rights come from. Morality, laws, and rights are invented by human beings for staving off the social chaos this would suppose. If every man is believed, not by having the same nature, not by having the same highest natural purpose (God) but rather by his subjective moral attitudes, to associate with natural capacities like reason, procreation etc., then they do not have the same fundamental moral obligations under natural law.

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[824] Ibid., p. 56.

[825] Maritain quotes Kant's *Introduction to the Metaphysic of Morals*, IV.24., trans. W. Hastie. Here is the entirety of Kant's quote:
> A person is a subject who is capable of having his actions imputed to him. Moral personality is, therefore, nothing but the freedom of a rational being under moral laws; and it is to be distinguished from psychological freedom as the mere faculty by which we become conscious of ourselves in different states of the identity of our existence. Hence it follows that a person is properly subject to no other laws than those he lays down for himself, either alone or in conjunction with others.

[826] The full cite to Jean-Jacques Rousseau [from *Social Contract,* Cosimo Classics, 2008, book I.6., p. 23] is
> "The problem is to find a form of association which will defend and protect with the whole common force the person and goods of each associate, and in which each, while uniting himself with all, may still obey himself alone, and remain as free as before." This is the fundamental problem of which the *Social Contract* provides the solution.

In other words, by abandoning Aristotle's and Scholastic philosophers' formal and final causes, all objective basis of morality is denied by modern philosophy. If nothing is objectively true for anything, then there is no sense to be made of the good as an objective feature of reality anyway. The good becomes whatever one or one's will wants it to be. As we find in Hobbes, "nature" is used in the mechanist sense, not the Aristotelian one and Scholastic or Thomist one. Through this sense, if everyone has the "right" to do anything he wants, including stealing, killing, harming others, etc., then no one has any right at all in the moral sense of the term. Natural law or moral law does not exist, and instead, there is only an amoral universal permissiveness.[827] If people believe in the mechanistic line, there is just nothing else for the good to be. The human will or human freedom, the concept of a person, and the idea of natural human rights, etc., becomes an illusion or convenient fiction.[828] In the end, this concept of human rights which serves to increase rightly what classic natural law was designed to prevent does not rest on natural rights at all. They are only to become civil rights that is determined by a state's or dictator's will.[829] Therefore, we can conclude with Maritain's wonderful analysis, which, though it is long, it is worth quoting in full:

> This philosophy built no solid foundations for the rights of the human person, because nothing can be founded on illusion: it compromised and squandered these rights, because it led men to conceive them as rights in themselves divine, hence infinite, escaping every objective measure, denying every limitation imposed upon the claim of the ego, and ultimately expressing the absolute independence of the human subject and a so-called absolute right – which supposedly pertains to everything in the human subject by the mere fact that it is in him – to unfold one's cherished possibilities at the expense of all other beings. When men thus instructed clashed on all sides with the impossible, they came to believe in the bankruptcy of the rights of the human person. Some have turned against these rights with an enslaver's fury; some have continued to invoke them, while in their inmost

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[827] Edward Feser, *The Last Superstition: A Refutation of The New Atheism,* St. Augustine's Press, 2008, p. 210.
[828] Ibid., pp. 219-21.
[829] Peter A. Redpath, ed., *From Twilight to Dawn: The Cultural Vision of Jacques Maritain,* American Maritain Association, 1990, pp. 10-11.

conscience they are weighed down to scepticism which is one of the most alarming symptoms of the crisis of our civilization.[830]

V. Conclusion

We have understood that, on the one hand, Maritain insists all human natural rights "are rooted in the vocation of the person (a spiritual rights and free agent) to the order of absolute values and to a destiny superior to time."[831] All these rights of the person "really [have their] origin in the conception of man and of natural law established by centuries of Christian philosophy."[832] They adhere to the originally Christian character of human rights through which making human person "toward its eternal destiny along the path which its conscience has recognized as the path indicated by God."[833] On the other hand, Maritain argues that certain modern philosophers' view of human natural law and rights is "no longer an offspringing of creative wisdom, but a revelation of reason unto itself."[834] This view transformed natural law into "a code of absolute and universal justice inscribed in nature and deciphered by reason as an ensemble of geometric theorems or speculative data," and made "this code of nature this same rationalism absorbed every kind of law which became thenceforth as necessary and universal as nature itself."[835] Therefore, law and justice, which were originally like philosophy, music, or art, have now became more like physics, mathematics, and geometry.

In Maritain's view, there is no doubt that the merely rationalist perspective is false. He gives the judgment that "the modern world has pursued good things down wrong pathways."[836] For Maritain, these paths by modern philosophy are, as we have already found him saying, fatal since

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[830] *NL*, pp. 57-8.
[831] Ibid., p. 78.
[832] Ibid., p. 79.
[833] Ibid., p. 79.
[834] Ibid., p. 78.
[835] Ibid., p. 78.
[836] This is re-quoted from Joshua Schulz, ed., *Engaging the Times,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017, p. 218. It is originally from Maritain, *Pour la justice: Articles et discours (1940-5)* (New York: Editions de la Maison Francaise, 1945), "World Trial: Its Meaning for the Future," p. 236 and *RR*, p. 193.

they neither begin nor end in transcendence. It is supposed that salvation is not from a transcendent God, but rather is totally from immanent and achievable by reason alone. "…Its error, in a word, was in believing that man works out his own salvation, only by his own power and that human history is made without God."[837] With this turning point of modern philosophy, the denial of a transcendent God, modern man has found individual happiness without knowing his true final and without believing in help from God's grace. Maritain concludes that "having given up God so as to be self-sufficient, man has lost track of his soul. He looks in vain for himself; he turns the universe upside down trying to find himself; he finds masks and, behind the masks, death."[838] Because of modern philosophy's denial of transcendence, "man has lost track of his soul." Since human being, as a member of society, now lacks a natural basic for community, this loss carries over into human society. Man has common life, but without common good, freedom without responsibility, equality without justice, looking for happiness without any final end to be aimed at, looking for democracy without any heroic task of justice to be performed. The concept of the rights of the human person and the rights of the people were warped.[839] This tendency of secularized anthropology in modern philosophy is, for Maritain, the result of the crisis of Western civilization, for it has developed toward a definitive disconnection with Christian values.[840] We cannot deny that modern time offers us many good things even as it takes us down wrong tracks, but the question now is that how we can seek good things along right tracts. Maritain suggests that "the only way of regeneration for the human community is a rediscovery of the true image of man and a definite attempt toward a new Christian civilization, a new Christendom" in which "a world of

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[837] *RR*, pp. 187-8.
[838] Ibid., p. 191.
[839] Ibid., pp. 187-8.
[840] Ibid., p. 189.

genuine humanism and Christian inspiration must be built."[841] The denial of transcendence is an essential cause of the Western crisis, but not its ultimate cause, because there must be deeper reasons why modernity denies the transcendence.

> Every great period of civilization is dominated by a certain peculiar idea that man fashions of man. Our behavior depends on this image as much as on our very nature… [This image is] strong enough to mold after its own pattern the social and political formations that are characteristic of a given cultural epoch.[842]

The ultimate cause of the modern crisis is not only in the denial of transcendence, but rather in an atmosphere of doubt which "distorts the way man pursues the primary precepts of the natural law. The natural law cannot be ignored, yet doubt leads modern man to assume he cannot fulfill it, that he can neither know Truth nor enjoy a truly common Good."[843] Therefore, to seek good things along right tracks we need to re-start a true philosophy based on the true idea of natural law.

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[841] Ibid., p. 193.
[842] Ibid., p. 185.
[843] Joshua Schulz, ed., *Engaging the Times,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017, p.219.

Chapter Six: What We Need is not Truths That Serve Us but a Truth We May Serve

> This is my commandment,
> that you love one another as I have loved you.
> No one has greater love than this,
> to lay down one's life for one's friends.
> *The Gospel of John* 15, 12-13

I. The Deepest Root of the Present Crisis

We saw the twentieth century, "century of genocide," murdered more human beings (born and unborn) in a single century than the total of all human beings who ever lived in all previous centuries. The extent and gravity of the attacks against human life and the "culture of life" have continued more serious and more terrible in this 21st century. Every day, we hear and read news of violence, hatred, racism, and conflicting interests, which lead people to attack others through war, murder, slaughter and genocide, and struggles leading to self-harm and suicide. The Western civilization for the first time in its long history is in danger of dying, not from the lack of material goods but a lack of spiritual faith. The attack on the Western civilization is due to people losing their soul of Christian faith which has become an illness. The Western is losing its soul, and that soul was the Christian faith. The infection destroying it is not because of a complex plurality or multiculturalism including the plurality of outlooks (religions and philosophical theories), associations, cultural contexts, economic systems, but because of the mono-culturalism of secularism.

As Edward Feser puts it, in words that Maritain would agree with, "secularism is, *necessarily and inherently*, a deeply irrational and immoral view of the world, and the more thoroughly it is assimilated by its adherents, the more thoroughly do they cut themselves off from the very

possibility of rational and moral understanding." "Secularism is, in its way, a religion to itself, and it is a religion that cannot tolerate infidels or heretics."[844]

Let us consider this last claim. Secularism is itself a kind of religion. The consequences of secularism are a subjectivism and relativism of truth that are destructive to intellectual honesty and to life. It divorces morality from God entirely, and from any transcendence. Secularism is contrary to natural law, which can be traced back to the God and transcendence that it rejects. In the middle of this serious culture of our present time, Pope John Paul II even said we have lived in the period of the "culture of death."[845] Further, our present age is not only in a civil and cultural crisis, but also a philosophical crisis. It is "a crisis of truth."[846] The objective truth is ignored both in theory and in practice. Most contemporary thinkers simply take this for granted without rational argument. However, the deepest crisis of our age is not even cultural and intellectual, but spiritual.[847]

For many Christian thinkers, the crisis of our age is a crisis of our humanity because it is a crisis of God, to whom we belong. When "God is dead" in human life, as Nietzsche claimed, God's image in us also dies. From the deepest root of our present crisis, together with Maritain we point out some reasons to re-discover truth in philosophical perspective and to rehabilitate moral values. We hope that the sun of truth will shine its light again soon, according to Martin Buber's reinterpretation of Nietzsche's phrase "the death of God" as the "eclipse of God."[848] When the sun is eclipsed, it is still there, but for a time we no longer can see it. It is a "darkness at noon," because noon, or anyway, during the day, is when eclipses happen. Secularism, subjectivism, relativism,

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[844] Edward Feser, *The Last Superstition,* pp. 2-3.
[845] John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae,* 1995, no. 12.
[846] I make use of the title of Ralph Martin's book, *A Crisis of Truth: The attack on faith, morality, and mission in the Catholic Church,* Servant Books, 1982.
[847] Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics,* IVP Academic, 1994, pp. 23-4.
[848] Peter Kreeft, *C.S. Lewis for the Third Millennium,* Ignatius, 1994, p.38.

materialism, and hedonism are only craters on the moon when the sun of Truth has been eclipsed at the noon hour of human pride, because we have become confident about things that by definition are beyond human understanding. Nietzsche's "death of God" is a real event, but wrongly understood. It is not the "death of God," but of His image in the human soul. It is not the sun that is in darkness during the time of an eclipse, but the earth.[849] As Aquinas convinces us that the natural law can never be destroyed from the heart of a human being,[850] so we believe that the crisis of our society is just the time of eclipse, and that the spiritual life will be recovered soon. Maritain believes that "if our love of the truth were purified by the flame of faith, no doubt we would not all share in the same philosophy, but we would be set free from an appreciable number of parasitical motives that cause division among us."[851]

1. Dualism Makes the Modern Society Losing its sense of the Transcendent

In seeking the deepest roots of the present crisis we have to go to the heart of the tragedy being experienced by modern human beings: "the eclipse of the sense of God and of man, typical of a social and cultural climate dominated by secularism."[852] Looking into the crisis of his age, Maritain clearly recognizes that civilizations rise and fall because of the understanding of "small errors in the beginning which lead to huge errors in the end."[853] For Maritain, the deepest result of crisis from modern to present time is that "man's natural community in the natural law and his innate ordination to the transcendent as the source of ultimate value have been cast in doubt."[854] In modern culture all is ultimately relative and therefore nothing is absolute. It denies eternal truths.

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[849] Peter Kreeft, *C.S. Lewis for the Third Millennium,* Ignatius, 1994, p. 38.
[850] *ST*, I-II, 94, 6.
[851] *RR*, p. 212.
[852] John Paull II, *Evangelium Vitae,* 1995, #. 21.
[853] Aquinas (paraphrasing Aristotle), *On Being and Essence,* trans. Robert P. Goodwin, Pretice-Hall, 1967, Preface.
[854] Joshua Schulz, ed., *Engaging the Times: The Witness of Thomism,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017, p. 217.

Modern culture seems to have no first principles, no ultimate values, no unshakable commitments, no fundamental conviction that there is any final meaning to life.

When the sense of God is lost or placed in serious doubt, then there is also a tendency to lose or doubt the sense of man, of his dignity and life. This explains why modern man has searched for happiness, but it still leads to a civilizational crisis, since it denies the greatness of soul which is satisfied only in striving to attain civic friendship, but not eternal beatitude. The modern world may not "be evil; in some ways the modern world is far too good." But moderns are full of doubt. Some of them care for truth, but their truth is pitiless. This is what G.K. Chesterton meant when he once wrote,

> What we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place…. A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about truth; this has been exactly reversed…. The part he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt…. But the new sceptic is so humble that he doubts if he can even learn…. The old humility made a man doubtful about his efforts, which might make him work harder. But the new humility makes a man doubtful about his aims, which will make him stop working altogether.[855]

We are living in the age of the pluralism which is rich in everything, except clarity or doubt. For Maritain, to satisfy the greatness of soul and to attain civic friendship and eternal beatitude, a true philosophy in a society with multiple cultures and religions, must be rehabilitated against the causes of the dualism of the modern age. In other words, we should avoid what he considers a cardinal vice of dualism. The growth of dualism produces a rigid separation of religion from this world. It must be responsible for the consequent secularization of some public culture, and of civic life. It is one of the main causes of the "separation of church and state," sacred and secular, religion and philosophy. It separates faith and reason, placing them into two different compartments. Dualism usually causes the separation of faith and reason by reducing faith to a personal, subjective attitude, and reducing reason to scientific and empirical reasoning. Maritain observes,

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[855] G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy,* Edition 2013, pp. 28-9.

> One of the worst diseases of the modern world… its dualism, the dissociation between the things of God and the things of world. The latter, the things of the social, economic and political life, have been abandoned to their own carnal law, removed from the exigencies of the Gospel.[856]

2. Restarting from Natural Law with the Common Ground of Ethics

First of all, we need to get out of the atmosphere of doubt which distorts the way man pursues the primary precepts of the natural law and is the ultimate cause of modern crisis. "For too long during this modern age the Christian world wounded by dualism has obeyed two opposite rhythms, a religious rhythm for the time of the Church and of worship, a naturalist rhythm for the time of the world and of profane life."[857]

Then, it is impossible for a vitally Christian transformation of the temporal order or the present crisis to come about by the same means and in the same manner as other temporal transformations and revolutions. The temporal order needs changing, and the truth is, it will not likely change for the better, unless this change is led by Christians. No group of people is in a better position to change the secular world or temporal order than Christians, but if the vitally Christian transformation is to come about, it will be as a result of Christian heroism. According to Maritain,

> this transformation demands, on the one hand, that one respect the essential exigencies of human nature, and that *image of God,* and that primacy of transcendent values which precisely permit and excite a renewal; on the other hand, that one understand that such a change is not the work of man unaided, but of God first and of man with Him, and that it is not the result of extrinsic and mechanical means, but of vital and internal principles: it is the unchanging Christian teaching.[858]

However, the individualism of a civilization which makes family and community life is difficult at every level. There is a strong anti-church movement within both popular culture and the intellectual world. It is not an easy time to be a Christian, especially if we are also trying to pass our faith on to our own children. Following Maritain, Fr. Norris Clarke and some others, I suggest

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[856] *SP*, p. 19, and *RR*, p. 195.
[857] *IH*, p. 78.
[858] Ibid., p. 93.

that we should start from natural law with the common ground of ethics. "Ethics is first philosophy,"[859] hence Maritain's claim that "the social revolution will be ethical, or it will not be all."[860] Maritain bases his ethics on the natural law that can be the basic of ethical objectivity.[861] Studying the contemporary scene with this goal in mind, Clarke writes,

> I think what is happening now is that in somewhat of a vacuum of solid philosophical theory, what is happening is that the Thomistic metaphysics and philosophy is coming back through the door of ethics. People like Alistair MacIntyre who, as you know, has become a convert to Catholicism finally and has attacked all the modern analytic ethics and has put out his own books, and finally one on three ways of doing ethics, Kant and Aristotle, and where he is opting for St. Thomas as the best way to do it.[862]

And then, Maritain hopes that political and secular affairs will be reintegrated with Christian ethics in the future Christendom. This Christian humanism or integral humanism demands,

> On the one hand, that one respect the essential exigencies of human nature, and that image of God, and that primacy of transcendent values which precisely permit and excite a renewal; on the other hand, that one understands that such a change is not the work of man unaided, but of God first and of man with Him, and that it is not the result of extrinsic and mechanical means, but of vital and internal principles: it is the unchanging Christian teaching.[863]

II. Rehabilitating the Attitude of Philosophical Wonder

Maritain described the social problems in the preface to his 1930 books *Antimodern* and repeated it a year later in the preface to his book praising of Aquinas: "If I am anti-modern, it is certainly not out of personal inclination, but because the spirit of all modern things that have proceeded from the anti-Christian revolution compels me to be so."[864] Maritain is clearly aware that anthropocentrism of the modern philosophy has led to irrationalism, since it neither begins nor ends in the transcendence that is needed to ground being and thinking. To rehabilitate and to save

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[859] Diogenes Allen and Eric O. Springsted, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology,* Second Edition, Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, p. 231.
[860] *IH*, pp. 120-1.
[861] John W. Cooper, *The Theology of Freedom: The Legacy of Maritain and Reinhold Niebuhr,* Macon. GA: Mercer University, 1985, p. 67.
[862] Norris Clarke, S.J., *A Creative Retrieval of Thomism,* also https://www.innerexplorations.com/catchmeta/a1.htm
[863] IH, p.93.
[864] Maritain, *St Thomas Aquinas: Angel of the Schools,* London: Seed and Ward, 1931, pp.10-11.

the modern philosophy from irrationalism, as Mortimer Zuckerman, editor of *U.S. News and World Report,* asked "how are we going to deal with an irrational… [x, y, or z]?" His answer is sadly chilling: "We have to destroy them. Reason has no role with the irrational."[865]

From the Reformation to the Enlightenment, both the pessimism of the Reformation and the ungrounded philosophical optimism of the Enlightenment, a trend views human nature as depraved, thereby separating human nature from God which assumed that salvation is attained by reason alone. It is wholly immanent. Facing this, Maritain described himself as willing to be 'ultra-modern' in promoting a Christian restoration that was true to natural law.[866]

From a "so-called Christian point of view,"[867] he condemns modern time and declares that "I have no taste for relativism in matters intellectual, and I do not believe truth to be a function of time."[868] He makes distinction between what is changing in history and what is eternal. He believes that it is a "great error" to confuse what is eternal with the social structure of the temporal order. Through time, culture passes under various passing "historical climates or historical constellations through which the development of mankind is passing."[869] Each historical climate is different, while the principles are absolute and unchangeable, so that the immutable principles must be applied in light of "concrete historical ideals… which are *relative* – relative to a given time – and which can be claimed and asserted as realizable."[870] Thus, each period must determine for itself how to remain faithful to the immutable principles. There are "a thousand possible historical realizations… of the same abstract principle."[871] Maritain admits that it is difficult to have an equal regard between "the

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[865] Mortimer Zuckerman, editor, *U.S. News and World Report,* 8 October 2001.
[866] Joshua Schulz, ed., *Engaging the Times: The Witness of Thomism,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017, p. 218.
[867] *PH*, p. 52.
[868] Maritain, "Preface to the Second Edition," *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison and J. Gordon Andison, NY: Philosophical Library, 1955, p. 11.
[869] *MS*, p. 156.
[870] Ibid., p. 157.
[871] *AS*, p. 135.

absolute unchanging truth and the relativity of every contigent kind of cultural development."[872]

According to him, to pursue practical realizations, the prerequisite of practical efficacy: "to keep thought centered at all costs upon the immutable."[873]

As we understood above in chapter V of this dissertation, natural law itself is unchangeable since the natural law participates in Eternal Law. However, in fact the way the precepts of the natural law are understood is formed and depended on by the intellectual culture into which we are born. In contrast with this, for the complex backgrounds of secularism and cultural pluralism in the twentieth century, the most universal enframing principle underlying modernity is, as Josef Pieper has observed, the attitude of doubt.

> Now, it is curious that in modern philosophy, especially, the aspect of the wonderful has taken on a different appearance so that the old doctrine of wonder as the beginning of philosophy has acquired the meaning, "Doubt is the beginning of philosophy."[874]

According to Maritain, this attitude of doubt originated from nominalism's rejection of the intelligibility of being.

> A deep vice besets the philosophers of our day, whether they be neo-Kantians, neo-positivists, idealists, Bergsonians, logisticians, pragmatists, neo-Spinozists, or neo-mystics. It is the ancient error of the *nominalists….* The reason is that while having a taste for the real indeed, they nevertheless have no sense of being. Being as such…is for them only a word.[875]

The attitude of doubt became emblematic of philosophical modernity,

> after Descartes had denied the scientific value of theology, and Kant the scientific value of metaphysics, we have witnessed human reason gone astray and a captive to empiricism seeking wisdom more anxiously than ever before, yet failing to find it, because it has rejected the sense of mystery and has attempted to subject wisdom to the alien law of progress by substitution.[876]

The attitude of doubt in the modern period toward the supposed certainties of purely secular concerns stands in contrast to the attitude of "wonder" in ancient and medieval periods toward

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[872] Maritain, *The Things That Are Not Caesar's*, p. 107.
[873] Maritain, "Religion and Culture," *Essays,* p. 52.
[874] Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture,* trans. Gerald Malsbary, St. Augustine's Press, 1998, p. 120.
[875] *DK* p.1, no. 2.
[876] *PM,* no. 8, p. 11.

both the certainties of metaphysics and the wisdom of religious faith[877] which lay at the source of ancient philosophy.[878] The ancient philosophers were impressed by the lively intelligibility of all beings. For the ancient and traditional thinkers, "the real *mirandum* (the wonderous or astonishing or whatever calls for astonishment or wonder)... is the beginning of philosophy."[879] The ancients wonder or ask themselves whether being is not only a problem to understand or solve, but at the same time a mystery by which to set up relationships between subjects and objects, "a mystery in regard the thing, the object as it exists outside the mind, a problem in regard to our formulae."[880] The "problem" can be known as a notional complex originated from our intellect. The mystery is a fullness of being with which the intellect enters into a vital union with being. In the act of understanding the intellect becomes what is other than itself. An intelligible mystery is not the implacable adversary of understanding, but it can be the most exact way to describe reality. The proper object of understanding is being, so being is a mystery.[881]

> If philosophy enables the human intellect to apprehend with absolute certainty the highest and most profound realities of the natural order, it cannot therefore claim to exhaust those realities by making them known to the utmost extent of their intelligibility. From this point of view science does not destroy the *mystery* of things, that in them, which is still unknown and unfathomed, but on the contrary recognizes and delimits it; even what it knows it never knows completely. The wise man knows all things, inasmuch as he knows them in their ultimate causes, but he does not know, is infinitely removed from knowing, everything about everything.[882]

Whereas most modern thinkers and certainly most secularists believe that a being "is not measured by the mystery of what is, but by the state of positive science at such and such an instant, this is false from the beginning, whether it be the metaphysics of Descartes, Spinoza or Kant."[883]

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[877] Joshua Schulz, ed., *Engaging the Times,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017, p. 217.
[878] For the ancient source, see Plato, *Theaetetus* 155d1-4, and Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.2, 982b12-28.
[879] Josef Pieper, *Leisure: The Basis of Culture,* trans. Gerald Malsbary, St. Augustine's Press, 1998, p.119.
[880] *PM,* no. 4, p. 4.
[881] Ibid*.,* no. 4, p. 4.
[882] Maritain, *An Introduction to Philosophy,* trans E. I. Watkin, A Sheed and Ward Book, 2005, p. 96.
[883] *DK*, p.4.

However, for Maritain, every cognitive act includes two aspects: the one a mystery, the other a problem. Mystery and problem are combined, and "a philosophy unaware of mystery would not be a philosophy."[884] The attitude of wonder invites us to participate in the being's mystery and to uncover the knowable. In contrast, the attitude of doubt tries to replace mystery with unknowability. In fact, this attitude darkens the intellect by praising the stubborn limits of rationality. It has led the wrong ways in which the person understands the precepts of the natural law in all beings.[885]

We have seen that Aquinas argues that the precepts of the natural law or moral law come after man's natural teleological inclinations. "…For everything, in so far as it is in act, acts and tends towards that which is in accordance with its form."[886] It is the fact that from man's form man "has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society,"[887] so "to know the truth about God and to live in society," knowledge of God and love of neighbor, are the two most fundamental precepts of natural law in which they come directly from man's rationality. We can say now that it is clear that these two fundamental precepts of the natural law presuppose the philosophical condition of wonder. By his rational nature, on the one hand, man desires to know the highest truth; and on the other hand, in order to attain the ultimate truth, man seeks friendship so that through social relationships he can grow virtually to achieve his absolute ultimate end.

> The human person is ordained directly to God as to its absolute ultimate end. Its direct ordination to God transcends every created common good – both common good of the political society and the intrinsic common good of the universe.[888]

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[884] *PM,* no. 4, p. 5.
[885] Joshua Schulz, ed., *Engaging the Times: The Witness of Thomism,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017, p. 220-1.
[886] *ST*, I, 5, 5.
[887] Ibid., I-II, 94, 2.
[888] *PG*, p.15.

When one wonders at the assumed intelligibility of the universe, it opens him to the possibility of attaining transcendent truth, and at the time, the assumed sociability of man automatically opens him to other persons as an infinite source of growth, a kind of a vibrant and mutually supportive society.

In contrast, under the attitude of the doubt characteristic of philosophical modernity, one still wishes "to know the truth about God and to live in society" that are connatural to his rationality, but the intelligibility of God is obscured, and faith becomes a subjective and irrational act. And the authentic nature of society is ignored, the common good is no longer bound in love to seek the common perfect, but it is a kind of contract for mutual protection, seeks rights to protect the individual or group. It gradually leads to a distrust among people. The essence of the natural law is originally ordained to support man toward fulfilling our sense of wonder in communion with others, but it is now predicated on fear born of doubt and distrust. Maritain points out that the term 'natural law' has historical connotations which are unfortunate.

> Sorry, that we cannot find another word! During the rationalist era jurists and philosophers have misused the notion of natural law to such a degree, either for conservative or for revolutionary purposes, they have put it forward in so oversimplified and so arbitrary a manner, that it is difficult to use it now without awakening distrust and suspicion in many of our contemporaries.[889]

In short, both "to know the truth about God and to live in society," the two most fundamental ends of the natural law, are replaced by divine punishment and temporal violence in the philosophical view of modernity. An Almighty God is no longer bound by Truth, Goodness, and Aesthetics: "I am the way, the truth, and the life,"[890] but He is a capricious God that is not able to be known. God is easy to be rejected because of anthropocentric narcissism. This attitude makes human being "the measure of all things, even of the God he worships."[891] No objective value is used to measure or

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[889] *MS,* pp. 80-1.
[890] *John* 14, 6,
[891] *TP,* p.107.

to solve wars and conflicts among men or social groups because all values are based on the subjective individuals which come out from the attitude of doubt. The de facto guideline for our pluralist society today seems to be "what makes you happy" – "so long as you are not hurting anyone else" – in which the criteria for happiness are self-determined, self-reported, and in which the meaning of "hurting anyone else" is assumed to be self-evident, unproblematic, or both.[892] The unavoidable results of these trends are precisely what Hobbes predicted, "To this war of every man against every man, this also is consequent; that nothing can be unjust. The notions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, have there no place."[893] When God cannot be known or rejected, in any case of social order or relationship human being cannot be made worthy. Maritain recognizes the two most fundamental precepts of a natural law have been inverted that lied at the root of modernity. Results from these distorted impulses are skepticism, fear, self-contradiction, and blind compulsion, etc., as Maritain explains and offers an integral humanism as a suitable solution.

> The general paganization of our civilization has resulted in man's placing his hope in force alone and in the efficacy of hate, whereas in the eyes of an integral humanism a political ideal of justice and civic friendship, requiring political strength and technical equipment, but inspired by love, is alone able to direct the work of social regeneration.[894]

Maritain believes that the only solution for the crisis of modernity and all periods is still: Thomism. It "answers modern problems, both theoretical and practical. In face of contemporary aspirations and perplexities, it displays a power to fashion and emancipate the mind. It is relevant to every epoch."[895] Although the two most fundamental precepts of the natural law can be distorted by the doubt's attitude of modernity, and this distortion leads to a moral crisis, Thomists, according to Maritain, must persevere in the renewal of integral humanism, the true meaning of these two

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[892] Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society,* The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012, p.182.
[893] Hobbes, *Leviathan,* chapter 13.
[894] *RR,* p. 195.
[895] *PM,* p.1.

principles will be rediscovered in philosophy and faith. This integral humanism is based on a proper estimation of the human person. It speculates about both the certainties of metaphysics and the wisdom of religious faith.[896] How can we, Christian, quest "to know the truth about God and to live in society," knowledge of God and love of neighbor in a pluralist society?

III. Right Thinking about a Pluralist Society

We cannot deny advantages from the developments of technical science, specially of internet and digital media. It helps human being to access information sources in diverse ways so quickly and multi-dimensionally, but also makes democratic societies naturally characterized by a complex plurality becomes more problematic, unstable, doubtful and suspicious. There are deep conflicts and divisions among opposing outlooks within a pluralist, multicultural, democratic society, and it seems that there is no social theory to overcome or make harmonizing these differences. In accounting for these complexities of a pluralist democratic society in which citizens belong to very different philosophical and religious creeds or outlooks, Maritain argues that all citizens should cooperate to support the common good. "A genuine democracy implies a fundamental agreement between minds and wills on the bases of life in common…. *It must bear within itself a common human creed.*"[897]

1. Pluralist Society

According to Maritain, pluralism is one of four characteristics of a society of free men: *personalism, communalism, pluralism,* and *the-ism or Christianity*.[898] *Pluralism* assumes that

> the development of the human person normally requires a plurality of autonomous communities which have their own rights, liberties and authority…, which arise either from

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[896] Joshua Schulz, ed., *Engaging the Times: The Witness of Thomism,* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017, p. 235.
[897] *MS,* p. 109.
[898] *CD, pp. 77-9.*

the fundamental exigencies of nature… or else from the will of persons freely coming together to form diverse groups.[899]

Looking at our present democratic societies, it may be said that they are caught in a bitter struggle between the principle of democracy and the principle of authority, by which "democracies have to face both their own internal difficulties and the obstinate opposition of totalitarian propagandas."[900] On the one hand, the former stands in the name of liberty, equality, and right individuals that principle of democracy covers extremely different realities. On the other hand, the latter offers what appears to be "a better principle without being aware that they are themselves but the fruit of the most morbid elements which affect modern democracies."[901] Maritain understands that the pluralist society is likely to be messy, but at the same time he knows that it is worthy and supports to achieve a higher order of good. He argues for a pluralist society that will be neither the socialist utopia nor the capitalist ideal but a new temporal order of Christian inspiration.

> The more a Christian, or a Catholic, gives an absolute primacy in his heart to a fully liberated brotherly love, and, in dealing with non-Catholics or non-Christians, sees them as they really are, members of Christ, at least potentially, the more firmly he must maintain his positions in the doctrinal order, and must make clear the difference which, in the realm of what is true or false, separate him from these men he loves wholeheartedly. In acting thus, he will be honoring them. To do otherwise would be to betray Truth, which is above everything.[902]

We should not forget that Maritain lived in a period when a society was easier than in ours. Our society holds open much greater possibilities in which people come from different countries and continents around the world may come to live together in small towns or cities. It is more diverse and complex. If there were a single word to describe the intellectual character of our age, it would

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[899] *CD, p. 78.*
[900] *SP*, p. 91.
[901] Ibid., p. 91.
[902] *TP*, p. 80.

be "difference."[903] If democracy depends on one or the other conception of human being, it will obviously generate different forms of government, which also means that all citizens still can live by right in the same body politic, though within this body politic there are differing understandings of regimes and human beings. Maritain thinks that the experience of the twentieth century shows that any form of democracy which is based on anthropocentric principles that deny any transcendent principles to human being, is contradictory to the true nature of democracy. It is considered by many thinkers to have been an exclusively secular, even anti-Christian and skeptical foundation, but Maritain, following his teacher, Henri Bergson, knows that in its deepest root, democracy is inspired by Christianity.[904] Maritain understands that the secular democratic society itself bears marks of evangelical inspiration not because that state is formed according to something seen in the Gospel, but because those who live in and act in the state are in their own souls instituted by principles of rational inclination that are themselves inspired by the Gospel.

> As Bergson has shown, … it is the urge of a love infinitely stronger than the philanthropy commended by the philosophers which caused human devotion to surmount the closed borders of the natural social groups – family group and national group – and extend it to the entire human race, because this love is the life in us of the very love which has created being and because it truly makes of each human being our neighbor… That is the deepest principle of the democratic ideal, which is the secular name for the ideal of Christendom. This is why Bergson writes, "democracy is evangelical in essence and … its motive power is love.[905]

As we know that Maritain distinguished the two kinds of understanding of humanism: theocentric and anthropocentric humanism. The different ways of understanding of humanism lead to very different kinds of democracies. Maritain also recognizes the difference among conceptions of tolerance in which is fundamental to understanding any forms of government. He makes a very clear distinction between dogmatic tolerance and civil tolerance: *"dogmatic tolerance*, which

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[903] Diogenes Allen and Eric O. Springsted, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology,* Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, p. 231.
[904] James V. Schall, *Maritain: The Philosopher in Society,* Rowman & Littlefield, 1998, p. 101.
[905] *CD,* pp. 39-40.

holds the liberty to err to be a good in itself, and *civil tolerance*, which imposes on the State respect for consciences."[906]

Maritain also recognizes that a form of government must be pluralist, in the sense of recognizing and accepting the diverse concepts of what human life is about. He accepts that in the realm of culture and politics, many varieties of forms and experiments are possible in a society.[907] In a democratic society the form which common life assumes described it as an *organic democracy*. It is not a democracy of legal forms, but one of growing and vigorous life. In it, initiative rests as far as possible with the groups which compose society, economic, cultural and other groups to which a measure of freedom is given. As persons, first, we all belong to the family, and then belong to our neighborhood, and finally, belong to the association within which we can earn and flourish our living. Under modern conditions, Maritain thinks that something which can support the sense of cooperation in a common project through which brings associative living within the individual's reach. This is what is called pluralism.[908]

> Civil society is made up not only of individuals, but of particular societies formed by them, and a pluralist body politic would allow to these societies the greatest autonomy possible and would diversify its own internal structure in keeping with what is typically required by their nature.[909]

Pluralism is neither the elimination of authority nor its appropriation by the individual but facilitates opportunity and reasponsibility among members of a society to unite to God through others. "The supernatural ideas of this humanism would no longer be that of God's *sacred empire* over all things but idea of the *holy freedom* of the creature whom grace unites to God."[910] Thus, for Maritain the unities of a pluralist society are looked for less in justice than in friendship. "The

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[906] *IH*, p. 172.
[907] Ibid., p. 132.
[908] E. L. Allen, *A Guide to the Thought of Maritain,* London: Hodder & Stoughton, pp. 40-1.
[909] *IH*, p. 164.
[910] Ibid., pp. 162-3.

unities of temporal community to that it is essentially and by nature: a simple unity of friendship….

It participated in some way in the perfect unity of the mystical body of Christ, and the unity of faith was its source."[911]

However, today our pluralist society is much different and more complex than in Maritain's age. The simple unity of friendship does not suffice to provide form and principle of the unity of the social body. This raises the question of how the collaboration and participation of unbelievers and believers can have in a pluralist society, when they do not have the same common ground for ethics? Maritain suggests we try to establish "a *common doctrinal minimum* among them…. Each engages himself and should engage himself in his entirety, each must give his maximum."[912]

2. Different Outlooks can Cooperate within a Pluralist Democratic Society

Maritain understands fully the difficulty of agreement among people in a party, a tribe, and a religion such as Christians and Buddhists in the political sphere. However, he also points out that they at least have some fundamental things of agreement. He argues that cooperation and brotherhood among human beings are based on intellectual duty. This intellectual duty is nourished by intellectual charity. "There is no intellectual justice without the assistance of intellectual charity. If we do not love the thought and intellect of another as intellect and thought, how shall we take pains to discover what truths are conveyed?"[913]

Since in the heart of each single person, there are similar moral values and moral standards originated from the natural law that requires us, human persons, to act in accordance with our nature, the pluralist democratic society must revere and work toward the same practical outcomes. Every pluralist and democratic society of free men must have a certain number of moral tenets.

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[911] Ibid., p. 173.
[912] Ibid., p. 206.
[913] *UP*, p. 29.

"No democratic society can live without a common practical belief in those truths which are freedom, justice, law, and the other tenets of democracy."[914]

> The dignity of the human person, human rights, human equality, freedom, law, mutual respect and tolerance, the unity of mankind and the ideal of peace among men – on which democracy presupposes common consent; without a general, firm, and reasoned-out conviction concerning such tenets, democracy cannot survive.[915]

Democratic societies with members coming from a great diversity of different races, and having different religious or philosophical outlooks can live together in harmony, since they at least can live with a basic common inspiration and faith. Even if we cannot find conformity of belief at the theoretical level, democracy can defend itself by appealing to basic common values.

> If it is to conquer totalitarian trends and to be true to its own mission, a renewed democracy will have its own concept of man and society, and its own philosophy, its own faith, enabling it to educate people for freedom and to defend itself against those who would use democratic liberties to destroy freedom and human rights. No society can live without a basic common inspiration and a basic common faith.[916]

If each person tries to impose one's own convictions and the truth in which one believes on others, would not living together become impossible?

> Well, if it were true that whoever knows or claims to know truth or justice cannot admit the possibility of a view different from his own and is bound to impose his true view on other people by violence, the rational animal would be the most dangerous of beasts. In reality, it is through rational means, that is, through persuasion, not coercion, that man is bound by his very nature to try to induce others to share in what he knows or claims to know as true and just.[917]

The outcomes of these basic moral tenets are supposed to lead to a set of practical conclusions and make them possible in societies. Because of this reason, Maritain convinces that we must maintain "the *theoretical justifications,* the conceptions of the world and of life, for the philosophical or religious creeds which found, or claim to be found, these practical conclusions in reason."[918] Thus,

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[914] Ibid., p. 18.
[915] Ibid., p. 12.
[916] *RR*, p. 167.
[917] *RON*, pp. 78-9.
[918] *MS,* p. 111.

theoretical justifications from diverse or pluralist outlooks have a legitimizing function for

democracy and a legitimate place in public life. They cannot be reduced to private life.

For Maritain, a democratic society is characterized by a pluralist outlook, and that all citizens are

responsible moral human beings whatever outlook they hold is a desirable state of affairs. Within

the worldview of plurality, Maritain acknowledges the right of those who deny the Gospel and the

truth of its message. He admits that it was the gospel working in secret ways and not always

through ecclesiastical bodies that bore these fruits in the world. It is the secret work of Christ that

is leading the whole world to the present time. The Christian leaven has nurtured in the social and

political order. Indeed, democracy is the secular name of a Christian ideal, since it is "evangelical

in its essence." If one separates democracy from its Christian inspiration, it was grave historical

loss.[919]

> The democratic impulse has arisen in human history as a temporal manifestation of the
> inspiration of the Gospel. The question does not deal here with Christianity as a religious
> creed and road to eternal life, but rather with Christianity as leaven in the social and
> political life of nations and as bearer of the temporal hope of mankind… but with
> Christianity as historical energy at work in the world. It is not in the heights of theology, it
> is in the depths of the secular conscience and secular existence that Christianity works in
> this fashion, while sometimes even assuming heretical forms or forms of revolt where it
> seems to be denying itself…. It was not given to believers faithful to Catholic dogma, but
> to rationalists to proclaim in Frances the rights of man and of the citizen, to Puritans to
> strike the last blow at slavery in America, to atheistic Communists to abolish in Russia the
> absolutism of private profit. This last process would have been less vitiated by the force of
> error and would have occasioned fewer catastrophes, had it been performed by
> Christians.[920]

However, we still should be aware that a democratic society characterized by a pluralist outlook

does not mean that Maritain promotes a position of relativism or fanaticism as some authors

think.[921] His solution to errors of relativism and fanaticism involves both the objective order of

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[919] Brooke W. Smith, *Maritain: Antimodern or Ultramodern?,* Elsevier Scientific Publishing, 1976, pp. 60-1.
[920] *CD, pp. 21-22.*
[921] John G. Trapani, Jr., *Truth Matters: Essays in Honor of Maritain,* American Maritain Association, 2004, p.288.

theories and the subjective order of men who hold these theories.[922] He recognizes that in pluralist

societies, a kind of attitude is self-destructive to democracy. It actually causes the replacement of

liberty by forces.

> It is not unusual to meet people who think that not to believe in any truth, or not to adhere firmly to any assertion as unshakeably true in itself, is a primary condition required of democratic citizens in order to be tolerant of one another and to live in peace with one another. May I say that these people are in fact the most intolerant people, for if perchance they were to believe in something as unshakeably true, they would feel compelled, by the same stroke, to impose by force and coercion their own belief on their co-citizens.[923]

He believes that although pluralists, different philosophical outlooks, promote different social and

political ideals, they can cooperate because of "intellectual rigor and justice."[924] "There can be a

kind of cooperation and fellowship, founded on intellectual justice and the philosophical duty of

understanding another's thought in a genuine and fair manner."[925] They have and pursue moral

values and practical doctrines in common, "of which the human man heart becomes capable with

the progress of moral conscience."[926] The pluralist social democracy is not only a manner of

organizing associations, but it serves first and foremost as a moral design to enable citizens to live

with dignity, freedom, and responsibility.

> Men possessing quite different, even opposite metaphysical or religious outlooks, can converge, not by virtue of any identity of doctrine, but by virtue of an analogical similitude in practical principles, toward the same practical conclusions, and can share in the same practical secular faith, provided that they similarly revere, perhaps for quite diverse reasons, truth and intelligence, human dignity, freedom, brotherly love, and the absolute value of moral good.[927]

3. The Huge Gap between the Theoretically Practical and the Practically Practical

In general, we agree with Maritain that a pluralist society has different worldviews and pursues

the moral values in common. We must cooperate within a pluralist, multicultural, democratic

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[922] Concerning this entire discussion, see *UP*, pp. 18 – 23.
[923] *UP*, p. 18.
[924] Ibid., p. 25.
[925] Ibid., pp. 28-9.
[926] *MS,* p.111.
[927] Ibid., p.111.

society, but human dignity, freedom, and peace are not menaced by different outlooks. Maritain understands there is a great tension or a huge gap from the theoretically or speculatively practical to the practically practical[928] in a pluralist society.

> …. But on the level of action there are practical truths toward which viewpoints mutually opposed on the level of speculative truth can converge. That is why… there can be agreement and cooperation in regard to action and purely practical principles, between men who are divided in their deepest convictions.[929]

This could be a reason for the fact that in his essay, "Truth and Human Fellowship," he opens with the proclamation of Madame Roland, the French writer and politician, as she mounted the scaffold, "O Liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name!"[930] This idea we see could be the same with what Stuart Mill recognized, "The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way."[931] How impressive that Stuart Mill and Maritain foresaw so many years ago a vision that is present so prophetically appropriate in our society. Maritain considers there are people, social groups, and states who use Liberty, Truth, human dignity, etc., as cloaks for their abominable acts of violence. These kinds of acts, according to Maritain, are that natural human tendencies of "vicious inclinations which drive from his will to power."[932] They are "rooted in our basic egotism and will to power."[933] They become more horrible when they are justified in the name of religions, of Truth or God, Liberty, and Right Individual to act such as terrorists, tyrants, primitives and perverts, etc., who have not disappeared in our age and who in fact have caused murders unborn and born human beings more than ever in history.

Most people today think that only what can be scientifically proven should be regarded as objective fact, and all other things is subjective opinion. The reality of contemporary Western societies is

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[928] *DK*, pp. 330-35.
[929] *TP*, p. 71
[930] *UP*, p.16.
[931] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty, Utilitarianism and Other Essays,* Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 15.
[932] *UP*, p. 22.
[933] Ibid., p. 21.

that religious beliefs and practices are optional. Morality and religion are relative. "You cannot impose your morality on someone else!" "Christianity is true for me, whereas Islam is truth for someone else." Moral standards and practices are not the same. We can see these issues, perhaps most obviously, in the United States where there has been no tendency toward a resolution of main moral disagreements concerning military interventionism, treatment of illegal immigrants, responsibility for the poor, fetal stem cell research, abortion, homosexuality, and other similarly contested issues. We cannot find any permanent or objective standard for the moral values in our society. This has can lead to strange contradictions. We see, for example, a moral skeptic like J. L. Mackie begins his book *Ethic: Inventing Right and Wrong* with the unskeptical statement that "there is no objective values."[934]

This confusion of moral pluralism with relativism happens to almost all people, either ordinary people or academic moral thinkers. Moral relativism causes confusion within many people about good and evil, and right and wrong, due finally to the fact that it rejects the classical metaphysics which undermines not some particular moral code, but morality as such. Relativism supposes that there is no absolute truth, but truth depends on subjective opinion from person to person, from culture to culture. In other words, truth is relative to what each individual person or culture agrees with. Aristotelian final causes were denied and replaced by a conception of nature as a universal mechanism of efficient causes. To reject that there are any final causes in natural being is obvious also to reject that there is any objective truth of goodness in those beings either. If there are no final causes in natural beings, and then, there is nothing by reference to which it can be judged objectively right or wrong. Human beings, rational beings, are only a part of nature like everything

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[934] J. L. Mackie, *Ethic: Inventing Right and Wrong,* Penguin, 1980, p. 15; David Gauthier, *Morals by Agreement,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986. These are quoted from Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation,* p. 182.

else. The denial of Aristotelian teleology makes our effort of practicing or keeping the moral virtues become unnecessary.[935]

For example, many states in the United State passed the law that homosexuals have a "basic civil right" to marry someone of the same sex. This law confounds good with evil, or rather rejects the proper sense of good by separating it from the universal natural order that makes morality possible. As we have seen, this reduces morality to local or particular moralities.

> Then when a master of oratory, who is ignorant of good and evil, employs his power of persuasion on a community as ignorant as himself, not by extolling a miserable donkey as being really a horse, but by extolling evil as being really good, and when by studying the beliefs of the masses he persuades them to do evil instead of good, what kind of crop do you think his oratory is likely to reap from the seed thus sown?[936]

Maritain thus points out the reason that the great danger of modern pluralist societies, which mistakenly think plurality is relativity, is a weakening of the sense of the Truth. He reminds us that the relationships between theory and practice should pose serious philosophical concerns. Since, on the one hand, citizens of pluralist democratic societies are bewildered by the manner in which the political techniques of advertising, propaganda, and fake news distort the use of the language that the citizens cannot know the authentic truth.[937] They are finally tempted to give up any interest in truth as such. On the other hand, citizens in the present societies become so accustomed to thinking in terms of stimuli and responses, and adaptation to environment, that they do not really grasp any truth from internal adherence. The moral standard is based on emotional reaction in which there is a basic impulse to repay the good or evil that has been done to oneself. What one calls good is that which stimulates in oneself the emotion of approval, whereas what one calls bad

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[935] Edward Feser, *The Last Superstition: A Refutation of the New Atheism,* St Augustine's Press, 2008, pp. 2-5.

[936] Plato, *Phaedrus (The Collected Dialogues),* ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, trans. R. Hackforth, Princeton University Press, 1989, 260c, pp. 505-6.

[937] For examples, as normal persons, we really do not know what really happened at the U. S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. We have received many kinds of information from social media, from our own friends, family members and even some of our colleagues. It is the same event, but each channel has given us a different direction.

is that which stimulates the emotion of disapproval. Thus, there are differences and disagreements of the moral standard that are found to vary from time to time, place to place, as well as culture to culture. The emotions of approval or disapproval are really conditioned and depended on the emotions held at the time and places in which the one has been living.[938] There is no rational justification for any act that an individual does. All human values are personal or particular and morality is contingent, constructed, and subjective. All are relative. They become equally arbitrary and irrational.[939] One author has summarized this movement of relative morality as follows:

> It all depends on where you are,
> It all depends on when you are,
> It all depends on what you feel,
> It all depends on how you feel,
> It all depends on how you're raised,
> It all depends on what is praised,
> What's right today is wrong tomorrow,
> Joy in France, in England sorrow.
> It all depends on point of view,
> Australia or Timbuctoo,
> In Rome do as the Romans do.
> If tastes just happen to agree,
> Then you have morality.
> But where there are conflicting trends,
> It all depends, it all depends….[940]

Further, according to Emile Durkheim, the emotions of approval or disapproval which arouse good or bad conduct are determined by the opinion of society as a unit rather than by the individuals of society. He suggests that the role of society is persuasive in forming the individual's moral standards.[941] Maritain recognizes great mistakes from modern philosophies those who support for moral relativism. The moral values are relative in maintaining that moral judgments can be exactly

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[938] Edward Westermarck, *Ethical Relativity,* Routledge, reprinted 2000, pp. 62 – 113.
[939] Seeing Luther J. Binkley, *Conflict of Ideals: Changing Values in Western Society,* Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969, pp. 2-4.
[940] Quoted in Abraham Edel, *Ethical Judgment: The Use of Science in Ethics,* NY: The Free Press, 1955, p. 16.
[941] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* trans. Karen E. Fields, The Free Press, 1995, pp. 208 – 216.

illustrated as irrational manifestations of social forces. Against them, and the erosion of community that would result, Maritain shouts out that "nothing is more immediately necessary for our times than a sound political philosophy."[942] The philosophers' task, in other words, should be to help us escape from moral relativism and remind the pluralist society of the absolute character of Truth and a sound political philosophy.[943]

Maritain's solution to this danger of modern pluralist societies and relativism lies at how we deal with the tension between tolerance and truth, both of which are of course good elements to develop in a society. On the one hand, the denial of truth is seen as a goal of inquiry in the name of toleration, and this destroys the basis for mutual cooperation. On the other hand, "truth admits no compromise," but it is imperative that we cooperate for the sake of the common good.[944] If truth prevents us from cooperation, then the quest for truth becomes meaningless. How can it be for a pluralist society to balance two essentials while they are seemingly contradictory? How can citizens of a pluralist society sustain a tolerance and respect for diverse ideas of their different constituents of a body politic and at the same time maintain the foundational truths of human nature and of a healthy democracy?

4. Right Thinking as Solution for the Tension between Tolerance and Truth

Maritain suggests we should have "right thinking" about both the objective order of ideas that are either false or true when considered in themselves and the subjective order of persons who hold these ideas. "Right thinking" about the subjective order of persons and the objective order of ideas is very important for solving the tension between tolerance and truth in the pluralist and democratic societies. On the one hand, when we think rightly in the objective order of ideas, we can see that

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[942] *UP*, p. 13.
[943] Ibid., pp. 8-9.
[944] Ibid., p. 25.

error ought to be abolished and truth ought to dominate. Without truth, we would have nothing to live or to die for. On the other hand, the right thinking in the subjective order of persons must be clearly understood and firmly verified all the precious sanctity of human dignity, life regardless of the philosophical ideas and the political socialization involved in the given situation. We must protect the truth of those foundational values of a healthy democracy, and at the same time we must protect the essential inherent dignity of all human persons and their inalienable, universal human rights.[945] This balance is very difficult but necessary. Maritain thus offers a solution and a general guideline to live in a pluralist society.

> There is a genuine tolerance and human friendship only when a man is firmly and absolutely convinced of a truth, or of what he holds to be a truth, and when he at the same time recognizes the right of those who deny this truth to exist… not because they seek the truth in their own way, because he respects in them human nature and human dignity.[946]

How can we, Christians, live out Maritain's ideas: thinking rightly about the subjective order of persons and the objective order of ideas in the pluralist society?

We need firstly to prove the objectivity of truth and disprove subjectivism, since it is supposed that an intense passion for truth, especially religious truth, is often concerned as a key source of intolerance and civil conflict in pluralistic societies. The whole issue of pluralistic societies is that there are different perspectives on truth, since the foundations of a society of free men are essentially moral on which democracy presupposes common consent. "Philosophy, especially moral and political philosophy, can perform its normal function in our modern society, especially as regards the need of democratic society for a genuine rational establishment of its common basic tenets."[947] We, as moderns, have lost both the solid objectivity of the universals, especially Truth, and of the concrete world. In response to this, Maritain insists "Nothing is superior to truth"[948] and

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[945] John G. Trapani, Jr., *Truth Matters: Essays in Honor of Maritain,* American Maritain Association, 2004, p. 305-7.
[946] *UP*, p. 24.
[947] Ibid., p. 13.
[948] *TP*, p. 71.

"It is impossible for a Christian to be a relativist."[949] Thus, to deal with the irreconcilable struggle of the pluralist societies, we need to begin and recover "what we need is not truths that serve us but a truth we may serve. For that truth of the food of the spirit." [950]

IV. Recovering or Finding The truth

1. Truth of Subjectivism and Relativism

Truth that is simply understood in the most common sense is "the property of being in accord with fact or reality." The most difficult obstacle to finding truth in our society is so many different points of view or relativism when it comes to those most important questions of faith, morals, and life's meaning. Thus, we cannot deny that one of the main reasons for the modern crisis of philosophical perspectives is because there are so many points of views of truth – relativism.

For pragmatists, "Truth is what works." Since "what works" is subjective and relative, the pragmatic theory of truth is a kind of subjectivism and relativism.

For empiricists, "Truth is what we can sense." If truth is what one can sense, it is determined by one's subjective experience, so truth is subjective and relative.

For rationalists, "Truth is what can be proved by reason." However, in reality, many truths cannot be proved, and we cannot prove that truth is only what can be proved.

For people follow the coherence theory of truth, "Truth is not a relationship of correspondence between an idea and its external object, but the coherence among a set of ideas." This theory of truth contradicts itself. The coherence theory is incoherent.

For emotivists, "Truth is what I feel." If truth identifies with feeling, many feelings are false, and many truths are not felt emotionally, truth of emotivists are subjective and relative.[951]

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[949] Ibid., p. 89.
[950] *DK*, p. 4.
[951] I summarize from Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics,* IVP Academic, 1994, pp. 362-6.

We have gotten lost in the middle of a tropical forest by truth's different definitions. Since we understand that all things come from authentic truth, they never conflict and disagree.

> Little by little, the hierarchy of spiritual, intellectual, scientific values were revealed to us, and we began to understand that they could not be inimical to each other. In varying degrees all participate in the mystery in which all science finally ends, all participate in the light from whence descends all knowledge. And we see clearly that the truth of one could not be the enemy of the truth of the others.[952]

Before understanding "what we need is not truths that serve us but a truth we may serve. For that truth of the food of the spirit," it is necessary to define the term: truth, in order to know exactly what we are discussing about and to be sure that we are not, at the beginning, with a misunderstanding of the meaning of the term truth. The definition we will offer below, citing Maritain, is a commonsensical one. This definition is what most people during the human history in all times and places meant by truth.

> The great truths without which man's moral life is impossible – for example, knowledge of God's existence, the freedom of the will, etc. – belong to this domain of common sense, as consequences immediately deducible (proximate conclusions) from primary data apprehended by observation and first principles apprehended by the intellect. All men, unless spoiled by a faulty education or by some intellectual vice, possess a natural certainty of these truths. But those whose understanding has never been cultivated are not able to give any account or at least any satisfactory account of their convictions; that is to say, they cannot explain why they possess them.
> These certainties of common sense, conclusions of an implicit reasoning, are as well founded as the certainties of science. But their possessor has no knowledge, or an imperfect knowledge, of the grounds on which he bases them. They are therefore imperfect not in their value as truth but in the mode or condition under which they exist in the mind.[953]

2. Definition of Truth

Aristotle, the master of common sense in philosophy, says in his *Metaphysics:* "For to say that what is is not or that what is not is, is false, but to say that what is is and what is not is not, is true, so that the one who says that something is or is not is either right or wrong."[954] Understanding in the simplest way, truth means the correspondence of what we know or say to what is. Truth simply

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[952] Raissa, *We have Been Friends Together,* p. 149.
[953] *IP*, pp. 90-1.
[954] Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* 1011b26-28.

means "what I think is what is," or in the same way, "saying it like it is."[955] Thus, truth is not an attitude. Truth is not how we know about a thing, but it is what we know.

Aquinas gives as the classic definition of truth: "Truth is the conformity of the mind with being, according as it says that what is, is, and that what is not, is not."[956] The conformity is constituted between intellect and thing (*adaequatio rei et intellectus*),[957] between the being possessed by the thing and the being affirmed by the mind. When the act of our human mind agrees with the way things are in existence, then the mind is true. Aquinas recognizes a dynamic unity between the mind and an object of knowledge, but it does this without implying that a thing ceases to be in case the absence of a mind does not know it. Maritain describes this well in *The Degrees of Knowledge:*

> The scholastics said that the relation between the soul that knows, and the thing known is a real relation (because it puts something new in the soul) but [this] ... relation of reason ... does not in any way affect or change the thing known. The thing and the mind are not two things in the act of knowing ... [they] are not only joined, but they are also strictly one.[958]

When we try to understand the classical definition of truth, we do not become the slaves of the principles of the past, but rather find the best way for the most rationally defensible moral values which can help us in making our society a more humane one in which to live. We have just learned that, according to Aristotle and Thomists, truth is a dynamic unity between the mind and thing, conformity between intellect and thing. Thus, if truth "that is not measured by the mystery of what is, but by the state of positive science at such and such an instant," is wrong, it is just relative truth. If truth is only discovered by the empirical, natural and social sciences, just based on the phenomenon, it may be used in order to solve human problems, can help to further the quality of human life, but it is not universal and absolute truth. This concept of truth may be supported and leads to a universal view where the world exists for us to achieve what we wish. It can be accepted

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[955] *DK*, p.89.
[956] Aquinas, *Cont. Gent.,* I, 59; cf. *In Metaphysics*, IV, 1.8, n.651.
[957] *DK*, p. 92.
[958] Ibid., p. 92.

by the worldview, but it still originates from human persons' subjectivism. Human persons become the source of their own solutions to the problems which they are facing in regardless of whether these problems are natural or not. This concept of truth is what Maritain calls as "truths that serve us."[959]

3. A Truth We May Serve

The meaning of truth that Maritain stands for is not about consensus. Truths remain the same while expressing themselves differently according to each historical situation and culture. Truth, as truth, is universal and unavoidable. The nature of intelligence has not changed. However, in modern philosophy, the vice is nominalism, which depends on the senses and denies what has to deal with natures and abstraction, though these are at the heart of things. Truth, which concerns "what is," is not "a set of readymade formulas to be passively recorded, so as to have the mind closed and enclosed by them."[960]

As regards modern philosophy and its defining attitude, Maritain understands clearly that metaphysics does not serve any utility for experimental science. But against this, he insists that this nothing is more profitable than this uselessness. Maritain's solution to the problem of finding truth or consensus lies in what he calls "a set of *practical conclusions* or of *practical points of convergence…* these practical conclusions in reason."[961] He also understands that changes in the regime of human life need at once both internal and external, which are accomplished both in the hearts of men and in the structures of the body politic. These affect to each other, though by different titles, the social and visible domain and the spiritual, moral, and invisible one.[962] If "truths that serve us" has a supreme utility and supplies the goal of knowledge, it helps and supports our

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[959] John G. Trapani, Jr., *Truth Matters: Essays in Honor of Maritain,* American Maritain Association, 2004, p. 303.
[960] *EC*, p. 12.
[961] *MS*, p. 111.
[962] *IH*, p. 213.

discovery of the world. However, as Arthur E. Holmes said, assuming a great deal that we have seen Aquinas and in turn Maritain argue, "*All Truth Is God's Truth,*"[963] which is to say that the whole world is also known as ultimately dependent on the providence of Divine Truth or Creator who is the source of every truth. This is the truth that Maritain calls as "a truth we may serve." "Truths that serve us" are seen in objectification of the world whereas "a truth we may serve" is seen as the demonstration of the goodness of God's creation. "A truth we may serve" suggests an attitude of respect and understanding toward the world and human communities. This is why Maritain enthusiastically promotes democratic society, with its pluralism, but also vigorously argues that democracy depends on society's acceptance of truths about God and the human being, so that its truth must be "a truth we may serve," not "truths that serve us." Human beings do not need truth to serve them, but instead need the truth that they can serve. These two perspectives on Truth – "truths that serve us" and "a truth we may serve" – may lead us to opposite ends. If "truths that serve us" may lead us to say, "I did it my own way," "it is true for you but not for me," by contrast, "a truth we may serve" has to lead us to say "Thy will be done." C.S. Lewis expresses a similar thought,

> There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, in the end, "Thy will be done." All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell.[964]

"Truths that serve us" expresses exactly the attitude of philosophies at the heart of our modern civilization. The formula extols doing over being, action over contemplation, problems over mysteries, analysis over intuition, conquering over nurturing. Our civilization is arrogant in its technology. However, more deeply, it is the spiritual origin of its technology in which originated from a new philosophy: "Man's conquest of nature."

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[963] It is the title of his book, published by IVP Books, 1977.
[964] C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce,* Harper Collins, 1973, p. 75.

> There is something which unites magic and applied science while separating both from the 'wisdom' of earlier ages. For the wise men of old the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline, and virtue. For magic and applied science alike the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men: the solution is a technique.[965]

This new theoretical philosophy means that objective reality is only nature, that nature is all there is, and then we, human beings, can conquer it. This new philosophy is sometimes therefore called Naturalism. It reduces objective reality to matter, space, time, and motion. It supposes that if human beings can hopefully control nature, they never can control their own control. If humans can conquer everything except themselves, the result is that each individual has his or her own power.[966] Thus, it happens that if a moral code or rule does not fit one's view, it is presumed simply that one can make his or her own decisions as to the best course of conduct for oneself. In this view, moral commands are not derived from some source outside the self. Values are only relative to each individual. There are no absolutes, and then, a value is no less authentic, for its being relative. Moral values become relative that "truths that serve us."

Maritain states, "*Unless one loves the truth, one is not a man*. And to love the truth is to love it above everything, because we know that Truth is God Himself."[967] What perspective on truth do we choose to live for between "truth that serve us" and "a truth we may serve" in pluralist society nowadays?

V. A New Christendom Needs the Law of the Gospel

We understood that, according to Maritain, "truths that serve us" would lead us to position in which human persons are proud of their accomplishments and power, while "a truth we may serve" would lead us to glorify and praise the Almighty God and His majesty of all creation. The former produces "useful" truths, while the latter reveals great paradox, or what Maritain dares to call "useless"

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[965] C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man,* Harper Collins, 1974, p. 77.
[966] Peter Kreeft, *Back to Virtue,* Ignatius, 1992, pp. 20-6.
[967] *TP*, p. 85.

truth.[968] Obviously, we will not choose "truth that serve us," since this does not "recognize anything as definitive and whose ultimate goal consists solely of one's own ego and desires."[969] If we have a passion for truth, we would choose "a truth we may serve" that as Maritain, our first concern is, and must be, truth, that is, the conformity of the mind to reality. All other things – the acquisition of knowledge, the control of nature, and practical success – are secondary. Only when we, Christians, want to pursue "a truth we may serve," can we "show the world how human action may be reconciled with and permeated by an ideal which is more real than reality, and why it is possible and right to die for liberty."[970]

1. Christians Are as Leaven within Any Kind of a Pluralist Society

According to Maritain, pluralist society has too often sought something good – "truths that serve us" – but failed to recognize the greater importance of "a truth we may serve." The truth of the modern society is whatever serves the interest of the State, and the problems of the modern society lie not so much in what it affirms, anthropocentric humanism, as in its underlying refusal admit the descent of the spiritual into the domain of the temporal. It turns away from religion as faith in God and looks for the truth rather than the truth itself. The great thread running through modern societies is a "weakening of the sense of Truth."[971] In facing a changing world and different structures of society, Maritain understood that throughout history, Christianity or the Church[972]

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[968] John G. Trapani, Jr., *Truth Matters: Essays in Honor of Maritain,* American Maritain Association, 2004, pp. 303-4.
[969] Chris Stefanick, "Foreword," *Absolute Relativism,* Catholic Answers Press, 2011.
[970] *EC*, p. 117.
[971] Maritain, "Science, Philosophy, and Faith," *Science, Philosophy, and Religion: a Symposium,* NY, 1941, p. 182.
[972] Maritain explains that the "Christianity," like the word "Church," has a religious and spiritual meaning. It designates a supernatural faith and supernatural life. By the words "Christian world," he means something temporal and terrestrial, something that relates to the order not of religion itself, but of civilization and culture. "Christendom" designates a certain temporal common regime whose structures bear, in highly varying ways, the imprint of the Christian conception of life. There is but one integral religious truth; there is but one Catholic Church; there can be Christian civilizations, diverse Christendoms (Seeing IH, pp. 41-42 and *On Philosophy of History,* p. 132).

should be able to become "compatible with all forms of legitimate government"[973] though it must

also defy the political perils of left and right.

> The Church makes her way amidst dangers springing from the most opposite quarters to imperil the souls of men, striking at one time to one side, at another to another. Anyone with his eyes fixed on the present thinks that she is changing direction every time; it is the danger which changes direction, the Church marches straight on. She repudiates none, rescinds none, renounces none of her decisions…. Liberalism still stands condemned, Americanism, Socialism, Sillonism, Modernism still stands condemned. The Church has always remained faithful both to "doctrinal absolutism" and to "evangelical daring": she has championed tradition where needed," "revolution where needed."[974]

Christianity is neither rightist nor leftist, but simply true. It does not follow any particular social

or political system. It is not "enslaved to any temporal regime."[975] Maritain bases himself on

biblical authority by which St. Paul "came to evangelize, and to preach the Kingdom of God, not

to reform temporal society."[976]

> Neither Christianity nor the Church have a mission to make men happy, their business is to tell them the truth – not to bring about justice and freedom in the political society, but to give mankind salvation and eternal life. No doubt this lays upon them the additional task of quickening the energies of justice and love in the depths of temporal existence and thus making that existence more worthy of man.[977]

During its history, Christianity has proven that "political and social changes have no terrors for

her,"[978] but Christians are invited to have the duty to respect the political authority, and they also

must actively seek to realize the values of God's Words in this world. There is no conflict between

the justice of God's Kingdom and true justice in this world. Christians must always keep in mind

the balance between the temporal word and the eternal world. They are entirely committed to both

the temporal progress of the world as an ultimate end in time and the spiritual progress of the world

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[973] *TC*, p. 60.
[974] Maritain, *The Things That Are Not Caesar's,* p. 82.
[975] *RR*, p. 170.
[976] Ibid., p. 216.
[977] Ibid., p. 116.
[978] *FMW,* p. 188.

as the ultimate end beyond time.[979] There will be no rest for the Christians so long as misery and slavery and injustice exist in the lives of men.[980]

Maritain offers and seeks an ideal Christian society. He views Christendom as a cultural and temporal radiation of Christianity, as expressed in many diverse temporal forms.[981] Any Christian community of the ideal Christian society or the integral Humanism would be "intrinsically vivified and impregnated by Christianity."[982] Christian virtues will permeate the local communities and animate their existences. A vitally Christian renewal must be "a work of sanctify, or it will be nothing: a sanctify, that is, turned toward the temporal, the secular, the profane…. If a new Christendom arises in history, it will be the work of such a kind of sanctity."[983] Virtuous life of Christians will improve and transform both the material and spiritual progresses.

> The absolutely ultimate goal is not to transform terrestrial life, but to have souls enter eternal life and finally the vision of God; and the "horizontal" effort itself, directed to transforming the world, essentially needs, in the depths of human history, the "vertical" effort directed to expanding the realm of grace in souls; for both efforts are, in the long run, necessary to one another; but the most necessary is the vertical one.[984]

Maritain holds that on the one hand, if Christians truly lived their faith, they would struggle for freedom and social justice against "any kind of totalitarian oppression." On the other hand, they never cease to "permeate every political camp whatsoever with the values of the Gospel."[985] At the same time, if Christians do not truly live their faith, they will be "towed like slaves in the wake

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[979] Maritain sometimes understands the spiritual progress of the world in terms of a "vertical movement of history." The spiritual progress is man's movement toward eternal life. However, according to theological view, the eternal life is "present and actually begun here below." This is known by the expression: "already begun but not yet completed." The material progress of the world, a progress is sometimes used the "horizontal movement of history." It is in linear fashion throughout history toward the fulfillment of human nature and human beings "conquer over nature." The proper end of the horizontal movement is the improvement of human being's condition on earth. Maritain's view about the horizontal movement of history is based on Genesis in which God ordered human being: "Replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over every living thing that exists on the earth" (See Brooke W. Smith, *Maritain: Antimodern or Ultramodern?,* pp. 53-5).

[980] Raissa Maritain, *Notes on the Lord's Prayers,* Ed. Maritain, New York: P. J. Kennedy & Sons, 1964, p. 52.

[981] *IH,* p. 90.

[982] Ibid., p. 168.

[983] Ibid., p. 122.

[984] *PH,* pp. 154-55

[985] *RT,* pp. 180-1.

of history."[986] Maritain urges Christians would bring their Christian virtues into the temporal society where significant decisions about public policy are happening. He encourages Christians to bring and apply the precepts of Christ to individual circumstances.[987] He argues that philosophers need to give practical advice for reaching their perspectives. He invites Christians to consider how their Christendom might come into existence. He expects incremental success of his goals by political action groups.[988] Thus, for Maritain, Christians should participate in political activities since the modern state is controlled by "irremediable contradictions and evils."[989] The duty and responsibility of Christians are to develop a renewed Christian culture in order to defend and rehabilitate what are the truths of the Christian Gospel. Christians must remind themselves that their faith can help in the reformation of the temporal society, since no society can exist without a basic common faith.

> Finally, it is true, and a Christian cannot fail to think it is true, that God governs history, that, whatever the obstacles, he pursues in history certain designs and that thus in time and through time a divine work and divine preparations are achieved, it would be to go against God himself and to wrestle with the supreme government of history to claim to immobilize in a past form, in a univocal form, the ideal of a culture worthy to be the end of our action.[990]

2. The Supreme Force of Charity

Maritain suggests that in our time that the pluralist structure of the body politic includes five characters or principles.

The first is unity.

The second is utilizing the temporal community as an instrument to achieve eternal life.

The third is employing temporal means for attaining spiritual ends.

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[986] *FMW*, p. 138.
[987] *IH,* p. 263.
[988] Ibid., p. 262.
[989] Ibid., p. 256.
[990] Ibid., pp. 140-1.

The fourth is recognized at the base of the hierarchy of social functions and the relations of authority: a legitimate diversity of "social races."

The last is brotherly love.[991]

In keeping with the fundamental characteristics of the pluralist society, the Christian community will be "a case of a "mixed regime" principally democratic."[992] Freedom of association will produce many different political parties, a representative assembly and an independent executive.[993] Unity in the pluralistic city will be minimal and accept a civil tolerance which imposes on the State respect for the individual's conscience.[994] The Christian political community must agree and recognize the person's autonomy and right to profession of pluralist religious views.[995] The ideal would be achieved if Christian virtues animate a city guided by Christian laity.[996] The collaboration of state and church, of the temporal and spiritual realms will follow from the moral leadership of lay Christians involved in political activities.[997] If the lay Christians act within the political regime as Christians, there are no problems with separation of church and state. Maritain hopes that with lay Christians becoming involved in the political regime a future world will become ablaze with Christ's love in the ever-widening outreaches of a new Christendom.[998] The type of political authority proposed would be paternal, and the community would resemble as an extension of the family. The characteristic of a new Christendom will be a brotherly community. "Fraternal love appears as an essential dynamic principle in our new

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991 Ibid., pp. 163 – 207.
992 Ibid., p. 171.
993 Ibid., p. 171.
994 Ibid., p. 172.
995 Ibid., p. 166.
996 Ibid., p. 115.
997 *FMW,* p. 115.
998 *IH,* pp. 150, 152, 166.

Christendom. It is because this Christendom would be truly oriented in its entirely toward a socio-temporal realization of Gospel truths."[999]

According to Maritain, the primacy of fraternal love is the foundation of the future course and direction of history in a time of extreme crisis. "Only in truth does charity shine forth, only in truth can charity be authentically lived …. Without truth, charity degenerates into sentimentality. Love becomes an empty shell, to be filled in an arbitrary way. In a culture without truth, this is the fatal risk facing love."[1000]

The law of love or charity, in Christianity's view, has the spiritual power to transform human history and society. He therefore holds that love is the "supreme virtue," which is the "rightfully entitled to the highest place in our scale of virtues."[1001] For love alone can essentially transform the temporal order of history. The quality of love is "not just any kind of love," but it "presupposes sanctifying grace." Supernatural love does not love qualities, obviously not quantities, but persons. Love of human beings is not essentially related to their ideas. Love and intellect are two different orders and realms. "Love does not regard ideas… love regards existing persons."[1002] A true love does not treat human beings as a means to love any other beings, even God, but to love one is to love him or her as end, because one is loved in and for oneself, whatever one's qualities or ideas. "Love does not go out to essences nor to qualities nor to ideas, but to persons; and it is the mystery of persons and of the divine presence within them which is here in play. This fellowship, then, is not a fellowship of beliefs, but the fellowship of men who believe."[1003] In this way, resting on deep

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[999] Ibid., p. 204.
[1000] Chris Stefannick, *Absolute Relativism: The New Dictatorship and What to do about it*, Catholic Answers Press, San Diego, 2011, p.11.
[1001] *FMW,* p. 60.
[1002] *EC*, p. 96.
[1003] *RR,* pp. 122-3.

Christian principles, basic natural rights, beginning with the right to be loved for one's own sake, are predicated universally of all human beings.

Maritain agrees with the long tradition that associates progress to perfection of this kind of love with spiritual contemplation of divine love. Contemplation is the instruments through which love transforms society and history. Since contemplation originates from love, it "passes into action by virtue of the very generosity and abundance of love."[1004] It is the inner act of love through which it "overflows from the realm of the spiritual to the temporal,"[1005] and transform all dimensions of history. "The drama of history is like a visible projection of that which is happening within ourselves."[1006]

In Maritain's view, the progress of the temporal society depends on a profound revolution, a "revolution far more radical than any envisaged by dialectical materialism: for it must begin in the heart, and it must change the very principles of our civilization,"[1007] since there is no great change without "a true spiritual revolution" in the "hearts of men."[1008] A renovation of the social and economic order can be, because it must be inspired by charity in some way that is "infinitely above the world and temporal history."[1009] If one desires "to change the face of the earth without first changing one's own heart… is to condemn oneself to a work primarily destructive."[1010] Love or charity is the unifying element that Christians are compelled to work toward the betterment of the pluralist society. In our pluralist society, there exists so much evil, hatred, discord, and war…, so the world needs love or charity even more than it needs "breads." Only charity can save and heal this world from the present crisis. "The renewal of civilization that we hope for, the age of integral

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[1004] Maritain, "Confession of Faith," *This is My Philosophy,* p. 254.
[1005] *RR,* p. 113.
[1006] Maritain, *Antimoderne*, p. 55.
[1007] Maritain, *Theonas: Conversations of a Sage,* p. 139.
[1008] Maritain, "Christianity and the War," *The Dublin Review,* CCVIII (January – February – March 1942), p. 17.
[1009] *TC,* p. 32.
[1010] Maritain, "A Note on the Bourgeois World," *The Commonweal,* XVIII, June 2, 1933, p. 120.

humanism, the time when science and wisdom are to be reconciled, the advent of a fraternal commonwealth and of true human emancipation – all this we do not await on the morrow."[1011]

3. Christians not only Live out the Natural Law, but further the New Commandment

We have just understood, with Maritain, that the spiritual power of charity is able to transform the temporal society. Above all other elements to heal the present crisis of our pluralist society, Christians need to demonstrate fraternal charity in the personal context of relations from each the individual to each the individual. Charity is Christian's highest vocation, and that Christians will be judged according to his or her fulfillment of this great calling. There is nothing more dangerous than to leave charity without giving some actions in the temporal realm. The world is changed by our example, not by our opinion. Western civilization was not won by the sword but through preaching and completing charitable works. In fact, Christianity spread most quickly when it was on the receiving end of the sword – which it has been countless times and still is today in many countries of Asia. In treating other persons as an end, it is called true or personalistic love that wills the good for them. This kind of love cannot remain at the level of a feeling of goodwill but must manifest itself in action. Charity, obviously, must blossom from good intentions into good actions. Charity not only necessitates to be benevolent, but it also, at times, requires action itself.[1012]

According to Maritain, the Western society will not have lasting peace until there is some restoration in the public good infusing Christian truths into the realms. In the fraternal dialogue of

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[1011] *RR,* p. 204.
[1012] Aquinas affirms that "in the love of friendship, the lover is in the beloved, inasmuch as he reckons what is good or evil to his friend, as being so to himself; and his friend's will as his own, so that it seems as though he felt the good or suffered the evil in the person of his friend…. Consequently in so far as he reckons what affects his friend as affecting himself, the lover seems to be in the beloved, as though he were become one with him: but in so far as, on the other hand, he wills and acts for his friend's sake as for his own sake, looking on his friend as identified with himself, thus the beloved is in the lover" (*ST*, I-II, 28, 2).

modern society, truth and charity must go hand in hand: charity for persons, truth for ideas. Only

when human beings are equipped with a passion for truth, can they "show the world how human

action may be reconciled with and permeated by an ideal which is more real than reality, and why

it is possible and right to die for liberty."[1013] The temporal missions of Christians are "to put

contemplation on the roads of the world,"[1014] and they are called to fulfill them.

> It is high time for Christians to bring things back to truth, reintegrating in the fullness of their original source those hopes for justice and those nostalgias for communion on which the world's sorrow feeds and which are themselves misdirected, thus awaking a cultural and temporal force of Christian inspiration able to act on history and to be a support to men.[1015]

The best way for Christians to change the temporal society is "not to barricade oneself behind the

walls of a fortress, but to go out into the highways to conquer through love and the gift of

oneself."[1016] Here, Maritain applies the ideas of the great mystic, St. John of the Cross, to the

present society: "By love shall you be judged."[1017] The society needs to be healed by the fraternal

actions of Christians, by which "every decision made in respect to the needs and the wounds of

any man on the road."[1018] Maritain reminds Christians that they need balance between social action

and solitude. Neither of them is alone sufficient.

> The danger of seeking sanctity only in the desert, and the danger of forgetting the necessity of the desert for sanctity; the danger of shutting up solely in the cloister of the interior life and of private virtues the heroism which it ought to dispense to the world, and the danger of conceiving this heroism, when it spills over to social life and endeavors to transform it, in the fashion of its materialist adversaries and according to a type wholly exterior, which is to pervert and dissipate it.

Seeing "two opposite dangers" that Christians are able to face, the Second Vatican Council in its

"Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world," *Gaudium et Spes,* invites "The joys

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[1013] *EC*, p. 115.
[1014] Maritain, *Liturgy and Contemplation,* trans. Joseph W. Evans, NY, 1960, pp. 74-5.
[1015] *IH,* p. 6.
[1016] *RR,* p. 218.
[1017] Maritain, "A Note on the Bourgeois World," *The Commonweal* 18, 1933, p. 120.
[1018] *AG*, p. 47.

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."[1019]

It is in fraternal charity of the New Law, the law of the Gospel, is fulfilled. "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."[1020] St. Augustine explains that the New Law includes and is beyond the Old Law – the natural law. "God teaches him two chief commandments, the love of God and the love of neighbor…. Right order here means, first, that he harm no one, and second, that he help whomever he can."[1021] The end of all law is to make human beings righteous and virtuous, and both the natural law and the law of the Gospel "have the same end, namely, man's subjection to God," but "the New Law is law of perfection, since it is the law of charity… that it is the bond of perfection."[1022]

In the view of natural law or the Old Testament it is "good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided," so each of us, we, are subjects of pursuing good and avoiding evil. "Although the natural law contained precepts of charity… is spread abroad in our hearts,"[1023] it still needs to be perfected in the New Law by supplying that which was lacking in the Old Law. If the natural law is that "good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided," it was the justification of human beings. The Law of the Gospel "fulfills the natural law by justifying human beings through the power of Christ's Passion."[1024] The law of the Gospel, which is the Law of love, is that "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this,

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[1019] *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 1.
[1020] *John* 15, 12-13.
[1021] St. Augustine, *The City of God*, Book XIX, chapter. 14, Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1960, p.460.
[1022] *ST, II-I*, 107, 1.
[1023] Ibid.*, II-I*, 107, 1, reply 2.
[1024] Ibid.*, II-I*, 107, 2.

to lay down one's life for one's friends." Jesus Christ has become and is the subject for followers or Christians to imitate and to mold their actions of charity. Love one another as Jesus has loved each of us, that is, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has highlighted three principal contributions which the works of Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Maritain bring to the discussion of human persons' relationship to society as a whole. The first is a focus on human dignity. Maritain's works are efforts to distinguish in order to unite. Maritain contributes "the personalism rooted in the doctrine of St. Thomas and to separate… a social philosophy centered in the dignity of the human person from every social philosophy centered in the primacy of the individual and the private good. Thomistic personalism stresses the metaphysical distinction between individuality and personality."[1025] His contemporary readers have seen Maritain most often as a philosopher who has attempted to apply his Catholic faith to the most controversial social and political crises of his period. We think that Maritain succeeds the framework of the Thomist system of interpreting reality. He applies the Aristotelian-Thomist worldview to problems that are essentially of the present society, not in order to simply reinstate that worldview, but to solve those problems.

Maritain acknowledges the dynamism of nature itself as a creation of God and realizes "the sense of the ontological mystery of the material world."[1026] He institutes the framework on which the Thomist responses to particular temporal issues is to be based. His works have had its most widespread influence in the field of social and political philosophy. His concept of the nature of human being is the first principle of his sociopolitical doctrine. "Man is at once a natural and a supernatural being,"[1027] and the creature (human being) must be "truly respected in its connection with God and because receiving everything from Him; [this is a matter of defending] humanism,

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[1025] *MS,* p. 13.
[1026] *PN*, 152.
[1027] *IP,* p. 10.

but theocentric humanism, rooted where man has his roots, integral humanism, humanism of the Incarnation."[1028]

Maritain makes his most significant achievements in the fields of political and social philosophy. The basis for speculative philosophy, which he finds in the Aristotelian-Thomist metaphysics, proved fruitful not only in politics, but in theology, history, education, and even science. One of the most valuable contributions Maritain contributes to modern culture is his vision of the fundamental unity of all the fields of knowledge. This contribution is of great value for contemporary students and philosophers because shows that all people, even while belonging to different fields, can approach the same basic mystery of life in their own ways.

Maritain presents the theme of the human person as a whole in the context of a discussion on human liberty. The deepest reason is that liberty which is commonly understood only in terms of free choice is a result of the metaphysical structure of a human person. The human person's freedom of choice relates to his or her ability to choose or to fail to choose. Our ability to choose is a metaphysical given, a part of human rational nature. To realize our capacity of choice is to act in the moral realm according to what a person already is in the metaphysical realm. A human person is a whole both in his or her moral action and in his or her ontological structure. The person is a whole, and this wholeness is the foundation of human dignity. Human dignity consists in both the ability to act by oneself and the ability to act intelligently and freely.

The second contribution from Maritain that we have emphasized is his contribution to renewed attention to the importance of the common good. The human dignity of each person is perfected by the common good. We cannot live a virtuous life in isolation, and the good which society pursues is the common good of all. "The danger of seeking sanctity only in the desert, and the

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[1028] *IH*, p. 72.

danger of forgetting the necessity of the desert for sanctity; the danger of shutting up solely in the cloister of the interior life and of private virtues."[1029] The problem of the common good needs to be solved in every period and every society, because it is a fact that political discourse usually opposes the good of the political community to that of each of its members.

> The Nineteenth Century experienced the errors of individualism. We have witnessed the development of a totalitarian or exclusively communal conception of society which took place by way of reaction… a simultaneous reaction against both totalitarian and individualistic errors… be opposed to both the idea of the totalitarian state and that of the sovereignty of the individual.[1030]

Maritain contends that the fundamental problems of a society never change but instead just appear in different modes, so we must apply ourselves to addressing problems of our society in new ways "without detriment to fixity of principles."[1031] He also believes that Thomism is "relevant to every epoch,"[1032] thus proposing traditional answers to modern problems. The task of the modern Thomist is to rethink the problems of modern society according to the mode of Thomas Aquinas. "We must disengage the formal principles of a truly comprehensive answer and describe the precise hierarchies of value which it implies."[1033]

For Thomas Aquinas, the fact that every human being is a creature of God implies that he or she is a member of a community which transcends the political community. "The human person is ordained directly to God as to its absolute ultimate end. Its direct ordination to God transcends every created common good."[1034] Maritain explains that political communities exist so that human beings can live in harmony with others. The role of political leaders is to serve the common good and to understand that the common good has primacy over private good of its own members.

[1029] Ibid., pp. 121-2.
[1030] *MS*, p. 12.
[1031] *PM*, p. 13.
[1032] Ibid., pp.19-20
[1033] *MS*, p. 12.
[1034] Ibid., p. 15.

Society does not exist for itself and also not only for the private good of any particular member, but for the good of the whole society and of each of its members. The common good includes

> the sum or sociological integration of all the civic conscience, political virtues and sense of right and liberty, of all the activity, material prosperity and spiritual riches, of unconsciously operative hereditary wisdom, of moral rectitude, justice, friendship, happiness, virtue and heroism in the individual lives of its members.[1035]

Maritain's third contribution to modern philosophy lies in his focus on the differences between a Christian common good and society. In his view, the true philosophy of the rights of the human person is based on the idea of natural law. He reminds us of the pluralist complexity of Christian interpretation, suggesting that intelligence never achieves a universally acceptable formulation of the Gospel but also that the Gospel never ceases to shape us intellectually and emotionally and to push us toward creative ideas and relationships. Maritain reminds us that in our modern time, "the temporal task of the Christian world is to work on earth for a socio-temporal realization of the Gospel truths."[1036]

The ideals of modern democracy are Christian in origin, and the values of Christianity energize its institutions. Maritain suggests that we need to make a distinction between a decoratively Christian and a vitally Christian society, since a new modern form of the latter still seeks to uphold "the *holy freedom* of the creature whom grace unites to God."[1037] According to Maritain, the Christian is thus called to a temporal mission. Each Christian is to involve himself in the temporal problems of his day. Maritain proposes that

> the more a Christian, or a Catholic, gives an absolute primacy in his heart to a fully liberated brotherly love, and in dealing with non-Catholics or non-Christians, sees them as they really are, members of Christ, at least potentially, the more firmly he must maintain his positions in the doctrinal order…. We must have a tough mind and a tender heart."[1038]

[1035] *MS,* p. 52.
[1036] *IH*, p. 42.
[1037] Ibid., p. 163.
[1038] *PG*, p. 80.

In the fraternal dialogue of modern society, truth and charity must go hand in hand: charity for persons, and truth for ideas. Maritain contributes a concrete way in dialogue among members of a pluralist society. We should have "right thinking" about both the objective order of ideas that are either false or true when considered in themselves, and the subjective order of persons who hold these ideas. Right thinking about the subjective order of persons and the objective order of ideas is very important for solving the tension between tolerance and truth in ~~the~~ pluralist and democratic societies. When we – Christians – have right thinking, we recover the Truth in the view of Christianity. Maritain invites Christians to live not "truths that serve us, but "a truth we may serve." To live out "a truth we may serve" we do not only live the natural law or the Old Testament, but also the New Law or the New Testament. If by the natural law "good is to be done and pursued, and evil avoided," we are subjects of pursuing good and avoiding evil. However, because of sin, we are also limited, so we do need divine grace. The Old Law needs to be fulfilled by the New Law whenever Jesus becomes our subject or model. Jesus has died for his friends, so, in turn, we must do the same: Love one another as Jesus has loved each of us, that is, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

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