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From the exaltation of the human person to the "new democracy"

Fr. Julio Meinvielle, Ph.D., S.T.D.
Translated by Fr. Nathaniel Dreyer, IVE, Ph.L.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Continuing with the publication of Julio Meinvielle's book, *Critica de la concepción de Maritain sobre la persona humana* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Nuestro Tiempo, 1948)* begun in *The Incarnate Word* vol. 5, n. 1, what follows is a translation of the sixth chapter.

This text uses two sets of footnotes. The first set, designated with Arabic numerals, are the author's original notes; the only changes introduced in this set were to standardize names and references and to replace texts quoted in a language other than Spanish with an English translation. Occasionally a reference has been changed to "cf." when the text does not match the Latin original. The second set, indicated with letters, includes the texts as quoted by the author in their original language, the citations for the translations utilized, and comments regarding the author's original text.

"For insofar as it advances, this movement tends to realize gradually, in social life itself, man's aspiration to be treated as a person in the whole, or, if you will, as a whole and not as a part. To us this is a very abstract but exact expression of the ideal to which, from their inception, modem democracies have been aspiring, but which their philosophy of

* For more information about Julio Meinvielle and his works, see www.juliomeinvielle.org. The book was reprinted in 1993 by Ediciones Epheta (Buenos Aires), an edition that can be downloaded from said website.

life has vitiated."[1,a]

Likewise, Maritain writes:[2,b]

> "A false philosophy of life, which made of human free will the sovereign rule for the whole social and moral order; made of the multitude an idle god, obeying no one, but completely handed over to the power of the State in which is was incarnate; made of all human values, and in particular of work, merchandise to be exchanged for wealth and for the hope of enjoying material goods in peace; made of Democracy or Revolution a heavenly Jerusalem of Godless Man—this false philosophy of life has so badly impaired the vital principle of modern democracies that it has at times been possible to mistake the false philosophy of life for the very essence of Democracy [confused with Democratism]. Yet what our fathers most truly cherished in Democracy—Democracy understood as an advance towards justice and law and towards the liberation of the human being—derives from an entirely different philosophy, whose sources are evangelical. . . . [This

1 Jacques Maritain, "La Personne et Le Bien Commun," *Revue Thomiste* 46 (1946): 266.

2 Jacques Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme et la Loi Naturelle* (New York: La Maison Française, 1942), 69.

a English trans. from Jacques Maritain, "The Person and the Common Good," trans. John J. FitzGerald, *Review of Politics* 8 (1946): 450.

b English trans. from Jacques Maritain, *The Rights of Man and Natural Law* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1958), 30-31. Here Meinville's text reads "la *nouvelle* démocratie." The bracketed text is missing from the English translation, but present in the Spanish.

> is] the 'new democracy'[3] which is in preparation at the core of the present death struggle."[4,c]

In *Christianisme et Démocratie* he lays out the causes for the failures of democracies, which he labels the "*tragédie des démocraties*," and he reduces them to three: the first, "the enemies of the democratic ideal never laid down their arms; and their resentment, their hatred of the people and of freedom, have only grown in proportion as the weaknesses and errors of the modern democracies gave them more pretexts. . . . [The second reason for the failure] is the face that this realization inevitably demanded accomplishment in the social as well as in the political order and that this demand was not complied with. . . . [The third reason is that] this form and this ideal of common life, which we call democracy, springs in its essentials from the inspiration of the Gospel and cannot subsist without it."[5,d]

3 Following liberal Catholics, Maritain speaks of the "evangelical sources" of modern democracy, letting it be understood that democracy would be derived from the Gospel as its normal and legitimate social expression. There is no doubt the modern egalitarianism and its social-political expression which is modern democracy have been acclimated and developed in the Christian countries of the west. There is thus a *historical continuity* in fact, existential, between the Gospel and modern democracy and, in general, between Christianity and modern thought. However, what is important is to know if this continuity is purely material or if it is also *formal*; if democracy and modern thought arise as an explanation of things contained in the Gospel, or if they are, on the contrary, its deformation or corruption. In our book, *De Lamennais a Maritain*, we have shown that the program of Antichristian naturalism consists precisely in a carnalization of Gospel truths. See especially the conclusion.

4 Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 69-71.

5 Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 31-34.

c English trans. from Maritain, *The Rights of Man*, 30-31.

d English trans. from Jacques Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy and the Rights of Man and the Natural Law* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011), 14-15.

"It is not a question," continues Maritain, "of finding a new name for democracy, but rather of discovering its true essence and of realizing it; it is rather a question of passing from bourgeois democracy, drawn dry by its hypocrisies and by a lack of evangelical sap, to an integrally human democracy; from abortive [*manquée*] democracy to real democracy."[6,e]

For Maritain, "true democracy responds to the deepest and most legitimate aspiration of man, of his aspirations to be treated as a whole," that his person, his super-eminent dignity as a person, be exalted, his natural rights in the spiritual, economic, and political realms be recognized. For him, there is a perfect equivalency between the exaltation of the human person = true democracy = and new democracy = new Christendom.

We must discuss and examine two problems: the problem of democracy as the exaltation of the human person, and the problem of the "New Christendom," as the realization of this true and new democracy. In this chapter, we will limit ourselves to the first, leaving the second question for the next chapter.

We will examine the problem of Maritain's personalist democracy in the following points: 1) the fundamental aspiration of the human person to democracy, and the doctrine of Saint Thomas, and 2) Maritain's democracy when faced with the doctrine of the Church and of Saint Thomas.

I. THE FUNDAMENTAL ASPIRATION OF THE HUMAN PERSON TO DEMOCRACY, AND THE DOCTRINE OF SAINT THOMAS

In the previous chapters we have seen how Maritain values the progress of both man and society as the emancipation

6 Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 36.

e English trans. from Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy and the Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, 17.

of the human person; for the same reason, democracy with its instrument, universal suffrage, and with the regimen of liberties or rights, would be in the line of the most perfect political system and the system most in order with man's inclination to perfection. The political rights of the human person, Maritain maintains:

> "depend indirectly upon natural law, not merely because in a general manner the regulations of human law fulfil an aim of natural law by completing that which natural law leaves undetermined, but also because the manner in which this completion takes place corresponds, in the case of political rights, to an aspiration *inscribed* in man's nature. . . . It is by reason of a more perfect agreement with the fundamental demands of the natural law that human law passes on to higher degrees of justice and perfection."[7,f]

And these higher degrees of justice and perfection are the right to universal suffrage for all men and women (106-107), the formation of political parties (107), and the rights of the peoples and of democracy (108-109).

He also maintains that *modern democracies*, even though they are imbued with a false philosophy, and in spite of it:

> "this movement tends to realize gradually, in social life itself, man's aspiration to be treated as a person in the whole, or, if you will, as a whole and not as a part. To us this is a very abstract but exact

7 Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 104-105.

f English trans. from Maritain, *The Rights of Man*, 46.

> expression of the ideal to which, from their inception, modem democracies have been aspiring."[8,g]

Maritain thus formulates two theses: one, regarding *human progress* which implies the aspiration to democracy; another, regarding the legitimacy of modern democracies, which would respond to this progressive aspiration of the human means and that, in that measure, would themselves imply a *social* progress, one that is profoundly human, as responding to a fundamental aspiration of the human person.

To these two theses, we will reply with the doctrine of Saint Thomas regarding the different forms of government and, in particular, regarding democracy. Our answer will be as follows: we accept that modern societies aspire to democracy, but this is the best demonstration to show that they are decadent societies, caught up in *anti-social* seeds, destructive to the true human personality.

This because, although there can be some legitimate forms of government that include elements of democracy, the essence of this, as such, in its pure state, is bad; and likewise the aspiration to it, as such, that is, to that which precisely, in its essence, constitutes, rather than a progress, a profound regression.

The guiding principle of Maritainian thought is that the human person aspires to be treated as a whole in society, and that this aspiration is fulfilled in democracy. In Maritain, the aspiration to be treated as a whole does not mean only to be treated as a "physical" whole, but rather, and also, as a "moral" whole. We categorically deny that there can be a *natural inclination*, and hence a *legitimate* inclination, to be treated as a *moral whole*, because this would imply the justification of Rousseau's thesis that the *social* state would be in contradiction to the *natural* state of man. If human persons aspire, with an aspiration

8 Maritain, "La Personne et Le Bien Commun," 266.

g English trans. from Maritain, "The Person and the Common Good," 450.

that is fundamental in their reality as persons, to be treated as *moral wholes*, they would have a fundamental aspiration to remove themselves from order, which is the first and most fundamental part of moral and social life.

On the contrary, if the fundamental principles of the moral life of human persons is their submission to order, to the common good, which is the end and ordering principle of order, then it would no longer be corrected to affirm that human persons aspire to democracy as the ideal of their lives. This is because the ideal of life is the common good, and not independence, and, consequently, there is a need to construct that political arrangement that best assures them that common good. Now then, which regime, within Thomistic principles, is the one that is most desirable *in itself*, speaking in absolute terms, or *simpliciter*, we could say?

1. In the measure that the human person progresses, they aspire to a monarchy, and not to democracy

The progress of the human person cannot be rightly understood except as a being perfected in the honest good. Now then, if a person progresses they should seek what it best in itself and what is most fitting; hence, for that very reason, they should seek whatever form of political life is the best. What this would be, according to Saint Thomas, would not be difficult to determine, especially after the excellent study by Demongeot,[9] spread by the thought of Maritain himself. "Now the best ordering," writes Saint Thomas, "of a state or of any nation is to be ruled by a king: because this kind of government approaches nearest in resemblance to the Divine government, whereby God rules the world from the beginning."[10,h] "The

9 Marcel Demongeot, *Le meilleur régime politique selon Saint Thomas* (André Blot, 1928).

10 ST I-II, q. 105, a. 1, ad 2.

h The citation is actually obj. 2. English trans. from Thomas Aquinas,

kingdom is the best government and *extremely divine*, the most divine, and the one that best agrees with right reason."[11,i]

And this is not only speaking of government in its metaphysical notion, that is, making an abstraction from human nature, but rather and also speaking of human society, he prefers regal or a monarchy as the form of government. He writes:

> "Now the welfare and safety of a multitude formed into a society lies in the preservation of its unity, which is called peace. If this is removed, the benefit of social life is lost and, moreover, the multitude in its disagreement becomes a burden to itself. The chief concern of the ruler of a multitude, therefore, is to procure the unity of peace. . . . Now it is manifest that what is itself one can more efficaciously bring about unity than several."[12,j]

11 *Sent. Politic.*, IV, l. 1

12 Here something fundamental is seen, and it is worthwhile to emphasize it: that Saint Thomas does not form a hierarchy, in order of value, of the different forms of government according to whether they are faithful to a greater "prise de conscience," autonomy, or "progress in conscience" in men, but rather according to the greater or lesser analogousness of the structure of these forms—of their structures of moral reality—with the order imposed by God in the universe and with the relation of that universe to God. The difference is the result of the following: that those who follow the first method—the moderns and with them Maritain—even though they might not do so with their words, but certainly in the back of their minds, they understand government essentially as a *coactive* reality; thus, the more intellectually and morally *perfected* people are, the less coaction they requires, and, hence, their government will be less coactive.

Summa Theologiae, Prima Secundae, 71-114, trans. Laurence Shapcote (Lander, Wyoming: Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012), 383.

i It is unclear where Meinvielle is citing from.

j Although Meinvielle does not indicate it, this quotation is taken from *De regno*, I, c. 2. English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (Toronto, Ontario: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2000), 11-12.

Saint Thomas dedicates the second chapter of the first book of *De Regno* to showing that:

> "it is best for a human multitude to be ruled by one person," and after presenting many excellent

The true Thomists, on the other hand, see the government as a reality that *orders*, and that is *not essentially coactive*. For this reason, the most perfect government will be the one that brings about the most perfect order, and this will be then, not the most free—since freedom is simply a means to realize that order—but rather the one that is most similar to the order that God has introduced among the parts of His universe, without having the greatest intelligence and virtues of the people—supposing that, in their historical time, they had achieved such progress—*diminish* in the least—rather, they would benefit—that order, and hence, *without the slightest decrease* in government's role and function with regarding to *ordering*. For the first group, what is perfect is to be found in democracy, since they think that it in men can determine themselves more freely, and with less coaction. On the contrary, those of the second group find what it most prefect in monarchy, since it best represents God's creative order: the king is an inferior analogate of God, and thus as the universe is governed by only one, thus too society.

On the other hand, God does not impede the secondary causality of created beings; analogously, society will not be absorbed by the one tyrannical regal authority, as happening at the beginning of the modern age, with surprising synchronism, as Max Scheler notes, with the denial of secondary causes by the Cartesian rationalists, but rather having in society other realities with their own proper causality, even while subordinated to the first: classes, municipalities, families, etc. For this reason, the "republic," which, in the Thomistic understanding, is not opposed to the monarchy, a mixed form of government that admits the causality of different subordinate authorities, is the best, because it maintains the unity of direction of the monarchy, which represents God, and to it adds secondary causes.

If a government is *better* in the measure that there is less *coaction*, then government is an *evil*, since its ideal would be a minimum. Although Maritain theoretically accepts that government is a good and that it is not the result of sin, in the logic of his two latest works, he makes of it a *lesser evil*: it is something necessary only because people are evil, or, at the very least, submerged in *matter* and hence in *individuality*, and we know how Maritain, in fact, tends to make that materiality and individuality the cause of evil. That *lesser evil*, necessary in the imperfect state of people, should go on becoming less and less necessary the more people progress, to such a degree that, if that if the government continues to have the same influence and authority that is had before, it will be transformed into an evil *simpliciter*.

> reasons, he ends by saying: "This is also evident from experience. For provinces or cities which are not ruled by one person are torn with dissensions and tossed about without peace, so that the complaint seems to be fulfilled which the Lord uttered through the Prophet: '*Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard.*' On the other hand, provinces and cities which are ruled under one king enjoy peace, flourish in justice, and delight in prosperity. Hence, the Lord by His prophets promises to His people as a great reward that He will give them one head and that '*one Prince will be in the midst of*

On the other hand, what does the "progress" of people mean in modern times? We already know that even *if it were to have been really brought about*, this would not be mean that government would be less government than before, or that the monarchy would cease to be the most perfect form of government, as we have seen; however, has this *progress really be brought about*? Maritain speaks of that progress as if man and his faculties were to progress in that way that animals do according to the doctrine of evolution: greater intelligence, more will, greater autonomy, more, etc. . . . But he forgets that in man the specifically *human* faculties are *intentional*, and hence they have a relation to an *object*: to being and to good. Hence, progress should consist, first and foremost, not in an increase of autonomy, but rather in a greater agreement between these intentional faculties with their objects: being and good. Hence, who can really speak of a true progress of people in these modern centuries? What would need to be shown is *that greater and better ordering*, and hence it would mean that agnosticism, skepticism, pantheism, materialism, transcendental idealism, monism, voluntarism, pragmatism, autonomism, morality, etc., etc., imply this greater ordering—and are, hence, truer and better—than Scholasticism and Catholicism.

Moreover, since those systems are *contradictory* between themselves, it would also be the case that either the contradiction and *simply change for the sake of change* are good in themselves, or that those systems are good and true *in the only thing that they have in common*: the denial of God, the claim of aseity for man or the universe. Maritain would never accept, without ceasing to be Catholic, such consequences. However, if he wants to avoid them, it is only because, as we have said, he has a misunderstanding of the essence of spiritual progress.

them.'"[k]

Against what Maritain attempts, this point of view is also strengthened by pages 88-93 of Demongeot's book, in which it is shows that monarchy and aristocracy are the best political systems because they are ordered to the virtuous life of the city. "Up to this point, we have considered," he writes, "monarchy and aristocracy. To speak of these regimes is to speak of the best regimes because these tend principally to the virtuous life."[13] Only the contrary, the inclusion of the democratic element in the government of the city is justified only in light of a *psychological point of view*, but in no way because it implies "higher degrees of justice and perfection,"[14] as Maritain maintains. It is fitting, teaches Saint Thomas, that "all should take some share in the government: for this form of constitution ensures peace among the people, commends itself to all, and is most enduring."[15] For this reason, Demongeot can writes:

> "Thus freedom, sacrificed upon the ground of justice, recovers its importance over the ground of psychology . . . and thus it remains that, from the point of view of justice, it is the most dignified of the two, so much as that this desire for power, which is present in the people, does not appear, at least to the pessimist Saint Thomas, to be a very elevated sentiment. Rather, he judges it to be quite lamentable because, he says, 'most deliberate injustices in the political community happen because of love of honor and money.'"[16,l]

13 *Sent. Politic.*, IV, l. 1.

14 Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 105.

15 ST I-II, q. 105, a. 1; *Sent. Politic.*, II, l. 1.

16 *Sent. Politic.*, II, l. 14.

k English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship*, 13.

l English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Politics*, trans. Richard J. Regan (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2007), 157.

This is in such a way that Saint Thomas does not accept so innocently what Maritain writes:

> "The famous saying of Aristotle that man is a political animal does not mean only that man is naturally made to live in society; it also means that man naturally asks to lead a political life and to participate actively in the life of the political community. It is upon this postulate of human nature that political liberties and political rights rest, especially the right of suffrage."[17,m]

Saint Thomas does not believe in this because, in the measure that man is perfected, he seeks what is best.

> "Again, whatever is in accord with nature is best, for in all things nature does what is best. Now, every natural governance is governance by one. In the multitude of bodily members there is one which is the principal mover, namely, the heart; and among the powers of the soul one power presides as chief, namely, the reason. Among bees there is one king bee and in the whole universe there is One God, Maker and Ruler of all things. And there is a reason for this. Every multitude is derived from unity. Wherefore, if artificial things are an imitation of natural things and a work of art is better according as it attains a closer likeness to what is in nature, it follows that it is best for a human multitude to be ruled by one person."[18,n]

17 Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 105.
18 *De regno*, I, c. 2.

m English trans. from Maritain, *The Rights of Man*, 47.
n English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship*, 12-13.

2. The aspiration to democracy as such, that is, in its pure state, implies a regression of the human person.

Maritain maintains that the fundamental aspiration of the human person is to freedom *d'épanouissement*, that is, freedom of autonomy, or independence, and that, for this reason, democracy corresponds to his deepest desires for perfection and justice. Let us see, in turn, what judgment Saint Thomas gives about democracy, based precisely on the desire for freedom, which constitutes its deep dynamism.

We are speaking here of the pure concept of democracy, of what it implies in itself, in virtue of its own and internal exigencies.

The Angelic Doctor starts out from the premise that "a democracy, in which liberty is the sole end, [anyone] could be promoted to office because they are free."[19,o] In his mind, democracy is linked to an understanding of life that makes freedom the highest end of man and, for that reason, the end of the city. In "freedom," he says, "is the end of democracy."[20,p] All other things exist because of liberty and for liberty. Hence, the differences that separate one man from another, the natural or historical dependencies, family or national ties, the diversity of gifts, of aptitudes, education, culture, or acquired rights, do not matter. Since to each and every person nature has given an identical freedom, it is necessary that everyone and each person everywhere be equal.

But, what does the notion of liberty imply for Saint Thomas? He explains it on different occasions, but here, we will limit ourselves to the commentary that he offers to the 4th book, 2nd section, of Aristotle's *Politics*, where, after insisting

19 *Sent. Politic.*, IV, l. 7.

20 *Sent. Politic.*, III, l. 4.

o English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Politics*, 200. Note that this commentary only contains up to Bk. III.

p English trans. from ibid., 211.

that freedom is the only and principal foundation for democracy, he adds "by freedom, we mean that one can determine themselves by their own will and to an end that one proposes for themselves." A person is free, he says when they are the cause of themselves, both in their movement, inasmuch as they are moved by their own will and follow their own reason, as well as when they are moved or act in order to an end of their own and not the end of another. He also takes the word freedom to mean the very operation or the act by which one is said to move oneself or act towards their own end.

"Now," says the Angelic Doctor, "be it in the first meaning, or in the second, one is free either on account of a natural disposition, and these are those who are naturally free, or by the constitution of the republic, which establishes that a person is not governed by another other than themselves, nor directed to the end of others but rather to their own end and to the end of the republic. And thus those who make the democratic state understand freedom."

Saint Thomas understands that there is a natural freedom that a person possesses when they are able to govern themselves by themselves, insofar as they are able to fix for themselves the right and fitting norm of what they should do, and are also capable of fulfilling that norm. In other words, this is the freedom possesses by perfect men who, ordered by the right exercise of their reason, determine themselves to fulfill the order that their reason indicates to them. This is true freedom. The other freedom, which serves as the base of the democratic regime and which of itself has nothing but a legal reality, because it arises from the constitutive decree of the republic, "*ex constitutione reipublicae*," consists in a pure and simple self-determination, meaning, that each and every person who makes up said regime do not suffer impairment or violence in wanting this or that, in accord with their own desire. And, insofar as in this self-determination or freedom all are equal:

> "popular or democratic justice demands that all participate in honors and public favors in accord with a quantitative equality and not, in contrast, with the dignity of the person or proportional equality, but rather the poor as much as the rich, the ignorant as much as the educated . . . *sed tantum pauper quantum dives, tantum idiota quantum studiosus*." On the other hand, "since there must be someone who establishes and maintains this popular justice . . . it follows that the end and the justice of the popular state is the opinion of the multitude . . . *manifestum est quod necesse est illud esse finem populari statui justum, quod videtur multitudini*."[21] The opinion and will of the masses are, therefore, the law in a democracy.

What is the result of a regime founded on these premises? The result will depend on the moral condition of those who make up said city. This is because if the political regime of said city rests on the freedom or self-determination of the citizens, its nature—just or unjust, good or wicked—will depend on the moral condition of said multiple. If this mass, in its majority, is virtuous, the city will be virtuous; if it is perverse, the city will be perverse.

However, the Angelic Doctor immediately reaches the conclusion that said city, in which "the multitude fixes the norms of justice," must be wicked because there "*viles et pauperes et inordinati*," the vile, the poor, and the disordered command.[22] From here it follows that Aquinas constantly sets democracy among the tyrannical forms of government, and from which comes that famous definition of democracy given in *De regno*, I, c. 1:

21 *Sent. Politic.*, IV, l. 2.

22 *Sent. Politic.*, IV, l. 7.

> "If, finally, the bad government is carried on by the multitude, it is called a democracy, i.e. control by the populace, which comes about when the plebeian people by force of numbers oppress the rich."[q]

The conclusion of Saint Thomas is determined by the pessimistic understanding he has of the masses.[23] Citation after citation can be amassed in which he teaches that the masses, in the majority of cases, allow themselves to be carried away by their evil inclinations, violating the right order of reason.[24] However, one citation will be sufficient to clearly establish the thinking of the Angelic Doctor: "There is a twofold nature in man," he says, "rational nature, and the sensitive nature. And

23 Those advocates of the moral progress of man and of peoples in particular, in modern times, could reply that that progress has made the pessimism of Saint Thomas inapplicable to contemporary times. However, to that reply can be opposed, in addition to everything that has been said above regarding the "*prise de conscience*," etc., the fact that, if this were the case, it would follow that the people, no longer under the preponderant influence of the Church, nor directed by the traditional minorities, nor by a stable and true philosophy, has, nonetheless, achieved in these times a progress that it did not achieve even when it did receive the influence of the Church, the traditional nobility, and of scholastic philosophy. From here it would follow that it is possible to have moral progress without right moral convictions (since the morality of modernity is based on erroneous philosophies), and without the direction of the Church, the wise, and the prudent, who had, as their mission in the traditional understanding, the task of ordering and governing. Lastly, if during the "rosy" era of the past century and at the beginning of the present one could in good faith believe in such a moral progress, what should be said of it after all the barbarous disordered, cruelties, and crimes of our times? Now, only now, are the terrible consequences of everything "modern" being manifested.

24 See ST I, q. 63, a. 9, ad 1; ST I, q. 49, a. 3, ad 6; ST I-II, q. 93, a. 6, ad 2; SCG, III, c. 6, ad 2; Ibid., c. 91, a. 6, ad 3; Ibid., c. 71, a. 2, ad 3.

q "*Democratia id est, potentatus populi, quando sc. populus plebeiorum per potentiam multitudinis, opprimit divites.*" English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship*, 8.

since it is through the operation of his senses that man accomplishes acts of reason, hence there are more who follow the inclinations of the sensitive nature, than who follow the order of reason. . . . Now the presence of vices and sins in man is owing to the fact that he follows the inclination of his sensitive nature against the order of his reason."[25,r] "The people separates itself from reason the majority of times," says the saint: "*Populus enim deficit a ratione, ut in pluribus*."[26] In short, the people, who react only affectively, is in danger of erring and wandering from the right path; it needs others—the few—to indicate what is right for it and to make them desire it; if a virtuous minority does not give them virtue, then any other daring minority will impose on them the yoke of money or collective work.

The Thomistic analysis of democracy is literally verified in modern democracies, caught up on the fervor of independence and freedom; and this can also be applied to the Maritainian democracy, moved by freedom *d'épanouissement*.

II. MARITAIN'S DEMOCRACY WHEN FACED WITH THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH AND OF SAINT THOMAS

The aspiration to democratic forms of political life, far from revealing a perfection, reveals rather a lessening of the authentic meaning of moral good. However, it does not follow from here that there does not exist a legitimate form of government with democratic elements. Maritain himself, in his *Primauté du Spirituel*,[s] characterizes this legitimate form when he writes:

25 ST I-II, q. 71, a. 2, ad 3.
26 *Sent. Politic.*, IV, l. 13.

r English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Prima Secundae, 71-114*, 4.

s English trans. from Jacques Maritain, *The Primacy of the Spiritual: On the Things That Are Not Caesar's* (Providence, RI: Cluny Media, 2020), 120-121.

"I would add that in the vocabulary of St. Thomas, democracy as a legitimate form of government is not called democracy but Republic (*politica*). It is a sort of *mixed system*, in which the democratic principle which, in the abstract, would tend to the supremacy of mere numbers, ('Democracy, that is to say the supremacy of the populace, when *the mass of the people* through weight of numbers oppresses the rich') is tempered by the aristocratic principle (the supremacy of the pre-eminent in value or virtue) and above all by the oligarchic principle (the supremacy of the pre-eminent in riches or power).[27] It is therefore more exactly an *ameliorated democracy*.[28]

As for the word *democracy*, it signifies in St. Thomas both the corrupt form of the *politia* and the abstract democratic principle."

What Maritain has explained above in his *Primauté* is the only political democracy recognized as legitimate in pontifical documents. Thus, Leo XIII writes:

> "Again, it is not of itself wrong to prefer a democratic form of government [*reipublicae statum populari temperatum genere*], if only the Catholic doctrine be maintained as to the origin and exercise of power. Of the various forms of government, the Church does not reject any that are fitted to procure the welfare of the subject; she wishes only—and this nature itself requires—that they should be constituted without involving wrong to any one, and especially without violating the rights of the Church."[t]

27 Cf. *Sent. Politic.*, IV, l. 7.

28 Marcel Domongeot.

t Leo XIII, "Libertas Praestantissimum" (Encyclical, Rome, June 20, 1888), 44. Meinvielle translates the bracketed Latin as *moderately popular*, and italicizes it. The Latin is omitted in his version but included here for clarity.

In *Immortale Dei*, he writes: "Neither is it blameworthy in itself, in any manner, for the people to have a share greater or less, in the government: for at certain times, and under certain laws, such participation may not only be of benefit to the citizens, but may even be of obligation."

The famous allocution of Pius XII regarding democracy recalls precisely this teaching that had been laid out in the beginning in order to clarify all the doctrine that comes later: "It is scarcely necessary to recall," he says, "that, according to the teaching of the Church, 'it is not forbidden to prefer temperate, popular forms of government, without prejudice, however, to Catholic teaching on the origin and use of authority,' and that 'the Church does not disapprove of any of the various forms of government, provided they be per se capable of securing the good of the citizens.'"

From here it follows that the democracy that Pius XII considered acceptable 1) is not a pure democracy—towards which the modern world tends—but rather a *moderated* popular form; 2) is proclaimed neither as the best nor the only good form of government; 3) it should not be conditioned by the idea of freedom but by that of the common good; 4) it presupposes the establishment, not of an egalitarian mass, but rather of a hierarchically structured people; 5) it demands a real and effective authority, derived from God and subject to Him; 6) it contains a legislative body made up of "a group of select men, spiritually eminent and of strong character, who shall look upon themselves as the representatives of the entire people and not the mandatories of a mob"[u]; 7) it does not fall into statist absolutism.

In other words, the Holy Father, starting from the idea that a democracy implies self-government or the participation of the masses in government, establishes the conditions or places where, tempering and moderating this self-government or the

u Christmas message of 1944.

participation of the masses, a legitimate and healthy form of democracy can arise.

Aristotle and Saint Thomas do exactly the same; after analyzing the nature of democracy, they come to the conclusion that it is unjust and perverse if it is brought to its ultimate consequences found in its very notion; however, they recognize its legitimacy if it is tempered and moderated with elements from the other pure forms, such as the unity of the monarchy, the virtue of the aristocracy, and even the riches of the oligarchy; these conditions, strictly speaking, are anti-democratic, but, by tempering and moderating the expansive perversity of absolute universal egalitarianism, they do not impede a certain, fitting participation of the masses in power.

From here it follows that the traditional democracy accepted by the Supreme Pontiff implies the rejection of modern democracy, both in its liberal and socialist form, as well as in the absurd version of Catholic Democrats. This is because these democracies are based on an *essentially* new understanding of civilization; they deny or diminish the divine origin of authority, make the people into an idol or a myth, come to equate the idea of justice with that of popular rule, and are moved by universal egalitarianism.

1. Who makes up the Maritainian democracy

We should examine if the democracy proposed by Maritain agrees with that *tempered* democracy of Saint Thomas and the Pontifical documents, or if, on the other hand, if it is seduced by the principle of universal egalitarianism that modern democracy suffers from. For this, we are going to investigate who makes up the Maritainian democratic city, who governs it, what end binds the citizens together in it, and what form of unity animates it.

The Maritainian democracy is made up of *persons*, qua *persons*, that is, inasmuch as they are *wholes* and *unable to be subordinated*. Maritain will speak on occasion of persons and of "by

concrete and positive liberties, incarnated in institutions and in the social body, that the inner freedom of the human being asks to be translated on the exterior plane of social action."[29,v] He will also speak of "organic democracy,"[30] but, in order to understand his thought, in the measure that its internal logic permits intelligibility, we think that we must distinguish two moments or instances in it: the first is that of an *imperfect* political society, in which the *individual* character of the person dominates, and thus their condition as *part*; and the second is that of a *perfect* political society, in which the *personal* character of the human person would dominate, and the person would enter into society as a *whole*, unable to be subordinated, spiritually, politically, and economically free. In chapter IV, when speaking of the *liberation of the human person*, we have seen how Maritain understands the progress of political society as an ascension from a society made up of persons *qua* individuals, to a society comprised of persons *qua* persons. The society that he has in mind as the *ideal form*, and the nearness to which he indicates the progress of every concrete political society, is this society, composed of persons *qua* persons, understood as wholes, unable to be subordinated, self-sufficient, spiritually, politically, and economically emancipated.

It is important that the reader have these two instances of Maritainian thought clearly in mind in order not to cancel out the one with the other; the Maritainian city, properly speaking, is a *personalist* city, in that *the person enters as a whole, unable to be subordinated and free from all servitude.* This very idea is deduced from the common good understood as a "returned and redistributed good," as we considered it earlier, and, in the same

29 Jacques Maritain, *Humanisme intégral: Problèmes temporels et spirituels d'une nouvelle chrétienté* (F. Aubier, 1936), 215.

30 Jacques Maritain, *Principes d'une Politique Humaniste* (New York: Éditions de la Maison française, 1944), 59.

v English trans. from Jacques Maritain, *True Humanism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), 195.

way, the joining of human persons by civic friendship, and not by reason of a common *objective* good, but rather by the subject, *ratione subjecti*, who would immediately form bonds with others.[31] From this same idea can also be derived *universal suffrage obligatory from the natural law*, required as an indispensable element of all just political regimes.

Now then, from a society thus composed, we should say that it is an egalitarian and inorganic society, in which it will never be possible to obtain the common human good, and it will never be possible to establish a people but rather a mob, to use Pius XII's expression.

Apply this, in essence, to the real men and women who live in a human society, where every individual is always an opinion; apply it in particular to the citizens who live today in the Western world, where, for political organization, religious and doctrinal differences, differences of family, education, position, and economic function mean nothing; where all and every one is a human person and where, as such, they have to inviolable right to be treated as a whole unable to be subordinated, imperious to all servitude, without any subjection other than that which the multitude would want to impose in its free beginnings, where the practical expression of the law will be the result of the adding up of wills registered by universal suffrage, equally given to all men and women: what will happen here?

One of two things: either an agreement will be reached among all the various parties among whom popular opinion is divided, at that very moment: Communists, socialists, Christian democrats, or not.

If this agreement is not reached, that society will dragged into an existential political fight between the antagonist groups until it becomes more and more *anarchical*, until finally a *Caesar* arises who unifies the masses by force; however, in this case, the city should become unanimous against and reclaim the ex-

31 Cfr. Maritain, *Principes d'une Politique Humaniste*, 59.

ercises of their democratic liberties; and thus we will again be in a city that, either comes to agreement regards the basis of the unification between Communists, socialists, and Catholic Democrats, or it will continue fighting within itself, until it eats itself up and falls apart. And, since it is not possible to reach an agreement in opinions between people that differ *profoundly and radically regarding the last end of human life*, it is not hard to predict that the collapse of the city will be the end, if the democratic principles are truthfully and fully applied. Here those words of Saint Thomas are confirmed:

> "For provinces or cities which are not ruled by one person are torn with dissensions and tossed about without peace, so that the complaint seems to be fulfilled which the Lord uttered through the Prophet: 'Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard.'"[32,w]

This is because a city in which each individual of the mass that makes it up does not seek any truly *common* good, but rather their other particular good, their own particular dignity, their own particular freedom, their own particular totality, cannot be harmonized in one single totality of the city.

2. Who governs the Maritainian city?

"It is indeed one of the values included," says Maritain:

> "in that most equivocal word democracy that is here achieved: I am thinking of a sense of this word which is rather affective and moral, having reference to that personal dignity of which the crowd has taken cognizance in itself, not, doubtless, in

32 *De regno*, I, c. 2.

w English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship*, 13.

> the sense of truly meriting or possessing it, but at least as being called thereto; that popular civic consciousness which excludes as a natural consequence any separate [*heterogénique*] (albeit good) domination of one social category over the mass of the people considered as minors, and implies on the plane of social life itself respect for human personality in each of the individuals of whom the crowd is made up."[33,x]

In another place,[34,y] Maritain explains that democracy excludes paternalistic domination:

> "It is the fact that a certain parity of essence (between the leaders and the led), an essential parity, I mean, in the common condition of men bound to labour, will then be at the base of all relations of authority and the hierarchy of temporal functions, whether it be a question of political or any other social forms of authority (be it priest, king, noble, wise man, or bourgeois)[35]. . . . In any case of the acceptance of a purely secular and 'homogeneous' conception of temporal authority, the head is simply one who has the right of command over others who are his equals or companions."[36]

33 Maritain, *Humanisme intégral*, 215.

34 Maritain, *Principes d'une Politique Humaniste*, 69.

35 The parenthesis is not in the text, but is our addition.

36 To deny all "paternalistic" ("even good") authority is to deny the superiority of the values of science and of prudence—and of culture in general—that *necessarily* is made concrete in the classes of every society that is somewhat developed. This denial of "heterogenous" authority, even though it is dressed in Thomistic appeal, is of Kantian origin: Kant rejects all

x English trans. from Maritain, *True Humanism*, 195.

y English trans. from Maritain, *True Humanism*, 193-194.

Maritain clarifies how he understands this *homogénique* authority: "It would be insanity," he says, "and a huge disaster, in a blind reaction against the errors of the 19th century, to reject communitarian-personalist democracy along with anarchic-individualist democracy. In this way we can explain the idea of an organic democracy which here we want to consider under the point of view of philosophical truth."[37] And he adds: "This organic democracy does not suppress, not even only in principle, authority and power: it wants them to come from the people, to be exercised by it and with it. At its base is the idea that . . . in the city, the hierarchical totality of persons, men should be governed as persons."

However, what does this authority coming from the people and exercised on its behalf and with it? He answers: "By virtue of the hidden work of evangelical inspiration, the secular conscience has understood that the authority of the rulers, by the very fact that it emanates from the author of human nature, is addressed to free men who do not belong to a master and is exercised by virtue of the consent of the governed."[38,z] And in what way is this consented authority exercised? "An organic democracy," replies Maritain, "will not seek to erase the notion of authority from its ideology; it will do the contrary, by making it clear, and this because it will admit a two-fold truth from common sense: that obeying, according to the just measure, the one who in that situation yields that right [of authority] is in itself an act of reason and of freedom; and to so obey

heteronomous morality as contrary to human dignity and to pure duty, and he hence proclaims an *autonomous* morality. This, upon being made concrete in law and in society, gives rise to a system that is the same in everything to the system that Maritain proposes.

37 Maritain, *Principes d'une Politique Humaniste*, 59.

38 Jacques Maritain, *Christianisme et démocratie* (P. Hartmann, 1945), 57.

z English trans. from Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy and the Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, 30.

the one who truly fulfills the task of directing common work towards the common good (as in a soccer or hockey game a player obeys the team's captain) is to work as a free man, that is, to not be at the service of another man."[39]

"At the source of this democratic sentiment . . . there is not," says Maritain, "the desire to obey oneself, but rather to obey what is just."[40] But, on the other hand, he writes, "Once the man of common humanity has understood that he is born with the right to conduct his own life by himself, as a being responsible for his acts before God and the law of the community, how can the people be expected to obey those who govern unless it is because the latter have received from the people themselves the custody of the people's common good?"[41,aa]

Thus, man *obeys himself*. This is because if he does not obey except when what he is commanded to do is just, and it is not just except when he consents to it, it follows that when he obeys, *he obeys himself*.

Maritainian democracy, in the words of Maritain himself, "not only recognizes that the prince governs as representing in his person the entire people, ut vices gerens multitudinis; but it makes of this vicariousness the typical law of its peculiar authoritative structure, in such a way that authority passing through the people rises, degree by degree, from the base to the summit of the hierarchic structure of the community; and so that the exercise of power by men, in whom authority is brought periodically to reside through the designation of the people, attests the constancy of the passage of sovereignty

39 Maritain, *Principes d'une Politique Humaniste*, 61.

40 ibid., 63.

41 Maritain, *Christianisme et démocratie*, 159.

aa English trans. from Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy and the Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, 31.

through the multitude."[42,ab]

And how does the people direct its own destiny? By means of universal suffrage. Maritain writes[43]: "That is why universal suffrage, by means of which every adult human person has, as such, the the [*sic*] right to make his opinion felt regarding the affairs of the community by casting his vote in the election of the people's representatives and the officers of the State—that is why universal suffrage has a wholly fundamental political and human value and is one of those rights which a community of free men can never give up."[44,ac]

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42 The governor governs *ut vices gerens multitudinis*, but he should govern seeking the objective good of that multitude. One and the other will not coincide except when it can be affirms that the subjective will of the multitude will always be in accord with the objective good. But when can this be affirmed except when the people, Lord knows by what means of prodigious alchemy, has become wise, saintly, and prudent? And, moreover, wise, saintly, and prudent in a society with freedom of worship and ideologies. So it is that behind Maritainian thought, we always find a *romantic belief* (meaning, irrational, absurd, sentimental, purely voluntarist): the romantic belief typical the liberal, the future *self-sanctification* of the people. It could be replied here that it is likewise not assured that the *subjective will* of a king or aristocracy will always be in accord with the objective good of the city. However, 1) the interest, even egotistical, of a leader or directing minority is always more likely to be in accord with the common good than the will of the multitude. This is because each person being governing, by seeking their own particular interests, *disconnects* what is social; in contrast, it is generally in the particular interest of the king or governing minority that a certain peace and order reign in the social sphere, even if only because it helps them to govern easily. 2) It is more probable that in the leader of minority the cultural values are incarnated than in the masses. 3) The leader is one, the minority acts as a unity, but the masses no. However, what is one rules better than the manifold. 4) Moreover, in our thesis, we suppose that the king or minority allows themselves to be enlightened by the Church, which in Maritainian thought the Church has a place only in private life.

43 Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 105.

44 ibid.

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ab English trans. from Jacques Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, trans. Mortimer J. Adler (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 106.

ac English trans. from Maritain, *The Rights of Man*, 47.

In practice, a people in which the existence and limit of authority necessarily depends on the consent of the people *expressed* by means of universal suffrage, determines and governs itself.

If this is the case, the *common good*, we say, can never be the ruling law in the city, because would be subjected to the unappealable decisions of the popular will.

What is unacceptable in Maritain's doctrine is that it makes the popular decision that arises from universal suffrage into a constitutive elements of the *justice* of the law of the city.

We admit that the people can, and indeed it is fitting, be given some participation in the government of the city; however, this should be done only in the measure that the people agrees to the common good of said city, that is, in the measure that the peaceful living together of the citizens is not affected. This is because the common good, and above all the peace, of a city is the first and essential thing that should be attended to, even before, of course, the supposed "rights of the people" that Maritain invokes.[45,ad] For this reason, Saint Thomas, when asking if human law can change, writes: "On the part of man, whose acts are regulated by law, the law can be rightly changed on account of the changed condition of man, to whom different things are expedient according to the difference of his condition. An example is proposed by Augustine (*De Lib. Arb.* i, 6): 'If the people have a sense of moderation and responsibility, and are most careful guardians of the common weal, it is right to enact a law allowing such a people to choose their own magistrates for the government of the commonwealth. But if, as time goes on, *the same people become so corrupt as to sell their votes, and entrust the government to scoundrels and criminals; then the right of appointing their public officials is rightly forfeit to such*

45 Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 109.

ad English trans. from Maritain, *The Rights of Man*, 48.

a people, and the choice devolves to a few good men.'"[ae] Hence, it is clear that universal suffrage is neither a natural right—since it can be given and taken away—and even less is it a fundamental condition for the life of a state.

Maritain's thought is in the revolutionary line of modern law, which precisely identifies legitimate government with democracy and one and the other with universal suffrage. For this reason, León Blum can affirm that the democratic ideology maintains, as a just and fertile principle, the government of the people by the people, and that it finds its dogma in the delectation of the rights of man and its rite in universal suffrage.[46]

Hence, here we reach the same conclusion that we had reached in the previous consideration. The end result of surrender the fate of the city to "universal suffrage" and to the rights of the people is to surrender it to anarchy and to the subversion and pride of the boldest. It is not enough to say that the will of the people or the spirit of the people is not the right rule of what is just or unjust[47]; or to teach that "the error of individualistic liberalism lay in denying in principle to those elected by the people every real right of command, on the pretext that everyone must 'obey himself alone,'"[48,af] is later universal suffrage is made into a right that is so essential to each human person, man and woman, that *without it* the political regime *would be unjust*.[49]

46 Léon Blum, *A l'echelle humaine* (Montreal: L'Arbre, 1945), 38, 51-52, 128-129, 37-39, 84-91.

47 Maritain, *Christianisme et démocratie*, 56.

48 ibid., 80.

49 Liberalism never denied *every real right of command* to those elected by the people. Maritain affirms this in order to be able to distinguish his position from the liberal one. On the contrary, liberalism, precisely in virtue

ae ST I-II, q. 97, a. 1. English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Prima Secundae, 71-114*, 256.

af English trans. from Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy and the Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, 44.

This is in such a way that, in practice, the intervention of the people, and even worse an inorganic intervention, and hence one that is by its nature disruptive, would become essential and primordial element of political society.[50]

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of that "*real right of command*," *arising from the will of the people*, reduced the Church to a merely private condition, monopolized teaching, laicized the family, marriage, births, death, destroyed social bodies, and, in short, acquired over *everything social*—even over individuals—a power that kings never dreamed of having.

50 On one hand, Maritain admits that all power and authority *come from God*; on the other hand, he states that no authority is legitimate if it is not *consented to*; thus it would seem that God only reveals Himself in consciences and not in the moral order, natural or supernatural, which can be objectively known either by reason or revelation, from which it would follow that every good is not only apparent *but rather real*, and to the truth of which particular consciences would have the *duty* to submit themselves. Here, Maritain makes of *conscience*, which is a means of knowledge and a proximate rule, something almost identical to the object and the ultimate and most formal rule, or, if you prefer, something that *gives value* to this object or rule, when it is recognizes. However, in this way, he truly makes every *individual conscience* the true source of authority, since the prescriptions of God only take on value when they are sanctioned by consciences. From here it follows that there is in Maritain a contradiction in the *notion itself* of the "legitimacy" of authority, since sometimes he acknowledges *theoretically* that it resides in the *agreement* between *objective moral norms* in the origin and exercise of that authority; other times—and practically—it resides in that authority *being consented to* by each one of those who are submitted to or submit themselves to it. However, what can be said when the vast majority of individual consciences sanction something that is *objectively evil*? Should it be recognized as a right? Thus, *rights* can exist without *justice*, which implies the destruction of Thomistic moral philosophy, and to accept one of the postulates of modern juridical philosophy, be it positivist or Kantian. Then, there can be a *right to evil*, and hence the subjective right no longer arises from objective right, *right social order*, according to the nature and end of man. There would be a *right* to dissolve the right order of the natural, objective, law, etc.
Moreover, notice this serious consequence: if the right to command is only such when it is born from *consent*, and if only then there is an obligation to obey, since it is contrary to "the dignity of the human person" to obey what is not consented to, when what happens when the *minority* is defeated by vote? They should obey something that they did not want. From here it follows that *obedience to God*, above and beyond the opinions of individuals, would

be illegitimate; on the contrary, it is legitimate and even *obligatory* to obey the *majority of individuals, even* (as happens in the case of the defeated minority) when something else was desired. Hence, the *majority* (the *desire* of the majority) is more respectable than what is *objectively good*. Moreover, it is not desired for man to obey *against his conscience*, and for this reason universal suffrage is imposed; however, as it happens that in universal suffrage unanimity is practically impossible, the minority *must obey against their conscience*, and this not in obedience to the *objective truth*, but rather in obedience to the *numerical majority*, unless the people who ended up in the majority had previously decided to join the majority in case they found themselves outside of it. As a result, these people would have two *consciences*: their own conscience, which would dictate its opinion to them, and that of the *eventual majority*, which they would decide to obey against their opinion. However, this supposes believing in something like the divinity of the "will of the people," since what the majority might establish is recognized *a priori* as *legitimate*, whatever it might be; and if it were to be said that it is recognized as such but only within the limits of the natural law and morality, it should be asked: who establishes, *in the social context*, what is natural morality and the natural law, and up until what point and in what its precepts are made up of? The majority? We find ourselves in a vicious circle. Should the *objective truth* be accepted, against the majority? Then the theory of *consented* authority falls apart. Then, the doctrine of consent, which is desired because it is *antitotalitarian*, ends up being the *totalitarianism* of the majority, the *totalitarianism of the will of the people*, and, since this constitutes the state, a totalitarianism of the *state*. And let no one try to bring up the *rights of the minorities* that those systems are supposed to guarantee. They might be a practical solution, a transitory state, but they have no possible theoretical justification in the systems of popular will. Because, who decides whether or not to concede rights, and which ones, to the minorities? The majority? Then it is simply a gracious concession, tolerance, a state that is essentially revocable, not a right in the proper sense, since *it comes from the majority*, and this majority can "legitimately" change or remove the rights of the minority according to those systems. One the other hand, how does one shield the rights of the minority in *indivisible* matters, which are generally the most important, such as: to declare war or not, to be joined or not to another country, to admit or reject the supremacy of the Church, to permit or refuse atheist, agnostic, materialist, or idealist teachings, etc.? This is in such a way that, in the system of consented authority: 1) obedience, be it from a large or small group, must always be given to an authority that was *not consented to*, and, hence, there is obedience against one's conscience (be it true or erroneous); 2) there can be, and often there is, obedience of a *conscience that is sure and certain* (but in the minority) to a *mistaken majority*. From here is follows that the right conscience

3. What end is proposed for the citizens when being grouped together in the Maritainian democracy

Here we are concerned with the end of the city itself, *qua* political city, and not precisely *qua* Christian city, because this second concern will be the focus of the next chapter. What this end might be we know from what we have seen in the fourth chapter when speaking about the dynamism of freedom in the social sphere, and in the fifth chapter, where we have examined the famous rights of the human person in the spiritual, political, and economic realms. This end is the famous *freedom* "*d'épanouissement*" through the "recognition and victory of all freedoms, spiritual freedoms, political freedoms, social and labor freedoms." If some order and common good is established in the city,[51] they will be subordinated to the particular good of the singular person and, above all, to the good of their own and particular "spiritual," political, and economic freedom.

The end that Maritainian democracy must strive for will be *freedom*. For this, singular persons are grouped together, *qua* persons, as *wholes* that are unable to be subordinated, without paying any mind to religious, cultural, political, or economic differences; they enter into the city as persons *qua* personas, and they want to be treated as persons *qua* persons. The only thing that matters is that they be *human persons* and they want to live as persons *qua* persons, meaning, as *wholes*.

For this, the government must be in such a way that it counts on the *constant consent* of each and every one of its cit-

of the minority should obey against their conscience, and even against objective truth, as long as social obedience to this truth over and against erroneous consciences (few or many) is not permitted. What's more, obedience to the truth against conscience does not devalue the truth or good (as is the case of a child who obeys, against his or her will, the wise and prudent commands of a parent), neither on the social order nor for the *person himself who is wrong*; however, to obey the erroneous majority against the truth and good is to condemn oneself and society.

51 Maritain speaks of the common good in different places, Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 20ff; Maritain, "La Personne et Le Bien Commun," 253ff.

izens. The common good of the city is subordinated to the free consent of those governed: a city of free persons, who govern themselves freely, in search of freedom.

What to think of this democracy which spends itself for such an end? What must happen to it is what must happen to any mass that has no governor, and of which Saint Thomas writes: "If, then, it is natural for man to live in the society of many, it is necessary that there exist among men some means by which the group may be governed. For where there are many men together and each one is looking after his own interest, the multitude would be broken up and scattered unless there were also an agency to take care of what appertains to the commonweal. In like manner, the body of a man or any other animal would disintegrate unless there were a general ruling force within the body which watches over the common good of all members. With this in mind, Solomon says [Eccl. 4:9]: *Where there is no governor, the people shall fall.*"[ag]

If this doctrine of Saint Thomas is so true with respect to the need for a social authority, it is even more certain with respect to the need for a *common end* which can be nothing other than the *common good*. This is because if there is a need for one sole authority, it is in order to make one sole common good effective, and because what is proper is not the same as what is common. Now then: the Maritainian city is deprived of a *common good*. This follows because where everyone seeks their own freedom and their own dignity as a human person, and the common good inasmuch as it is proper to them and inasmuch as it is distributed among them, and their own "spiritual" freedom and their own political participation, there, there is no *common good that is specified for the city*. That city is an anarchy of particular ends; there are as many ends as there are human persons in the city, all of them sought as wholes that cannot be

ag *De regno*, I, c. 1. English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship*, 5-6.

subordinated.

An examination of the final cause of the Maritainian democracy brings us to the same conclusion that the examination of its material cause and efficient cause did: namely, that this city is condemned to disintegration.

4. The form of unity of the Maritainian democracy

In order to understand the form of unity of the Maritainian democracy, it helps a great deal to know the setup of Lamennais. In an article from November 9, 1830, Lamennais presents, in these terms, the problems of the vital form that must animate the city of modern times.

"Under whatever form of government the city is established," he writes, "it will necessarily be ruled either by intelligence or by brute force.

It cannot be ruled by intelligence except in two ways, namely: by human intelligence, subjected to Divine reason and guided by it, in such a way that God is the true and first sovereign; [or] by human intelligence alone and, politically considered, without any relation to God.

However, the reason of each man, considered without relation to God, is in its essence independent from the reason of every other man, and since that power is similar in everything in all men, without any privilege, without any superiority of nature, it follows that the man with power has no right to impose his reason on others by means of rules and laws; it follows that this is not, nor can it be, as much as it can, anything but brute force.

From here arise three systems of society: one founded upon God, the source of power, the author of order, and sovereign legislator, whose reason and will dominate the reason and will of His intelligent creatures, and bring them all, by means of obedience, to unity. And man is free in this society, because he does not obey a man, because he obeys none other than supreme reason, the truth, immutable and eternal justice,

which is perfect freedom.

In the second system, founded only upon human reason without any relation to God, all unity is impossible, because united is not established except by obedience, that is, by dependence. Now then, where God has been excluded, all dependence is servitude of the one who depends, the oppression of the one who is made dependent, since independence is the fundamental law, the law itself upon which this class of society rests. It follows, then, that it implies individual freedom in the highest degree that can exist: this has no limit other than itself or, in other terms, the freedom of each one does not restrain itself except where it becomes, in its exercises, a violation of the freedom of another.

In the third system, the reason of one person, likewise independent of divine reason, is raised above the reason of all, and it imposes itself upon society as reason, as the supreme law. And, as it has no right whatsoever to the obedience of other reasons, its power, as has been said, is reduced to brute force, and it has no title to power other than that very brute force. This is the man who, substituting himself for God, usurping His power, thus violates, at the same time, the rights of God and the rights of man himself, to owes obedience to no one save God.

This system tends to a sort of unity, but it is a purely material unity, which is nothing but a common slavery of all intellects and of all wills; it is a unity of prison in which all the unfortunate are enclosed together, held by the same chains, sleeping on the same bunks, and working under the same whip.

Now then, of these three classes of society, the first which, uniting order to truth, offers the perfection of both on and the other; in the current settings of peoples, it is clearly impossible, because it presupposes what does not exist, namely, the belief in one same law that is universally recognized as divine, and in an authority that promulgates and infallibly interprets that law. . . .

In order for the third system to be able to establish itself and

to last, it will be necessary for all the people to recognize the right of one man make justice and truth according to his likes; this would be the complete annihilation of all truth and of all justice, of all reason, of all thought, and from there, of all duty and of all real right. . . .

Thus, we are left with the second system, founded upon the full development and complete enjoyment of freedom. Here, at least there exists, certainly not a complete life and a perfect order, but one of the conditions for order and for life, that is, freedom itself without which no intelligence, no conscience, no duty, and no right can exist. Since the principle that is, at the same time, the foundation and the rule of duty, of right, of conscience, and of intelligence, which are reduced to unity, has ceased to be universally recognized among us, and at the same time no strength can destroy it, and if it were destroyed, man himself would be destroyed, it follows that the social system founded upon the development of individual freedom is today the only one possible, the only one that can persevere us from the greatest evils that peoples must fear, despotism and anarchy; and, as a consequence, to be opposed to this necessary consequence of the current state of spirits is to be opposed to the order such as it can exist today, it is to prolong the convulsions that agitate and torment the world, it is, after so many calamities, to bring new ones without end and without number."

However, is the society that arises in this way a true society with a social bond with a form and a life that is truly *common*? Lamennais answered negatively. "Without doubt," he says in another article from October 30, 1830, "such an alliance does not constitute a true society; however, while there do not exist the conditions of a true society, it can attenuate the consequences of a state that is so terrible, prevent a complete anarchy, and, averting a part of obstacles that oppose the passions and material disorders to the action of the laws that rule human reason and that constantly tend to bring it to unity, to prepare, to hurry along a better future.

Let us imagine a house that is inhabited on its different floors by a Jew, a Muslim, a Protestant, a Catholic; certainly their beliefs and duties are too different for them to really form a true society. However, suppose they fear that a bunch of crazies will come to burn down the house, whose roof covers them all, or that in each victory of a different party, a group were to come to slit the throats, successively, or to persecute them, the Jew, the Muslim, the Protestant, and the Catholic: in that case, the common danger will unite them, and, if they themselves are not blinded by a ferocious fantasy, they will not hesitate to join themselves for their mutual defense, an association that will create relations of benevolence between them, relations that will make them happier, calmer, and more efficient than purely doctrinal discussions regarding the points that divide them. In any event, they will live and live in peace."

The thought of Lamennais is one of extraordinary transparency. His opinion is that a city where there is "freedom of conscience and of teaching, freedom of the press and of association, civil and political freedoms, freedom of work and industry," even though it is not a real society, is the best that can be hoped for in the *present dispositions of the human spirit.* The form that would give life to the city of Lamennais would not be the *order of reason subjected to revelation*, but rather the *order that comes about from allowing each person the greatest individual freedom*. Lamennais accepts this neutrality, not as an ideal, but rather as the *lesser evil*, the only possible solution in the current disposition of spirits.

Even though Maritain also starts from the fact that current society is divided by different religious, philosophical, and political doctrines and beliefs, he wants to impose a *common vital form*, which brings together in a *true society* materialists, idealists, agnostics, Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists: "a *common* program, with respect to which they can all be in agreement, not in virtue of an identity of doctrine, but rather by analogous similarity to practical princes, which therefore tend to

the same practical conclusions, if they feel a similar reverence towards the truth and intelligence, human dignity, freedom, fraternal love, and the absolute value of the moral good."[52,ah]

The setup of Maritain differs from that of Lamennais in that while Lamennais theoretically leaves true *freedom*, Maritain wants to *impose* a *common* program of freedom, which would make a kingdom of order impossible. Lamennais wants *freedom* for everyone as the best thing given the present disposition of spirits, but while recognizing that this program is con-

52 *El Pueblo*, 15, V, 45. On account of this citation from *El Pueblo*, Maritain reproduces in his latest book, *Raison et Raitsons*, the original text from the paragraph in question, just as it appeared in *The Nation* (New York, April 21, 1945). The text by Maritain does not modify at all the version found in *El Pueblo*.

There Maritain himself wants to show that I falsify his thought be reading *Christianity* where he has written *Christendom*, or reading *Christianity* where he has said *common faith* (not religious, but secular). I allow myself to formally challenge Maritain to show concretely where, in even a single passage of my writings, I have made this assumed confusion. What I have pointed out in Maritain, as I have shown to Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., (see *Correspondence*, p. 119), is the identity between his *new Christendom*, his *new democracy*, and his *earthly Christianity*.

In the same way, Maritain attempts, very loosely, to accuse me of reading *Christianity* (earthly!) where he has spoken of the repercussions of the Gospel message in worldly conscience . . . (see, in my *Answer to two letters of Maritain*, p. 49, the passage from Maritain). However, in order to justify his accusation, Maritain should remove the paragraph on page 43 of his *Christianisme et Democratie*, where he speaks of two Christianities, one "as a religious creed and road to eternal life," and the other "as leaven in the social and political life of nations."

ah The English text in *The Range of Reason* reads slightly differently: "As concerns, therefore, the revitalized democracy we are hoping for, the only solution is of the pluralistic type. Men belonging to very different philosophical or religious creeds and lineages could and should co-operate in the common task and for the common welfare of the earthly community, provided they similarly assent to the charter and basic tenets of a society of free men." We have provided a translation of Meinvielle's Spanish text. English trans. of the text from *Christianisme et Démocratie* from Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy and the Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, 22.

trary to the rights of God and to the order and absolute good of the city; in contrast, Maritain wants for the *order of the city* to come from a *common* agreement of *divided* spirits but that *agree* with the dignity and freedom of the human person. From here it follows that in the city of Lamennais, no one will be excluded; however, in the city of Maritain, everyone who does not conform themselves to this program based on the *dignity and freedom* of the human person will be exiled.

From here it follows that if someone were to maintain that the city, even the *modern* one, divided by different religious and philosophical beliefs, should be regulated, not by freedom, but rather by the *common good*, they would need to be exiled from the city. This is because the *common good*, taken as the rule for the city, would look after the efficient, although prudent, attaining of those real and objective good that can efficaciously promote the real good of concrete citizens. Although bearing in mind their desires for freedom and human dignity, it would take, as its only criterion for value, the *common good*, and not exactly this freedom and dignity which are kept in mind only in the measure that they aid to attaining the common good. Meanwhile, in the Maritainian city, the common good is only kept in mind in the measure that it concurs with the freedom and dignity of the singular person.

This discrimination is not a more or less harmless subtlety. It points out an essential difference between the city governed by the *common good* and the other by *freedom*. The city ruled by the common good will obtain, without any detriment to peace, to draw near to the traditional sort of natural and Christian society that Saint Thomas describes when he writes: "It pertains to the king's office (and to whatever authority, even in a democracy)[53] to promote the good life of the multitude in such a way as to make it suitable for the attainment of heavenly happi-

53 The text in parenthesis is our own addition.

ness,"[54] by the means that are most fitting for them to obtain heavenly bliss, which, as it known, cannot be obtain except by means of the Roman Pontiff, "to him all the kings of the Christian People are to be subject as to our Lord Jesus Christ Himself."[55,ai]

Hence the concrete society should be organized in such a way that, without endangering the peace, the *bonum pacis*, it draws near to that good; hence, the society should seek that good and permit what is evil only in the measure that it is required for the *bonum pacis*. Hence, in what measure a society tolerates evil, and consequently in what measure it distances itself from the ideal good, is something to be determined on a case by case basis by *political prudence*. One thing might be required in a society like Spain, where the majority are born and raised Catholic, and something else in a society like France, where liberal ideas have had more influence, and something very different for a society like England or the United States, and even something far different for a pagan society like one in the Far East.[56]

However, what has been pointed out here is the only principle for a solution that demands healthy reason and that prescribes the Catholic doctrine expounded by Leo XIII in *Libertas*, when he writes: "But, to judge aright, we must acknowledge that, the more a State is driven to tolerate evil, the further is it from perfection; and that the tolerance of evil which is dictated by political prudence should be strictly confined to the limits which its justifying cause, the public welfare, requires."

54 *De regno*, I, c. 15.

55 *De regno*, I, c. 14.

56 However, it must be pointed out that a pagan society like those of the Far East are closer to the common good, and it is easier for them to draw near to it than a liberal-Socialist-Protestant society; the pagan who reveres his God with the humility proper to a creature is closer to God than the proud liberal Protestant who, under the name of God, only adores himself.

ai English trans. taken from Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship*, 62.

The one governing must adopt, as the only valid criterion of value, the *common good*, and if this truly *common good* must be regulated by that ultimate rule for valuing every good, which is the eternal law of God, the lawgiver must push all citizens to obtain both their temporal and eternal good.[57]

The opinions of Lamennais and Maritain are to be rejected. Lamennais believes that the time to renounce the very principle of the city's order has come; public power should not seek the greatest common Christian good by the means that political prudence suggests . . . but rather should be simple and straightforwardly implant a society where there is the greatest freedom of individual possible permitted in accord with the city's peace. For Lamennais, that is the greatest good which must be sought: the full exercise of individual freedoms. On the other hand, he teaches that by seeking that greater exercises of individual freedoms, one will reach a Christian society. His error consists in switching the very "end" that the one governing should seek, since this end can only be to seek *the Christian common good* and to *permit* freedoms only in the measure they that are concretely better in order to attain that good; the achieving of freedoms can never be an end, even if, by means of *revelation*, it were known that by that means Christendom were to be obtained. This is because *non sunt facienda mala ut eveniant bona* [*Evil cannot be done so that a good might result from it*].[58]

The position of Maritain is worse still, because he does not simply private the city of its unity, as Lamennais does, but rather fixes it with a *perverse* unity, such as that of a city where *norms of public life* that satisfy idealist and materialist ideals

57 Lamennais and Maritain make a *social theory* out of something that only pertains to *political prudence* (the tolerating of evil, the least evil organization possible in this era). They even end up pretending that this implies a *progress*.

58 Saint Paul: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach [to you] a gospel other than the one that we preached to you, let that one be accursed!" (Gal 1:8).

must be positively established. Maritain effectively seeks *a norm of political convenience* that will be truly *common* to both Catholics and non-Catholics: a city in which "Men belonging to very different philosophical or religious creeds and lineages could and should co-operate in the common task and for the common welfare of the earthly community, provided they similarly assent to the charter and basic tenets of a society of free men."[59,aj] "No society," writes Maritain,[60,ak] "can live without a basic common inspiration and a basic common faith. But the all-important point to be noted here is that this faith and inspiration, this philosophy and the concept of itself which democracy needs, all these do not belong in themselves to the order of religious creed and eternal life but to the temporal or secular order of earthly life, of culture and civilization."[61,al]

"As concerns, therefore, the revitalized democracy we are hoping for," says Maritain,[62,am] "the only solution is of the *pluralistic* type. Men belonging to very different philosophical or religious creeds and lineages could and should co-operate in the common task and for the common welfare of the earthly community, provided they similarly assent to the charter and basic tenets of a society of free men. For a society of free men implies an essential charter and basic tenets which are at the core of its very existence, and which it has the duty of defending and promoting. One of the errors of individualist optimism was to believe that in a *free society truth*, as to the foundations of civil life, as well as the decisions and modes of behavior befitting

59 *El Pueblo*, 13, V, 45.
60 *El Pueblo*, 13, V, 45.
61 *El Pueblo*, 13, V, 45.
62 *El Pueblo*, 13, V, 45.

aj English trans. from Jacques Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), 166.
ak English trans. from ibid., 167.
al English trans. from ibid.
am English trans. from ibid., 166.

human dignity and freedom, would automatically emerge from the conflicts of individual forces and opinions supposedly immune from any irrational trends and disintegrating pressures; the error lay in conceiving of free society as a perfectly neutral boxing-ring in which all possible ideas about society and the bases of social life meet and battle it out. . . .

Thus democratic society, in its concrete behavior, bad no concept of itself, and freedom, disarmed and paralyzed, lay exposed to the undertakings of those who hated it, and who tried by all means to foster in men a vicious desire to become free from freedom.[63] 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,[64] enabling it to educate people for freedom and to defend itself against those who would use democratic liberties to destroy freedom and human rights."[65,an]

The human common good, which is able to be subordinated and, in the measure that circumstances allow for it, is subordinated *in actu* to the supernatural good, is not the specific end of the Maritainian city; this specifying end consists, rather, of the democratic liberties upon which a *common foundation* can be established between materialists, idealists, Christians, and Jews. In the Maritainian city, the *common good* is accepted in the measure that the democratic freedoms of worship, the freedom of universal suffrage, and economic freedom permit it. This is so that if the *common good* of a city were imposed and required, in the judgment of responsible men, the

63 In such a way that the *defect* of individualist optimism was in not having followed the liberals enough.

64 May the reader be warned about this error: a *philosophy* that is derived from *democracy* (the theoretical truth derived from a contingent political order!), a faith (belief in what is not seen) derived from said order and *in* said order, etc.

65 *El Pueblo*, 13, V, 45.

an English trans. from ibid., 166-167.

government of a leader who is good, balanced, magnanimous, religious, and prudent, it would be worthless if it was not established by egalitarian universal suffrage. Hence, the life of the city is at the mercy of political freedom.

And if, in a peoples like those educated in the Spanish Catholic tradition, the *common good* of the city were imposed and required, in the judgment of responsible men, like those who form the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the public recognition of the teaching and Catholic life in schools and universities, and in economic and social relations, this should also be prohibited, because it would be contrary to the freedom of worship, which is a natural, inviolable right of the human person.[66]

The democracy of Maritain is incompatible with justice and with the common good

For Catholic doctrine, democracy is only acceptable while is does not change the promotion of the *common good*, which is the only end to which the city is directed. For this reason, in the first lines of his famous allocution on democracy, Pius XII printed those words of Leo XIII: "The Church does not disapprove of any of the various forms of government, provided *they be per se capable of securing the good of the citizens*."

All democracies that alter or diminish this end will be bad in the measure that they alter or diminish it. For this reason, *modern* democracy is bad; because with its spirit of rebellion and popular sovereignty, inherited from Kant and from Rousseau, it makes the flourishing of the common good of the city impossible.

It is true that Maritain expressly rejected *modern Rousseauian* democracy, and he blames it for having invalidated the legitimate democratic aspiration of the peoples.[67] He expressly

66 And thus, with this, there is no way to avoid, for instance, that a professor or several make an unforeseeable number lose the faith, and even natural certainties, and in this way disturb the whole right social order.

67 Maritain, "La Personne et Le Bien Commun," 266; Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 69-71; Maritain, *Christianisme et démocratie*.

rejects that "the people are . . . God, the people . . . have infallible reason and virtues without flaw, the will of the people or the spirit of the people is . . . the rule which decides what is just or unjust."[68,ao] He rejects the idea that man "must 'obey only himself'"[69,ap]; that "this common life, which we call democracy . . . [can] subsist" without the inspiration of the Gospel[70,aq]; that it is "the regime of the sovereignty of the people"[71,ar]; that "Democracy or Revolution [is] a heavenly Jerusalem of the Godless Man."[72,as]

These express reprobations show that his democracy is not as perverse as that of Rousseau. However, they do not reach the point of showing that his is good or acceptable, as Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, O. P., and Leopoldo Eulogio Palacios has believed. I have expressly concerned myself regarding the opinion of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange elsewhere.[73] I want to take advantage here to concern myself with the opinion of Leopoldo Eulogio Palacios, as much as it is known at present, regarding what he says about my book *De Lamennais a Maritain*. Maritain, as Palacios writes, "by rejecting the ideal of the divine mandate as valid for our days, he substitutes it with another ideal with which

68 ibid., 56.

69 Maritain, *Christianisme et démocratie*, 80.

70 Maritain, *Christianisme et démocratie*, 33.

71 Maritain, *Christianisme et démocratie*, 79.

72 Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 170.

73 Julio Meinvielle, *Correspondance avec le R.P. Garrigou-Lagrange a propos de Lamennais et Maritain* (Buenos Aires: Editions "Nuestro Tiempo", 1947).

ao English trans. from Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy and the Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, 29.

ap English trans. from Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy and the Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, 108.

aq English trans. from Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy and the Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, 15.

ar English trans. from Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy and the Rights of Man and the Natural Law*, 44.

as English trans. from Maritain, *The Rights of Man*, 31.

he considers to have found a *via media* between the aforementioned medieval ideal and the modern liberal ideal."[74]

In proof of his assertation, he reproduces a passage in which Maritain characterizes *the autonomy of the temporal* as an *intermediate end*, subordinated to the spiritual, but not instrumentalized by him. He continues: "Paragraphs like this, in which Maritain distinguishes his position in the face of modern liberal understandings, abound in the latest works of the French thinker, and they could be easily adduced by him or by his supporters against the book by Meinvielle."

However, it is easy to respond to this that the position of Lamennais and that of Marc Sangnier, like that of all Catholic liberalism, which, in the expression of the *Syllabus* is presented as a conciliation of the Church with modern civilization, are *already* this *via media*. Instead of such a general affirmation, it is necessary, if one really wants to effectively refute my argument, to point out *the essential difference* between the doctrines of Lamennais-Marc Sangnier and those of Maritain. My book can only be destroyed by showing that Lamennais-Marc Sangnier were condemned for teaching other doctrines that are not contained in that of Maritain. It is not enough to say that "Maritain distinguishes his position in the face of modern liberal understandings"[75]: Lamennais does the same. What has happened is that many who have not directly studied the writings of Lamennais and of Marc Sangnier imagine that their teachings are much more serious, or other a different nature then they are in reality. For this reason, I have been able to write to Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange O.P. what might perhaps be useful also to remind Leopoldo Eulogio Palacios: "Lamennais of *L'Avenir*

74 Leopoldo Eulogio Palacios, "Un libro argentino sobre Maritain," *Revista de estudios políticos* XV, nos. 27-28 (May–August 1946): 150–164. Since the distinguished author promises a study regarding the work of Maritain, it is necessary to wait until that appearance in order to know and examine his opinion in greater detail.

75 ibid., 163.

does not teaching anything that is essentially different from what Maritain teaches in a series of books where these errors have been made explicit since 1930.

I must tell you that, in spite of all the effort you have put into it, you have not been able to point out this essential difference. . . . Up until the present, when you have attempted to point out some difference, it has been done by exaggerating the errors of Lamennais in order to diminish those of Maritain; but let all of the writings of Lamennais in *L'Avenir* be read calmly, and all of Maritain in the refuted works, and one will be left amazed by the coincidences. May the discourses and writings of Marc Sangnier be read as well, and it will be seen that he has said nothing more serious that what Maritain has taught. . . . And, nonetheless, there is the letter condemning Sillon."

The parallel between the opinion of Lamennais and that of Maritain can be made even stronger by showing with greater strength, if possible, how Maritain, in spite of his condemnable democracy, rejects the democratic thought of Rousseau. In a letter dated February 12, 1831, he writes to Fr. Venture: "By adhering to the principles of Saint Thomas and of other theologians, we will two observations:

First: his doctrine cannot be confused with that which has been defended by Jurieu and Rousseau under the name of sovereignty of the people. In effect, this fundamentally consists in supposing that the people have no other law than their will, which is what creates justice; this doctrine evidentially entails atheism, and from it nothing but terrible calamities can come. Catholic theologians, on the other hand, establish in principle that each people is submitted, just like individuals, to the divine law of justice essentially independent from their will and promulgated by the conscience of the human race. . . .

It is true that we must overcome the resistance of the ministry buried in the traditions of despotism of all regimens, and the opposition of the persecuting liberalism, which is still dominated by the prejudices of the philosophies of the 18th cen-

tury. However, the ministry cannot, no matter how hard it tries, impede what the Carta contains from coming forth, what the firm will of the Nation has put in it, and the old liberalism, which was animated by ideas of tyrannies, has been succeeded by a true, clarified, generous liberalism, which rejects all oppression, and which strongly desire real freedom, a freedom equal for all, whole for everyone. United to this loyal liberalism, Catholics will be invincible. . . . "

Thus, it is not sufficient to anathematize the liberal doctrines of Rousseau and the other creators of *modern* democracy; it is necessary to reject all liberalism, even the diluted version of liberal Catholic. The Maritainian democracy, which makes freedom the specifying end of the city, changes the nature of the just and ordered city that should be ruled by the common good.

Moreover, when the opinions of an author are examined, it is not enough to repeat their *express* affirmations in order to exclude the errors that they can be accused of. It is necessary to present their thought in a coherent way. What is it worth if, for example, Maritain indignantly rejected the accusation of liberalism that has been made against him, like the Canon Pérez, among others, if later he develops concepts that logically imply liberalism?

This is because, just as *Primauté du Spirituel*, in its internal logic, excludes liberalism, the internal logic of *Du Régime* and of *Humanisme Intégral* imply it. For, if what is erected is a *new Christendom*, *essentially new*, in which the state refuses to subordinate itself to the Church, to the end of the Church as *minister*, *ministerially*, and this in virtue of a progress, of a *prise de conscience*, of a supposed *age of majority*, how can liberalism be avoided? If public freedom of worship is defended as a *natural, inviolable right*,[76,at] how can liberalism be avoided? If *social*

76 Maritain, *Les Droits de L'Homme*, 103.

at Meinvielle's text has no footnote 76; from this point, all footnotes are

progress is made to consist in economic, political, and religious *emancipation* of persons *qua* persons, in the face of the state, how can liberalism be avoided? Since, if progress formally consists in *freeing oneself*, a society, like modern society, must be, by *right*, better, as a city, than another that is less *free*, which makes a public profession of the Truth. For this reason, what I reminded Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., is very important: "The Society of Maritain must be *neutral* not only because of a *necessity in fact* but rather also by a necessity of *right*. Since, although Maritain, like Lamennais, deplores the present division of beliefs and considers it a bad thing, he fully maintains that a society that respects the rights of conscience is more valuable and is more Christian than the one that respects the rights of the truth; the reason for this is in that it implies a greater progress demanded by the Gospel inspiration. Thus, *by right*, a society like modern society, even though the religious division must be deplored, is to be preferred to a society without religious division but with less freedom, on account of the intervention of public power that restricts freedom, as was the case in medieval society. By *right and in fact* the United States and France are preferable to Spain which openly declares itself Catholic."[77]

With respect to the point in which Leopoldo Eulogio Palacios believes to have found the shine of the probability of the new Christendom of Maritain when he would affirm "the autonomy of the temporal to the title of *intermediate end*, in conformity with the teachings of Leo XIII that declare the supremacy—in its order—of the authority of the state," we give a two-fold response: 1) Theological thought has always recognized the autonomy of the temporal to the title of intermediate end, as Maritain himself teaches in *Primauté du Spirituel*, because there he writes: "This doctrine is unchangeable. It may

77 Meinvielle, *Correspondance avec le R.P. Garrigou-Lagrange a propos de Lamennais et Maritain*, 94.

shifted one from the original.

have been presented under different aspects: it has not altered in the essentials throughout the centuries. What was described in the Middle Age as the doctrine of the two swords—at all events in the sense in which it was understood by St. Bernard and St. Thomas Aquinas as in pontifical documents—is essentially identical which what has been described since Bellarmine and Suarez as the doctrine of the indirect power—at all events if the latter be taken without attenuation. Anyone paying sufficient attention to the substance of things underlying the various incidents of history will perceive that one same teaching is imparted by Boniface VIII in the Bull *Unam Sanctam* and by Leo XIII in the Encyclical *Immortale Dei*; and for a complete idea of the indirect power, both these great documents should be simultaneously borne in mind."[78,au]

We could add that some secondary theologians in the 14th century who claimed for the Church *direct* power in the temporal realm; these are those who, as a consequence, have stripped the state of its condition as total and adequate principle cause, or of complete end, in the natural order. But, who would dare to consider them as representatives of medieval theological thought?[79]

The affirmation that the Middle Ages was practically ignorant of the state's character as *intermediate end* and that is was only assigned the role of instrument, is a version in Scholastic terminology, of the capricious accusation of Lamennais, later repeated thoughtlessly by Catholic liberals, in *Le mélange du spiritual et du temporel*.[80]

78 Pg. 28.

79 Cfr. Jacques Maritain, *Primauté du spirituel* (Plon, 1945), Annexe I.

80 Hugues-Félicité Lamennais, "Le mélange du spiritual et du temporel," *L'Avenir* (Paris), June 30, 1831.

au It is not clear what Meinvielle's footnote refers to, but the English trans. from Maritain, *The Primacy of the Spiritual: On the Things That Are Not Caesar's*, 11.

Lamennais writes: "It is clear that during the centuries in which Christian peoples lived under the empire, which was originally necessary, of *royal paternity*, *what resulted* from this still imperfect mode of society was an inevitable mix of the two powers, spiritual and temporal. . . . The mix, or, better said, confusion of the two powers in the *royal paternity* was an unending source of difficulties and divisions; in this way, the *agreement between the priesthood and the empire* never existed in any age, but rather in books where it was wisely dealt with."[81]

To recriminate an institution for the abuses that men have committed with it is an immature response which does not warrant special attention. These are the same abuses, not altogether invisible in the current regime in Spain, which in some spirits which would otherwise be very promising, produce disaffection for the traditional Catholic doctrine of the subordination of the state to the Church.

However, these must be reminded that to correct the abuses it is not necessary to correct the *institutions*, if these are not *intrinsic and essential* to the abuses. Every regime, even the divine one of the Church, is exposed to the deficiencies that come from men.

However, the regime of separation or of equilibrium is bad because of its *intrinsic* nature, and it can only be tolerated as a *lesser evil*.

2) *Although the end of temporal power might be a complete and principal end in its order*, it must be an end that is *per se* subordinated to the supernatural end of the Church. The reason for this is based on the impossibility for the will of one single person to be able, with one unique absolute act of will, to desire at the same time all the various *fines simpliciter* that are ultimate, total, and adequate. This is the doctrine of Saint Thomas, which is based on metaphysical and psychological reason, which have

81 Hugues-Félicité Lamennais, *L'Avenir* (Paris), June 28, 1831.

been magisterially explained by Fr. Ramírez.[82] "It is *impossible*," writes Saint Thomas, "that there should be many proper causes of the same thing within the same genus and in the same order, although there can be many causes providing that (1) one is proximate and another remote; or (2) that neither of them is of itself a sufficient cause, but both together. An example would be many men rowing a boat."[83,av] "It is impossible for two complete causes to be the causes immediately of one and the same thing."[84,aw]

Thus, the natural or temporal end cannot be at one and the same time the *absolutely* last end, like the supernatural, but must, rather, be subordinated to it. For this reason Fr. Ramírez writes: "When the ultimate natural end is subordinated to the ultimate supernatural end, the same man can be directed by one and the other at the same time and have them; but, when the ultimate natural end is not subordinated to the ultimate supernatural end, but rather is opposed to it and contradicts it, then the same man can neither have them at the same time, nor be directed by them efficiently."[85]

From here it follows that for the temporal or natural end to be subordinated to the end of the Church, it must be able to be subordinated *per se*. Now then, a city with its end in freedom and not in the *common good* cannot, as a city, be *good per se*, since it is deprived of that form which is the only thing that

82 See J. M. Ramírez, *De hominis beatitudine*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1942), 318.

83 *Sent. Meta.*, II, 773.

84 ST I, q. 52, a. 3.

85 Ramírez, *De hominis beatitudine*, 340.

av The citation is actually from Book 5. English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans. John P. Rowan (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1995), 284.

aw English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Prima Pars, 50-119*, trans. Laurence Shapcote (Lander, Wyoming: Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrine, 2012), 22.

makes it good. If it is not good, then it is not able to be subordinated to the Church. The natural order is autonomous and, without losing its autonomy, it is subordinate to the Church, building in this way the Christian civilization, but it is able to be subordinated only when it maintains the *essential* integrity of the natural good. In this way the Church could assume and subordinate the ends of the empire and the authority of the Romans. But the Church cannot assume and subordinate a city with an end of obtaining material riches, or freedom, because these would be corrupted in their very condition as a city. It is precisely in this that the evil of modern democracies consists, in the Roussean-ian ones first and principally, and later too the Lamennaian ones, the Sillonists, and the Maritainian, in the measure that they participate in the spirit of the first.

A state—and this is the case of Maritainian democracy—which sets modern freedoms as an essential postulate of the juridical order, including freedom of worship, is perverted in its condition as a state and it cannot, in any way, be subordinated to the Church, as a cause subordinated to another cause, as an *intermediate end* to a higher end. Lastly—and with this conclusion we put an end to the present chapter—if the setup of the democracy in Maritain were purely sociological,[86] there would be little or nothing reprehensible in it, because its character would be determined by the concrete and actual condition that the peoples present today. However, its foundation is determined by a metaphysics of the human person, with the consequent pretension of constituting itself as *universal and eternal truth*. And because Maritainian democracy is ideological, it is incompatible with the Church.

86 In the sense of being merely *descriptive*, not *moral* or ordering. But, then, it should not be proposed as an *ideal* that is apt to be desired, and as the myth of the New Christendom.

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The Weaknesses of Critical Realism: On Lonergan's Cognitional Theory

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PREFACE

This paper is my best attempt to confute (Kantian) Modern Philosophy at its very core. This implies, of course, that in my view the principles of Critical Realism are Kantian.

The basic arguments supporting Critical Realism are powerful: I have tried to show clearly their power, but also to expose clearly their putrid root. Section III, on the principle of immanence, offers the most important contribution in this undertaking.

This paper began as a discussion on the Cognitional Theory of Bernard Lonergan,[1] but when I was revising it for publication, it became something much deeper and in my view much more helpful. The references to Lonergan are still there, but now as the springboard only for reflections on principles that go beyond Lonergan and deep into Modern Philosophy. As a result, this paper may also be of interest to those wrestling with other modern philosophers and trying to escape Kant's cage on their way to a true Realism, in which consciousness is grounded on being, and not the other way around.

My research is necessarily limited, especially regarding Lonergan, but I hope it will be found neither inaccurate nor superficial.

I say that my research is limited because I am not a Lonergan scholar per se. I studied Lonergan's writings, to the best of my ability, while at the University of Toronto. I approached him with great interest when I first heard about him, because Lonergan was presented as a great Thomist who was working out conscientiously the dialogue between faith and reason. Many

1 Bernard J. F. Lonergan, SJ (1904 - 1984) was a Canadian Jesuit priest best known for his original contributions to philosophy and theological method. His intellectual program embraced philosophy, theology, macroeconomics, and the problems of method in the human sciences and historical scholarship. The *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* project 25 volumes. Cf. http://www.lonerganresearch.org/

students around me, young and old, were excited about him and I was excited too: my hope was to find in his works an appealing way to offer Aquinas' doctrine today. However, when I began to read Lonergan's writings and to hear more about his doctrine I realized that he perhaps was not what I was looking for. My goal became then to identify Lonergan's principles and to consider their true value. In any case, I have tried to substantiate my claims regarding Lonergan and I hope those who know him better than I do will correct or nuance my affirmations as they see fit.

This research comes mainly from my readings and studies during the academic year 2013-2014, a period in which I wrote two papers for Professors John Dadosky and Michael Vertin.[2] It has been a while since then, but I did not want to leave those efforts unpublished, even if they could be completed with more recent publications. The first of those two papers, with some modifications, was published as "Reflections on the Possibility of Perceptualism."[3] The present article is based on the second of those papers but greatly revised and augmented, particularly in the doctrinal discussion of the issues.

I hope the reader will find here a clear confutation of basic principles of Modern Philosophy and, consequently, important elements for the foundation of a true Thomistic Realism. The issue is very complex indeed, but these reflections may, at the very least, indicate a path out of the Kantian world.

INTRODUCTION

Bernard Lonergan states that intellectual conversion is the "elimination of the false assumption that knowing involves

2 I want to thank professors Michael Vertin and John Dadosky, for allowing me to "pursue my own set of questions" from such a different perspective as it is perceptualism, in an atmosphere of confidence, openness and academic freedom. Much of what follows has been inspired in their observations, clarifications, questions and proposed readings.

3 Cf. Andres Ayala, "Reflections on the Possibility of Perceptualism," *The Incarnate Word* 6, no. 1 (May 2019): 33–48 (henceforth as "Reflections").

'taking a good look.'"[4] He means to say that knowing is not the perception of objects "already out there now real," but a process of experiencing, understanding and judging. Why? What are the reasons for denying that knowledge is perceptive? What are the reasons to postulate knowing as a process of "construction" of the object of consciousness? There are reasons: that which follows will expose the apparent power and the real weaknesses of these reasons.

As will be seen, the arguments discussed here are only those that appear to be, in my view, the basic assumptions and the starting point of Cognitional Theory. Therefore, the reader should not expect an assessment of Lonergan's doctrine as a whole. At the same time, the principles at work in Lonergan's Cognitional Theory and discussed here are present also in other expressions of Critical Realism and Modern Philosophy: therefore, this paper can be helpful to assess some of those accounts, as well.

The first thing that struck me in my Lonerganian readings was that I could hardly find the reasons to deny that knowing is 'taking a good look.' This is denied many times, but the reasons are presumed, most of the time.[5] Therefore, I will try to make

4 John D. Dadosky, *The Structure of Religious Knowing: Encountering the Sacred in Eliade and Lonergan* (Albany: Sate University of New York Press, 2004), 55 (henceforth as *Structure*), where Dadosky refers to Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 238. For citation, I will give the complete bibliographical reference the first time only and then use abbreviated references. When *The Lonergan Reader* is referred, I will indicate first only the title of Lonergan's original work and then add "in *Lonergan Reader*" and the page corresponding to *The Lonergan Reader* itself.

5 Naïve realism is rejected sometimes with irony Bernard Lonergan, "Insight," in *The Lonergan Reader*, ed. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 180-181), or pejorative words (Mark D. Morelli, "The Realist Response to Idealism in England and Lonergan' s Critical Realism," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 21 (2003): 12, 19 [henceforth as "The Realist Response"]). The terminology "naïve" for perceptualism and intellectual "conversion" for the assumption of cognitional theory may be well grounded, but does not help by itself to see the strength

more explicit what these arguments are, because a cognitional theory cannot be sustained by words alone, especially when the difficulties of rejecting common sense are so clear.[6]

This paper is divided in five sections, as follows. In my view, the main reason to reject that knowing is 'taking a good look' is a notion of data of experience as "raw materials," and this is the subject matter of section I.[7] This notion in turn leads to a theory

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of the arguments. On perceptualism and intellectual conversion cf. also Bernard Lonergan, "Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 239-240, 247; Bernard Lonergan, "Second Lecture: Religious Knowledge," in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 134; Morelli, "The Realist Response," 12; Vernon Gregson, ed., *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1989), 10 (henceforth as *The Desires of the Human Heart)*.

6 Cf. Lonergan, "Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," 248; Lonergan, "Insight," 221; Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Giovanni B. Sala, *Lonergan and Kant: Five Essays on Human Knowledge*, ed. Robert M. Doran, trans. Joseph Spoerl (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 30 (henceforth as *Lonergan and Kant)*; strengths of naïve realism in Morelli, "The Realist Response," 6, 19.

7 In this paper, however, I will focus on sense experience. As said in Ayala, "Reflections," 37: "I set aside consciously the data of consciousness, belonging also in Lonergan's view to the first level of experience (cf. Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 2013 reprint, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, vol. 3, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 362 [henceforth as *Insight*]; Bernard Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 78; Darren Dias, "The Contributions of Bernard J.F. Lonergan to a Systematic Understanding of Religious Diversity" (PhD diss. University of St. Michael's College, 2008), 120 [henceforth as "The Contributions of Bernard J.F. Lonergan"]; etc.). In my view, they are necessarily secondary and product of reflection. We cannot speak about consciousness without reflecting and without supposing other acts of direct knowledge. More should be said, but cf. Bernard Lonergan, "First Lecture: Religious Experience," in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 117; Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 7, 10; Lonergan, "Insight," 186; Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being: An Introduction and Companion to Insight*, ed. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark Morelli (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1980), 17-18 (henceforth as *Un-*

of knowledge in which the "formal" elements of knowing (such as intelligible unity or existence) are necessarily a function of the subject. Question and inquiry are for Lonergan helpful notions to explain these a priori functions in human understanding, and these notions are discussed in section II. Another main reason to deny Perceptualism, but connected with the notion of experience, is the principle of immanence, or the reduction of (intelligible) being to being of consciousness: this is treated in section III. This section is in my view the most important, because the other sections always refer in one way or another to this one. Section IV will focus on Critical Realism's use of the notion of relation, especially with regards to understanding. Finally, Lonergan's doctrine on judgment as the position of the real will be briefly discussed in section V.

In each section, by reporting some references and texts, I have tried to show, firstly, that each principle under discussion is actually maintained by Lonergan. Secondly, I have tried to understand and show why those principles are maintained, their plausibility, their allure and their power. They do (at least apparently) "make sense," and the only way to discuss these principles in a useful way is to "see the point." Otherwise one's discussion would seem biased and unduly "dogmatic." Thirdly, I have also tried to show clearly the falsity of those basic assumptions and principles. These issues are fundamental: a proper demonstration (or syllogistic confutation) is not always possible, because sometimes there is nothing more fundamental that can be used as a principle of demonstration. However, it can neither be said that the confutation of these principles depends on a decision, nor that their falsity is simply evident and no confutation is needed. In my view, the falsity of these principles must be clearly *exposed*, or better said, left naked be-

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derstanding and Being. I use always this edition unless otherwise indicated); Cornelio Fabro, *Percezione e pensiero* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1962), 380 (henceforth as *Percezione*)."

fore the judging eye of the intellect, sometimes by a reduction to the absurd, other times by deepening on the notions used for argumentation until the erroneous root of the arguments can be seen. I did what I could at each step on the way, and I hope the reader will find something useful in what follows.

I. THE NOTION OF EXPERIENCE

The first weakness I see in Lonergan's cognitional theory is related to his notion of experience as providing simply the "raw material" for human understanding. This implies, first, that the data from experience are without form and without unity; second, that the data from experience have no intelligibility of their own. The first is against experience itself, as I have discussed in *Reflections*. The second is against the Thomistic distinction between intelligibility as content (i.e., the natures of corporeal things, which certainly belong to the particular) and intelligibility as the abstracted mode of being of that content (which is only in the subject and depends on the subject's agent intellect), a crucial distinction which will not be the focus of this paper.[8] In this section, divided in five points, I will try to assess what Lonergan says about experience and why, in order to show the weakness of his notion of experience.

1. Overview: The Problem

Lonergan's fact (or point of departure) in the explanation of human understanding is the emergence of intellectual con-

8 For this important distinction, cf. Andres Ayala, *The Radical Difference between Aquinas and Kant: Human Understanding and the Agent Intellect in Aquinas* (Chillum, MD: IVE Press, Forthcoming), 113ff (henceforth as *The Radical Difference*). This monograph is based on my dissertation, Andres Ayala, "The Agent Intellect in Aquinas: A Metaphysical Condition of Possibility of Human Understanding as Receptive of Objective Content" (PhD diss., University of St. Michael's College, 2018). Online https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/93391. See especially Chapter 2.

tent over the content of sensible experience.[9] This emergence of the intelligible content, however, is considered by Lonergan as an absolute heterogeneity, in such a way that the intellectual contents can never come from the sensible ones: they are different, irreducible. The content of sensible experience is indefinite, multiple and disorganized; whereas the intellectual content possesses unity, meaning, etc.[10]

Now, the intellectual content refers somehow to that of sensible experience. But it does not come from experience. Therefore, the intellectual content is subjectively added to the data of experience. This is one of the key features of a Kantian aprioristic system: if there is intelligibility in the object of knowledge, and this intelligibility does not come from the data, it must necessarily be a function of the subject.

The heterogeneity of contents of consciousness is a real problem. However, because here intelligible and sensible contents are arbitrarily dissociated, Lonergan's solution is questionable. One of the problems, as I have tried to show in *Reflections*, is Cognitional Theory's analysis of experience: experience is portrayed as disorganized and devoid of unity, simply a "raw material" for the subject to inform… a portrayal of experience which has basis neither in experience nor in science.

2. Lonergan's Doctrine of Experience

For Lonergan, the data of experience are the "material" for understanding, in the sense of elements without organization, determination, unity or structure. Speaking on the cognitive level of experience, Lonergan says that "it is presupposed and

9 Cf. Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," 78: "The world of immediacy is a world of data, of what is given to sense and given to consciousness. It is a world as yet without names or concepts . . . . The world mediated by meaning goes beyond experience through inquiry."

10 Cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Cognitional Structure," in *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 4, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 218: "By our sense we are given, not appearance, not reality, but data."

complemented by the level of intelligence, that it supplies, as it were, the raw materials on which intelligence operates, that in a word, it is empirical, given indeed but merely given, open to understanding and formulation but by itself not understood and in itself ineffable."[11] He further clarifies that: "[S]ince data, percepts and images are prior to inquiry, insight and formulation, and since all definition is subsequent to inquiry and insight, it was necessary to define data, percepts, and images as the materials presupposed and complemented by inquiry and insight."[12] The only possible determination of the data is from intelligence: "The given is residual and, of itself, diffuse… it can be selected and *indicated only* through intellectual activities, of itself it is diffuse; the field of the given contains differences,[13] but insofar as they simply lie in the field, the differences are unassigned."[14]

We read sometimes also "insight into the data" and "immanent intelligibility of data,"[15] which may suggest some intelligible content in the data of experience themselves. However, these phrases are interpreted by Patrick Byrne in this way:

11 Lonergan, "Insight," 165.

12 ibid., 194.

13 Regarding this interesting phrase, "the field of the given contains differences," cf. ibid., 288.

14 ibid., 218f (my emphasis). Similar expressions are found throughout Lonergan's works. Cf. Lonergan, "First Lecture: Religious Experience," 116f (no superstructure in the data; notion of experience as potential and material); Lonergan, *Insight*, 97: "raw materials of one's sensations"; ibid., 364: "as insight draws the definite object of thought from the hazy object of experience"; Lonergan, "Insight," 219: "inquiry and understanding presuppose materials for inquiry and something to be understood"; Lonergan, *Insight*, 367: "Inquiry and insight, then, are related internally to materials about which one inquiries and into which one gains insight." He seems to interpret St. Thomas in this sense, cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Christ's Knowledge: Thesis 12 of De Verbo Incarnato," trans. Charles Hefling (unpublished), 18 [original Latin published as Bernard Lonergan, *De verbo incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1964)], quoting ST I, q. 84, a.6, a text often misused in Transcendental Thomism (cf. Ayala, *The Radical Difference*, 248ff).

15 Lonergan, *Insight*, 93.

> This is what is meant by "insight *into* phantasm"—**not** that the intelligibility (proper object) **is somehow hidden within or behind the image**, but rather that the **insight adds** intelligent consciousness of the intelligibility proper to the image out of which it emerges … .The emergent insight bestows its own proper object of intelligibility upon the image, since, strictly speaking, the image as merely imagined has no intelligible content of its own.[16]

The data are devoid of any intelligible content: "As data, such acts are experienced; but as experienced, they are not described, distinguished, compared, related, defined, for all such activities are the work of inquiry, insight and formulation."[17] "The given is unquestionable and indubitable… in the sense that it lies outside the cognitional levels constituted by questioning and answering."[18] "Without this second level [of understanding] there is indeed a given but there is no possibility of saying what is given."[19]

Lonergan's consideration of understanding as a unifying activity supposes also a theory of data as elements without unity. He claims that: "Our answers unify and relate, classify and construct, serialize and generalize. From the narrow strip

16 Patrick Byrne, *The Ethics of Discernment: Lonergan's Foundations for Ethics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 141-142 (henceforth as *Ethics of Discernment*). Mine bold, Byrne's italics.

17 Lonergan, "Insight," 166. Cf. ibid., 188: "That P is 2 when the needle on a dial stands at a certain place is a judgment ….All that is seen is the needle in a position on the dial …. Nor is it this description that is seen, but only what is so described …. In the formulations there always are elements derived from inquiry, insight, conceiving. But in virtue of the checking one can say that the formulation is not pure theory, that it is not merely supposed or merely postulated or merely inferred, that it's sensible component is given."

18 ibid., 218.

19 Lonergan, *Insight*, 336.

of space-time accessible to immediate experience we move towards the construction of a world-view."[20] In a lecture on "Religious Knowledge," Lonergan explains:

> A grasp of unity presupposes the presentation of what needs unification, as a grasp of intelligible relationship presupposes the presentation of what can be related. Again, such insight or grasp presupposes inquiry that search, hunt, chase for the way to piece together the merely given into an intelligible unity or innerly related whole.[21]

Two features of this last text are interesting for our following reflections: 1) the "wholeness" of the object of knowledge is not related to experience but to understanding; and 2) understanding adds but without having anything ready-made to add.[22]

3. Possible Reasons to Assume this Theory of Experience

Because this notion of experience is similar to Kant's, it could be helpful to explore why Kant himself assumed this notion.

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20 Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 104 (henceforth as *Method in Theology)*. Cf. Lonergan, "First Lecture: Religious Experience," 126.

21 Lonergan, "Second Lecture: Religious Knowledge," 142. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," in *A Second Collection* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 272: "The first seven chapters of Insight deal with human intelligence insofar as it unifies data by setting up intelligible correlations."

22 For other texts that consider understanding or judgment as an addition or completion of the content, cf. Lonergan, "Insight," 167; Lonergan, *Insight*, 30; Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 5, 12, 24; Byrne, *Ethics of Discernment*, 139ff; Dias, "The Contributions of Bernard J.F. Lonergan," 120; Joseph Maréchal, *A Maréchal Reader*, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 241 (henceforth as *Maréchal Reader)*.

Lonergan's notion of experience is not different from that of Kant.[23] Kant also maintains the heterogeneity of sensible content and thought: "Kant assumed the heterogeneity of sense and thought, a generic difference between sensibility and understanding—one receptive, the other spontaneous"[24]; "One such premise, contained in the principle that universality and necessity cannot be derived from experience, is the inability of understanding to penetrate the sensible."[25] For Kant, the data of experience are also material to be organized: "Empirical elements of experience, arising from mechanical affection by a real agent, are crude materials to be worked up into the form of knowledge, with the outcome being a *tertium quid* between the cognizing mind and the things themselves."[26] Quoting first Kant, Sala states that the a priori for Kant "will in any case be an addition made by the cognitional faculty to the raw material of the sense impressions"[27]; sensation gives the matter of the appearance, "but that which so determines the manifold of appearance that it allows of being ordered in certain relations, I term the form of appearance. [It] cannot itself be sensation; and therefore, while the matter of all appearance is given to us a posteriori only, its form must *lie ready* for the sensations a priori in the mind, and so must allow of *being considered apart from all sensation*."[28]

23 Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), B 1-6 (the numbers correspond to the original German edition, in this case, the second edition, noted "B"); Ayala, *The Radical Difference*, 349ff.

24 Morelli, "The Realist Response," 12.

25 Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 22.

26 Morelli, "The Realist Response," 12.

27 Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 20.

28 ibid., 14. This similarity between Lonergan and Kant regarding the notion of experience does not prevent us from finding differences between their respective doctrines. There is a difference between Lonergan and Kant regarding what they consider "knowing," which is still intuitive for Kant, and so actually impossible with regards to the *noumeno* (cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Metaphysics as Horizon," in *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 4,

Why Kant assumes this notion of experience seems unclear. Giovanni Sala wonders: "Why is it that the formal component of sensible knowledge cannot originate in the *Erfahrung* [experience]? The KRV does not give the slightest response to this question .... Admittedly Kant attributes an a priori origin to the synthetic, intelligible element of our knowledge."[29] Therefore, he continues, for the same reason, he would have applied the same principle to every form of knowledge.

For Dawes Hicks, instead (as Morelli tells us) at least the historical origin of Kant's notion of experience is clear. The problem of Kant, for Hicks, is the assumption of Hume's theory of experience:

> The inadequate starting point that Dawes Hicks identifies is ... Kant's appropriation of Hume's conception of sense-experience as constituted by a mere aggregate of discrete impressions. Given this assumed theory of perceptions, says Dawes Hicks, a synthesis or combination of the manifold becomes necessary. This synthesis becomes the very act of knowing, and its product the intervening and object veiling *tertium quid*.[30]

In my view, Kant's notion of experience as random elements without unity derives certainly from his historical-philosophical context, but Kant's reason to assume it is related

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Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 194; Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 5, 12; and there is a difference also regarding their respective notion of a priori: according to Sala, for Lonergan the a priori is only heuristic, without content, and instead for Kant "it has an objective content of its own" (ibid., 5; cf. Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, 194ff). Cf. Morelli, "The Realist Response," 20.

29 Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 14.

30 Morelli, "The Realist Response," 21. It is the same position of Cornelio Fabro (cf. Fabro, *Percezione*, 7, 12-13), that is, that Kant assumes Hume's notion of experience.

to his solution to the problem of the universals. Kant's universal cannot be grounded in experience, which is particular through and through. Experience is the multiple which can only find unity in and from the subject. The universal, therefore, must be grounded on the subject. The *intelligible* unity of the object is now a function of the subject: why would the object's *sensible* unity be a "given"? Can this sensible unity be perceived outside our consciousness? Is not the sensible object one in our consciousness *only*? And if the sensible object were one in itself, could this objective unity be subjectively perceived? All we can perceive is what appears to us, what enters the realm of consciousness: for Kant, whatever is absolutely objective (*noumeno*) remains outside the field of human knowledge.

Or better said: the reason to deny an a posteriori origin of the intelligible is that the object *appearing in consciousness* (i.e., the universal and necessary object) is absolutely dissimilar to the particular sensible reality. Kant is departing from an object of knowledge which is *immanent* and subjective, because for him knowledge is possession, not encounter. Knowledge is for him physical possession, not intentional possession. It is enclosedness, not openness. For the same reason, that is, for the impossibility of verifying subjectively that which is outside the subject, for the impossibility of knowing outside of ourselves, Kant cannot justify the experiential origin of any other formal content, including sensible, and this is why he attributes to the subject also a priori forms of sensibility. As can be seen, Kant's reason to assume this notion of experience is related to the principle of immanence, which will be the subject of section III of this paper.

A physical interaction between two bodies is easier to admit, and that is probably why Kant, and in general all modern philosophers, admits that there is a material element coming from experience and producing "impressions" on the subject's sensibility. These "impressions" coming from outside allow

Modern Philosophy to explain the fact that we do not simply and arbitrarily "come up" with the object of knowledge, that we are not "creators" of the known world but, rather, simply "administrators" of what is given, according to the "Transcendental Rules" of our subjectivity.

I suggest that a similar approach is present in Lonergan, that is to say, he has made a possibly unquestioned assumption of Kant's (and so Hume's) theory of experience. Perhaps Lonergan thought it was an evident fact: "The problem tackled in the book [*Insight*] was complex indeed. At its root was a question of psychological fact. Human intellect does not intuit essences. It grasps in simplifying images intelligible possibilities."[31] But what were Lonergan's reasons to assume this theory? Kant's reasons seem to me more clear. Lonergan's reasons may be similar, insofar as he also embraces the principle of immanence, as we will see in section III.

4. Weakness of this Theory of Experience

What is important at this point, however, is to draw attention to the weakness of this theory of experience, insofar as there is no reason to assume it, and many reasons to reject it.

As I have suggested,[32] the psychological research of the *Gestalttheorie* has made clear that the data of experience are never a raw material without unity or form but "wholes."[33]

31 Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," 268. Or perhaps Lonergan was trying to answer this question when he wrote: "Why is the given to be defined extrinsically? Because all objectivity rests upon the unrestricted, detached, disinterested desire to know" (Lonergan, "Insight," 220).

32 Cf. Ayala, "Reflections," 37ff.

33 It is the thesis of Cornelio Fabro in his monograph Cornelio Fabro, *La Fenomenologia della Percezione*, Opere Complete 5 (Segni, Italy: EDIVI, 2006). Cf. also Fabro, *Percezione*, 7-17 and for a very similar account on behalf of Dawes Hicks, cf. Morelli, "The Realist Response," 21. For Lonergan's awareness of the problem and related issues, cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959," in *The Lonergan Reader*, ed. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997),

Hume's theory of experience does not have any experience to support it. The object of perception of everyday experience presents itself as a synthetic unity of contents ("objectual levels" of Fabro), in which the heterogeneity of contents does not prevent their interdependence. Modern Philosophy appears to separate mistakenly what is united in the data of conscious experience (i.e., sensible and intelligible content, matter and form of human knowledge, etc.).

It is also difficult to defend Hume's notion of experience by rational analysis, precisely because it implies that experience is intellectually perceived and not "irrational"![34] Someone may suggest that it is not that we perceive experience intellectually, but that we "deduce" what experience must be like, given the facts. Fair enough, but what "facts"? Certainly not conscious experience. The immanence of the object of knowledge, then? I will address this in section III of this paper.

The assumption of Kant's notion of experience leads to an Epistemology in which knowledge is considered an informing activity and the subject a source of content. But if Kant's notion of experience is not safe ground to tread upon, then this theory of knowledge should be revised. This is the first weakness I see in critical realism.

II. THE NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE: QUESTION AND INQUIRY

Another important element of Cognitional Theory is the notion of question. The notion of question is employed in order to explain the aprioristic character of human knowledge. For example, it is argued that we understand something insofar as we find the clue we were looking for, insofar as we bring

364; Lonergan, *Method in Theology* Bernard Lonergan, "Method in Theology," in *The Lonergan Reader*, ed. Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 448, 495f; Lonergan, "Second Lecture: Religious Knowledge," 142 (explicitly quoted above, see footnote 22).

34 Cf. Ayala, "Reflections," 39-40.

questions to the issue.[35] To understand is to unify otherwise disparate clues, to subjectively organize the data which we had but were insufficient to make understanding arise. Actually, the amount of data, helpful as it may be, never guarantees understanding.[36]

These partially fair statements are used in Cognitional Theory to suggest that the *absolute* origin of every intellectual content is the activity of the subject (yearning, *intentio entis*, unrestricted desire to know, inquiry, etc.),[37] and not the data; this is because, as we have seen before, the data are devoid of any formal unity or intellectual content. The difficulty I see here is that the above-mentioned particular facts are not enough to establish their conclusion. In other words, the fact that *sometimes* our questioning helps understanding arise, is not enough to conclude or to suggest that all understanding arises from a certain "questioning."

It is evident that a question presupposes an object about which we inquire. Lonergan does not disagree with this.[38] But

35 Cf. Gregson, *The Desires of the Human Heart*, 86. He puts the example of bringing questions to a text. Sala uses an example of a judge to show how the questions are prior to knowledge (cf. Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 6-7).

36 Cf. Gregson, *The Desires of the Human Heart*, 84: "No sequence of rules can guarantee understanding. Understanding is a creative act of intelligence, deriving from the desire to know and one's native gifts, which finally allows one to make sense of a word, a sentence, a paragraph, a section, and finally the whole work"; John D. Dadosky, "Observations to Andrés Ayala's Paper 'An Inverse Insight'" (Course, Thought of Lonergan, University of Toronto, 2013).

37 Cf. Lonergan, *Insight*, 34; ibid.: "As human knowing begins from natural spontaneity, so its initial developments are inarticulate. As it asks what and why without being given the reason for its inquiry"; cf. also Michael Vertin, "Affirming a Limit and Transcending It," in *Limina: Thresholds and Borders – A St. Michael's College Symposium*, ed. Joseph Goering, Francesco Guardiani, and Giulio Silano (Ottawa: Legas, 2005), 117, 123 (henceforth as "Affirming a limit"): "primordial… yearning that is a constitutive feature of my concrete subjectivity."

38 Lonergan, "Insight," 167: "Questions for intelligence presuppose something to be understood, and that something is supplied by the initial level"; ibid., 219: "inquiry and understanding presuppose materials for inquiry and

the problem is that, for him, that which is presupposed is not in the realm of intelligence. Instead, in my view, though it is true enough that we do not know what we question, in the sense of the "goal," we do know the object we question about, we know the "this" of the "what is this?" If "this" can be questioned about, "this" is known. If "this" is known, "this" is determined, indicated, unified and one. If "this" is known in this way, "this" is in the realm of intelligence before the question itself, as a *datum* about which we question. "This" is not diffuse, as Lonergan's data, but determined and unified. Now, what is the determination of "this," what is the content of "this"? Its content is "something that is," *ens*, the *primum cognitum* of Aquinas. In other words, when we question "what is this?" we neither question whether there "is" something, nor that this is "something", but "what" this something is. So, the first weakness I see in Lonergan's notion of question is that, for him, the subject matter of the question is not intellectual, and this seems not to be the case. The subject matter of the question is "something that is," *ens*, which is intelligible and the first intelligible in human understanding.[39]

Another weakness, connected with the previous one, is that the nature of that questioning is not clear, and is sometimes described in obscure terms. In fact, the words "questioning" and "desire" can be understood as certain conscious acts we know

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something to be understood"; Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, 164: "We cannot wonder or inquire without having something about which to wonder or inquire; and it is the flow of sensations, perceptions, and images that provides the materials about which one wonders or inquires"; cf. Lonergan, *Insight*, 367.

39 As I have suggested in Ayala, "Reflections," 40-41, what sets in motion the process of inquiry seems to be the participated unity of the object of knowledge, that is, its unity not of simplicity but of multiplicity. This kind of unity moves us to look for its grounds. Something similar could be said about the knowledge of a relation: we see something in the object that moves us to think in something else. Relation will be the subject of the fourth section of this article.

very well, but Lonergan is pointing to something much more primordial than that. What is the experience we have of that, or what is the consciousness we have of that "yearning"? Our desire to know, the one we can experience, allegedly implies a previous knowledge of something. If this "primordial" desire is not like the desire we can experience, why do we call it desire? If it is like the desire we can experience, can we say that it is more primordial than knowledge itself? And why, if not because of the assumption that intellectual content cannot be given?

Sometimes examples are proposed to illuminate the primordiality of affectivity over knowledge, especially feelings that apparently do not have knowledge or reason as a cause, like falling in love, unsubstantiated or unreasonable fears, angst, etc.. I suggest that the fact that, at a certain point, we are conscious of an (affective) feeling but not of its cause, does not mean that we did not (cognitionally) feel anything that produced this affection. It is also important to make a distinction between what we think is the cause of the feeling and what is actually the cause.

The obscurity of the term is sometimes greater because of the characterization of the *a priori* questioning as purely "heuristic,"[40] but at the same time adding content.[41] There is a tension between affirming that intelligence does not have any "implicit" knowledge but at the same time adds intelligible content. Things are not clearer when we read: "Inquiry itself,

40 Cf. Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 23. Michael Vertin, "The Finality of Human Spirit: From Maréchal to Lonergan," *Lonergan Workshop* 19 (2006): 270, 277 (henceforth as "Finality"): "*mere notion, bare idea, simple intention*, of being," "bare anticipation"; ibid., 279: "because he maintains that what is naturally given is my mere intending (rather than primordial knowledge) of being, Lonergan holds that the fundamental basis of a transcendental criteriology is my anticipating of knowledge (rather than actual knowledge)."

41 Cf. Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 20; ibid., 24: "Because of an intelligent a priori in the quest of the intelligible, there is an intelligible content, expressed in the concept, which is added to the sensible content of presentation."

then, is something between ignorance and knowledge."[42] The difficulty is this: where does the content come from? It does not come from experience, because the given is unintelligible and diffuse. It does not come from inquiry either, because the a priori is only heuristic and it does not know anything yet.

I suggest that, if the things we know have a formal content (a certain perfection), and this perfection was not previously there (in our consciousness), we need to answer where this perfection is from. It is not enough to say that the answer is in the subject: considering that the subject itself does not have that perfection (from nothing, nothing comes out, and you cannot give what you do not have). Perhaps it would be argued that the intelligible content is just the organization of the data, as a certain unity of order, a certain relation among the (unintelligible) data. The question then becomes: is that process of organization blind or does it follow rules? If it follows rules, the rules for the process of organization of the data would be the functions of understanding (Kantian categories), and so understanding would not be purely heuristic. If the process is blind, how can it give an account of intelligibility? How can something unintentional and unintelligible give an account of intentionality, consciousness and intelligibility? Cognitional Theory's plausible answer is: "It is necessary. If the intelligible content of consciousness does not come from experience, it must come from the subject, and even if the content does not seem to be ready-made in the subject, we need to postulate that it is there in some way. Now, if we do not want to postulate definite a priori rules of understanding, in a Kantian fashion, it seems that the only way left is to postulate that the content is in the subject implicitly." The problem is at the beginning: why must we deny that the intelligible content comes from experience? Their necessary end, of course, cannot be more absurd: the only rational explanation of knowing is grounding the rational on the irra-

42 Lonergan, "Method in Theology," 452.

tional, the definite on the indefinite, act on potency, being on nothing, intelligence on will, etc.[43] It does not make any sense to postulate something like this: that there is something definite because there was something indefinite before, that the definition of the present comes from the absolute indefinition of the previous. It would be more sincere to say that there is no explanation for the fact of knowing.

Another difficulty in using the word "question" is the very nature of questioning. By itself, a question implies previous knowledge: we need to know something in order to question about it. But, does the notion of knowledge, by itself, imply questioning? It does not seem so. Some knowledges imply previous questions, but knowing something does not necessarily imply to have questioned about it. Now, knowing something does imply the capacity of knowing, but that capacity needs not to be considered actively, as the word "questioning" seems to suggest. Therefore, the notion of question, because it implies knowledge, does not seem to be helpful in the ultimate explanation of knowledge. And because not every knowledge implies questioning, again, the notion of questioning does not seem helpful to explain every knowledge.[44]

43 An observation regarding the origin of the content may be in place, and I thank Prof. Dadosky for his suggestion in this regard. In cognitional theory, the intelligible content is necessarily a function of the subject (Cf. Lonergan, *Insight*, 365: "Inquiry is generative of all understanding, and understanding is generative of all concepts and systems"), and it is only in this sense that the subject can be said the "creator" of its objects. Not, however, as a creator *ex nihilo*, but rather, I would say, as a platonic demiurge, who gives form to the matter. For Lonergan, the sensible component of the object is given, but the "form" is added by the subject's activity (Cf. Lonergan, "Insight," 188, text in footnote 17 of this paper).

44 The term "questioning" seems unhelpful for other reasons as well. 1) If the intelligible content (here, the "answer" to the primordial "questioning") comes from the a priori activity of the knower, question and answer come in a certain sense from the same source, which is odd. 2) If question is a way of dialogue, it implies an "other" and a certain equality with this other, and so a) the one questioned is the data and therefore there is no equality or b) the

Admittedly this is not a matter of words, but of notions and principles: I hope, however, that this discussion on "questioning" has raised issues more important than words.

III. THE PRINCIPLE OF IMMANENCE

In Cognitional Theory, the objects of our knowing are complete only in our knowing, insofar as our subjective operations inform (i.e., give form to) the raw material from experience. The object as we know it is only in our conscious operations. The world we know is the world *as* known. The world is thus immanent to consciousness. A world outside consciousness would not be known. Nobody can know outside his or her own knowledge. This is how I understand the "principle of immanence": the object of knowing is necessarily "inside" consciousness as an act of it.

When I argued against Cognitional Theory at the University of Toronto I received these kinds of responses: "Are you not arguing from within yourself? Are you not using your very operations to contradict Cognitional Theory?" Such responses enabled me to realize that Cognitional Theory maintains the immanence of the object of knowledge, and one cannot get out of that immanence even as one argues against it. One always argues through one's own operations; everything one knows is mediated by that person's conscious acts: therefore, the object of knowledge "remains within" human consciousness, is subjective, insofar as the object's formal determinations come from the subject's conscious operations.

In the words of Lonergan: "The world mediated by meaning is not just reality but reality as known."[45] Giovanni

one questioned is the knower itself and therefore there is no otherness. 3) We may find difference between the parties of a dialogue, insofar as they may be unequal in knowledge: but if the one who questions knows more than the other, why is s/he questioning?

45 Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," 92. Perhaps in the same line is the text of Lonergan, "Insight," 258: "the universe

Sala says, "Reality here obviously means the reality as understood."[46] He further explains:

> When the mental content, the representation qua representation, has acquired the character of the absolute, we have a representation which by its very nature brings about that transcendence that belongs to knowledge; arriving at it as a mental representation is the means of reaching the thing directly. The difficulty of recognizing this reflexively, even though it is spontaneous in our performance whenever we make a rational judgment, is the difficulty of intellectual conversion.[47]

As we have seen, it is common to speak in terms of that which is "within" when referring to the content of conscious acts or to the objects of consciousness. For example, Sala says: "Obviously, the representation as representation is in me, it is mine. But by reason of the unconditioned, its content is not relative to me."[48] Dadosky says something similar: "A judgment within the human subject… refers to reality as independent of the subject."[49]

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of being is whatever is intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed . . . . All development is development inasmuch as it goes beyond the initial subject, but in man this 'going beyond' is anticipated immanently by the detachment and disinterestedness of the pure desire." An interesting description of the principle of immanence, though in interrogative terms, is in Lonergan, *Insight*, 363: "A thing is a concrete unity-identity-whole grasped in data as individual. Describe it, and it is a thing-for-us. Explain it, and it is a thing-itself. Is it real? Is it objective? Is it anything more than the immanent determination of the cognitional act?"

46 Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 17.

47 ibid., 30.

48 ibid., 29.

49 Dadosky, *Structure*, 48. For the principle of immanence in Maréchal, cf. Vertin, "Finality," 269; Maréchal, *Maréchal Reader*, 18. Other indications regarding the principle of immanence in general in Paul Templeman, "Clear-

1. Weakness of the principle of immanence

In order to appreciate the weakness of the principle of immanence, let us examine the following argument: "*we learn reality* through operations, and so *not what is outside*, but what is in the operations." It could be answered that the fact that we learn reality through operations does not mean that reality is in the operations, as if reality were a subjective event, but that operations are about reality. To say that we do not know that which is "outside" our operations is either to say that we do not know that which is outside reality, which is obvious; or to say that reality is nothing other than the *known* reality, which does not follow. The fact that I reach reality through my operations does not imply that reality depends on my knowing it. The original fact in human knowledge is that I know *reality*, and that *I know* it: this is a dual fact, and nobody has ever been able to deny this duality.

Again, the fact that I cannot assert a reality which is outside the reach of my cognitive operations does not mean that the reality within the reach of my operations depends on those very operations. What is meant is simply that my operations are about being. The fact that knowing is about being, and that being is known, does not necessarily imply that being depends on one's knowing it, or that being is because one knows it. This fact, of course, presupposes a certain adequacy between knowing and being, but not being's dependence on knowing, and even less the reduction of being to knowing. If knowing is about being, to reduce being to knowing is to take away knowing itself.

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ing the Ground. How to Think about Realism and Antirealism," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 19 (2001): 251 (henceforth as "Clearing the Ground"); Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, trans. William Dych (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 67; Fabro, *Percezione*, 464-465, 474.

2. Being and Knowing: Comparing the Notions

Is being simply being known, as Modern Philosophy suggests? As I have just argued, there is no compelling reason to affirm this. Should we not rather say that knowing is nothing other than knowing being? A simple examination of the notions shows that the notion of being does not imply the notion of knowledge, and, instead, the notion of knowledge implies the notion of being.

Being, as the simplest and most original concept in human understanding, does not presuppose anything else. Knowing, instead, begs the question, "knowing what?" To know is to know something, knowledge implies an object of knowledge in order to be thought of. In order to think about knowledge, knowledge must be there and we must experience it, and the first knowledge we can experience is the knowledge of something else, not the knowledge of knowledge itself: because, again, knowledge cannot be known if it does not happen first. In other words, knowledge is a subjective act on something, and this something, at the beginning, cannot be this subjective act itself, precisely because this subjective act is not there to be known, unless something else is known first. Therefore, the first thing the subject can subjectively encounter in its act is that which is different from itself, that is, that which is thrown before itself (= object as *ob - jactum*). Only then, once the subject has known something, is the act of knowledge there, and able to be known as subjective act. The fact that the act of knowledge is "conscious" does not mean that it is conscious of itself, but that it is conscious of its object, whatever this object might be (i.e., being at first, and then also the act of knowledge itself).

Therefore, there is no compelling reason to affirm that being depends on knowledge, but we have seen that there is no way to think about knowledge without thinking being. Therefore knowledge depends on being. Knowledge does not happen

without being. Knowledge is actually about being. Being enters the definition of knowledge, but not the other way around.

Now, it is true that there is no *compelling* reason to affirm that being depends on knowledge, but can we not entertain that this is actually the case? To think that being is only being known and that being is simply an event of consciousness involves no contradiction. Could we not, therefore, pose arguments to support this theory? In the end, if this theory is thinkable, there are no arguments to show that is simply false. Cognitional Theory might be opposed to the appearances, but the appearances are not enough to contradict it as a theory.

First, there are compelling reasons to affirm that knowledge depends on being (as I have just shown), and therefore the opposite is simply false, even if it is thinkable. Second, you can certainly *try* to prove something which is thinkable, even if it is false and against the appearances, but this is an act of will, not a reasonable exercise of science. Third, the reasons to *try* to prove that being depends on and is coessential with knowledge are usually connected with skeptical arguments (the fact of error in human knowledge, the lack of agreement among philosophers, the relativity of the object to the subject, etc.), arguments which are inconsistent and have already been confuted. Skeptical arguments, however, keep enticing our scruples to "make sure" that our doctrine is completely certain, completely under our control… Other reasons to *try* to prove the principle of immanence are in the affectivity: when we do not want something outside of us to determine what we consider true or false, and reality seems to prove us wrong, the principle of immanence gives us a good excuse to determine our own truth because, in the end, "being depends on our knowing it."

3. Human Knowledge: Communion, not Identity

In my view, it is very helpful to consider St. Thomas' reflections on the nature of knowledge in *De Veritate*, q.2, a.2, in order to respond more completely to the principle of immanence. In

short, he says that there are two kinds of perfection in reality. One is the perfection that each thing has in itself, which is the specific perfection of every substance; with regards to this kind of perfection, each thing can have only one perfection, which is its own specific perfection. But there is in reality another kind of perfection: that is, the perfection of one thing present in another thing, and this is the perfection of the knower. In this way, that is, according to this second kind of perfection, one thing (the knower) can potentially possess the perfection of the universe (the other things).

This is an important point of departure. We human beings experience not one, but two things: we experience the world around us, and we experience knowledge itself. We know both, and we know that these two things are different from each other, even if they are connected with each other. It might very well be that one depends on the other, but that one is not the other *as such* is out of the question. One thing is the world, or each particular thing in itself, and a different thing is what happens to me when I know. When I know, this particular thing is in me, somehow. I know that this thing is something in itself, I know *it*, but now I consider this thing as related to me, as bringing itself to me, as being possessed by me. This thing appears different from me, but is *with me*, and is with me precisely *in its otherness*. How is this possible?

The consideration of human knowledge is the consideration of the communion between subject and object. Such consideration of human knowledge comes after this communion itself, that is, after we have considered not our communion with the object, but the object in itself. When we consider human knowledge we move from considering the characteristics of the object to considering the conditions of possibility of our communion with the object. This "togetherness" invites our consideration precisely because it presupposes a fundamental "alterity": two things are somehow one. Again, how is this possible?

At this point, the temptation arises to transform this unity of communion into a unity of identity, this oneness of two into the oneness of one and the same. "It's true, Modern Philosophy says, they do not seem to be one, but they must be one, if they are together." Clearly, what they say is already a denial of the original factual duality. However, what is most important is their reason for this denial, which is, in my view, *Modern Philosophy's inability to understand being unless it is considered in a physical way*, perhaps related to a certain inability to transcend imagination. And this is why knowledge is understood by Modern Philosophy in terms of matter and form: the unity between subject and object must be like the unity of matter and form, because there is no other unity outside the unity of identity, the unity of one thing with itself.

This is the methodological mistake of Modern Philosophy: standing before the mystery of being and knowing, Modern Philosophy absorbed being into knowing. This was done in order to create a unified system, but at the price of amputating half of the mystery of reality. And so, in order to give primacy to knowing, Modern Philosophy actually destroyed knowing, rendering knowing no longer communion with the other but the oneness of a physical being, the information of matter, the imposition of the subject on the non-subject. Strangely, knowing, which was originally a "togetherness" with the in-itself of reality, is understood now in terms of the physical "in-itself." Being has been robbed of its matter-form structure by knowing, and then killed. Knowing is no longer itself, because it looks like being, and being is no longer there, because knowing has killed it.

St. Thomas avoids this problem, for example in *De Veritate* q. 2, a. 2, by starting from the consideration of two different kinds of being, one physical and one intentional. One kind of being is the unity of each thing with itself, the possession of itself and its own perfection; the other kind of being is the unity of one thing with another one, the possession

of the other. These two kinds of being are facts: but Modern Philosophy is reducing the second to the first. And this is also why Aquinas explains the second kind of being as something related precisely to immateriality, to a way of being which is independent from matter. In other words, while Modern Philosophy had to transform knowing into physical being, because it could understand unity only as identity, as the unity of matter and form, St. Thomas departs precisely from the necessity that knowledge be explained as something related to immateriality. Immateriality is thus the condition of possibility of this "togetherness" which knowing appears to be.

Modern Philosophy has transformed this "encounter with the other" (which knowledge seems to be) into a "finding myself in the other," a "finding my own perfection in the material other." For no reason, the "other" in knowledge has been robbed of its own perfection, and now the subject attributes to itself that which belongs to the object. For no reason, I say, because there was no reason to deny the duality that knowing implies both factually and essentially; also, because it was not necessary to explain every event in reality (including knowledge) with the parameters of one aspect of this reality (here, physical being). Knowledge is a primordial event, like being, and it may very well be that it has its own mystery and rules, irreducible to the mystery and rules of other things.

4. Immanence or Alterity?

If we are truly attentive to the data of consciousness, we realize that the object appears to the subject with a sheer character of alterity.[50] The object appears "in" consciousness as *other*; insofar as it appears "in" consciousness precisely as a guest, as "non consciousness." I am not saying that the object's alterity is already present as part of our initial consciousness of the object: our initial consciousness is busy with the "in-itself," is

50 Cf. Fabro, *Percezione*, 380.

"outside" of the self, so to speak. But once we become conscious of having known the in-itself, conscious of knowledge, and therefore conscious of our own selves also,[51] the object's alterity is obvious: the object appeared "to" us, is not us; the object came in from outside as a guest. The only way to pass from consciousness of the "in-itself" to consciousness of the object being present "in" us or "to" us, is by distinguishing the object from us: *the object's presence "in" ourselves presupposes its distinction from ourselves, not its identity with ourselves.* Consciousness could be conceived as a certain "space," but certainly not as a closed space: consciousness has doors and windows, is open to the world.

Things "happen" in consciousness, people and things "come and go": we can only welcome them. We could try to reject them too, but only after they knock on our windows or doors, only after we realize that we don't want them in. We can try to defend our space, but we should not destroy doors and windows: they are our salvation, and if we destroyed them, we would just be making bigger holes in the walls.

In short, what I mean is that the object appears as other in our consciousness of knowledge, not initially in our consciousness of the object in itself. Alterity is in this sense not a primordial datum of human knowledge, because it presupposes something, namely the knowledge of the "in-itself." But alterity is certainly more primordial than immanence, since we cannot perceive the object "in" consciousness unless we have perceived the object as different from consciousness.

5. The Nature of the Cognitional Species

Epistemologies based on the principle of immanence have another problem, which is the consideration of the cognitive species as an objective mediation, that is to say, a species which becomes the very object of knowledge. Instead, the species I

51 Cf. ST I, q. 87, a. 1; ibid.

propose[52] is a subjective-objective mediation, that is to say, a subject's quality referring him or her to the object. The species has thus a double aspect: a subjective aspect, as a real modification of the subject, and an objective aspect, the one which is the reason for the intentional presence of the object. The example of a picture *may* be helpful: in a picture we have a sheet of paper and we have the image of a person. Both things are present, but the mode of being of each is different. The paper and materials of the picture are real; the person, however, is not there physically. Yes, the person is somehow present in the picture but, physically, there is nothing in the picture except materials. However, when we look at the picture, we know the face of the person, of *that* person *him or herself*, and we do not care about the (*real*) materials out of which the picture is made. The species is something like this: something real connecting us with something different from itself. What we know in (through) the concept as subjective modification is the thing itself, not the concept.[53]

I do not think it is necessary in this paper to defend thoroughly this proposed notion of species. But two things should be clear: 1) Modern Philosophy's notion of species as objective mediation is grounded on the issues already discussed. The cognitive species, as subjective modification, becomes in Modern Philosophy the only possible object of knowing, since reality is reached solely through our operations and therefore the reality we can know is only that which is "within consciousness": all we have "in ourselves", and therefore all we can know

52 Cf. Fabro, *Percezione*, 463-476, especially 472-473 with quotations of St. Thomas; Ayala, *The Radical Difference*, 168ff.

53 Most important in this respects is the distinction between formal concept (the subjective modification by which we understand) and objective concept (what is understood). Prof. Tavuzzi emphasized this distinction in Michael Tavuzzi, "The Distinction of the Divine Attributes from St. Thomas to Gaetan" (Course, Pontifical University St. Thomas Aquinas: Rome, 2003) (henceforth as "Distinction").

is our cognitive species, understood as active information of the matter from experience. 2) The species I propose is also grounded on the issues already discussed with regards to the Thomistic notion of knowledge. The species' double aspect is related to the fact that our operations (subjective aspect of the species) are about reality (objective aspect of the species).

6. Intentional Attribution

A last observation is in order. The principle of immanence tells us that what we know is not outside but "within" us. But as Giovanni Sala noted, it is difficult to recognize this reflexively.[54] Lonergan himself recognized this difficulty.[55] We are not conscious of knowing something within us, but something "outside," distinct from us, independent in being.

It may be helpful here to recall the problem of the universals and the different instances of its solution. When I say, "John is a man," "man" does not stand for a name, because John is not a name, he is not the word "man." "Man" does not stand either for a concept, because John is not the concept of man, he is a man, not a concept, and even less a concept of mine. When we say, "John is a man," we do not mean to say that John is a name or a concept, but that John is an instance of *what* we *intend* (mean) by "man." "Man" stands for the nature, the nature of John. The universal, therefore, what we predicate of the many, is the nature of the concrete.[56]

When in judgment we attribute a certain nature or the very existence to something, we do not attribute it in the sense of giving to or putting into the data something that was not there. We do not mean that, and so this is not what *we* do, this is not what we are conscious of. We attribute in the sense of recognizing that something belongs to the object of perception. It is

54 Cf. Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 30. See footnote 47.

55 Cf. Lonergan, "Unity and Plurality: The Coherence of Christian Truth," 248; Lonergan, "Method in Theology," 470; Lonergan, "Insight," 221.

56 Cf. Fabro, *Percezione*, 611; Tavuzzi, "Distinction."

a cognitional or intentional attribution, not a physical attribution.

A notion of judgment or cognitive attribution as providing the data with an intelligibility they do not have in themselves would be an idea of attribution which is foreign to our experience, which is never conscious and which seems to confound the intentional with the physical. This "physical" attribution, that is, this giving intelligibility to the particular in the sense of adding something to the raw material of experience, presupposes the notion of experience which I have already criticized. However, if there is no reason to suppose that the object of experience is a disorganized material, and instead this object appears as a determined and meaningful whole, then judgment's intentional attribution should be considered as a reflexive acknowledgement of what belongs to the object in itself, and not as adding to the object something that was not there before judgment.

The principle of immanence is not necessarily the childish transformation of everything into a solipsistic dream. It is rather the establishment of the subject as the criterion of objectivity, reality and truth.[57] Human being becomes the cen-

57 Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *The Lonergan Reader*, ed. Mark Morelli and Elizabeth A. Morelli (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 22 (from the *Introduction*): "The criteria of knowledge, objectivity, truth, reality, and value are immanent in the operators; they are contained in the questions we raise."; Lonergan, "Insight," 217: "Upon the normative exigencies of the pure desire rests the validity of all logics and all methods"; ibid., 198; Lonergan, "Method in Theology," 456; Lonergan, "Second Lecture: Religious Knowledge," 144: objective truth is the fruit of "being ruled by the inner norms .... satisfying these norms is the highroad to the objectivity to be attained in the world mediated by meaning and motivated by values .... There is the objectivity of the world of immediacy .... But there also is the objectivity of the world mediated by meaning; and that objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity"; Bernard Lonergan, *Understanding and Being*, 2013 reprint, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Elizabeth A. Morelli, vol. 3, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 168: "Now insofar as there is a requirement, a criterion of the virtually unconditioned, there is opera-

ter of the universe, because there is nothing else outside his or her consciousness that could function as a rule or limit. Human being becomes the sovereign of a universe which is as great as his or her nothingness can be. Man remains alone, because he did not want to open his consciousness to the object-given-other, and so he blocked the way to discover the infinite Other. Thus, man is left without salvation, except from himself… and so becomes a being-towards-death. I suggest that the existential void into which humanity is being drawn comes from the principle of immanence, which has left man alone with his own nothingness and despair. It is not good for man to be alone. As Kant woke up from the dogmatic dream, we should now wake up from the immanentistic nightmare.

IV. THE NOTION OF RELATION

Cognitional Theory proposes a notion of understanding as an activity of unification of data, a unification through relation. The relation of the data among themselves is what gives them intelligibility. "A grasp of unity presupposes the presentation of what needs unification, as a grasp of intelligible relationship presupposes the presentation of what can be related."[58] "The first seven chapters of *Insight* deal with human intelligence insofar as it unifies data by setting up intelligible correlations."[59]

tive something that we have from nature; but insofar as we grasp the virtually unconditioned, we are dependent"; ibid., 169; Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 105, 114, 115, 120; Vertin, "Finality," 278; Gregson, *The Desires of the Human Heart*, 86: "Nor may one expect the discovery of some objective criterion or test or control. For that meaning of the 'objective is mere delusion. Genuine objectivity is the fruit of authentic subjectivity"; ibid., 93: "The criteria of our own consciousness… will lead us to true judgments both of fact and of value."

58 Lonergan, "Second Lecture: Religious Knowledge," 142.

59 Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," 272.

1. The Priority of Relation

In this way, Cognitional Theory suggests the priority of relation over the things that are related (*relata*). Is this so? In order to respond, in my view, we need to consider the following. By principle, relation as "being towards" presupposes a plurality of things to be related: there is no notion of relation when there is only one thing.[60] Plurality, in turn, implies the unity of each member of the plurality: there is no plurality when we do not have distinct unities. Distinct unities imply understanding (because they can be indicated as "this" or "that," and they can be distinguished).[61] Therefore, an understanding of relation implies an understanding of the *relata*; not, however, *as relata*, that is, as members of a relationship, but rather in themselves, as beings.

Moreover, relation (as an accident) presupposes a subject or substance, and it is established with regards to another thing: these amounts to saying that a relation cannot even be thought of unless, on the one hand, we presuppose a subject of the relation, and, on the other hand, we presuppose something as an objective or aim of this "being towards."

That is to say, a relation not only presupposes the *relata*, but these *relata* are presupposed *cognitionally* (they must be known before the relation itself is known) and are previously known on the same level of understanding (the relata must be *understood* before the relationship itself is understood). An intelligible relation implies intelligible things to be related, because otherwise the relation itself cannot be understood *as such*. In short, my contention is that an intelligible relation presupposes, and is not the absolute origin of, intelligible unity.

60 The terminology employed is intended to fit with the problem at hand, and does not intend to be fitting for Trinitarian Theology.

61 Cf. Lonergan, "Insight," 218-219. An intelligible unity needs not to be a perfectly defined essence, but it can be perceived as just "something that is." Cf. Fabro, *Percezione*, 631.

2. The Relation to the Subject

The use of the notion of relation in Cognitional Theory is problematic, not only as relation among the data themselves (as discussed in the previous point), but also as relation between the data and the knower. How is this latter relation understood? Giovanni Sala points out:

> If we prescind of one of the two terms of the relation, we no longer have the connection, and so there is no longer any understanding and much less any resulting concept .... For if knowledge is a structure, then the ontological value of its object can be determined only by considering the whole structure.[62]

It seems that, for Sala, knowledge is understood as a real relation on both sides, in which the intelligibility of each *relatum* as such depends always on the other term of the relation. Thus, for example, when we understand "father" as such we necessarily understand "child." Something similar would occur between subject and object: "the ontological value of its object can be determined only by considering the whole structure."[63]

I would say, instead, that the object of knowledge would be affected by the whole structure if the being of the object were only a relative being, that is to say, if the object as such were dependent on the subject. However, as we have seen, the object of knowledge is not constituted by the activity of the subject, but given to it. Therefore, the object is not necessarily affected by knowing. Knowing instead, because it is by itself constituted

62 Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 16-17.

63 This interpretation of knowledge as a physical relation is perhaps at work also when Lonergan writes about description as prior to explanation, thing-for-us as prior to things-in-themselves. Cf. Lonergan, *Insight*, 368: "But besides things-themselves and prior to them in our knowing, there are things-for-us, things as described"; Lonergan, "Insight," 194; Lonergan, "Method in Theology," 467; Lonergan, *Insight*, 36-37.

by a relation to an object, is certainly affected by the object. It is important to distinguish the two opposite relations in knowledge (that is, object to subject and subject to object): a relation is not necessarily real on both sides. There is certainly a real modification in the subject (*species* as subjective modification); however, that modification is not the object of knowledge, but rather the subjective ground of the relation to the object represented in the *species*.

It is true that knowing may "affect" the object, in the sense that whatever is apprehended depends on the attention, the experience, or even the faculty involved: different subjects, or different faculties, apprehend different things in front of "the same" real object. This fact, however, is not enough to affirm that what is perceived is not given, but a function of the subject.[64]

The being known, if we considered it *as* known (and so as *relatum*), cannot be thought without the knower; but it can certainly be known without the consideration of the knower, and without the consideration of the relation, because *we know the object before knowing the relation*. Our intention (as "tension-towards") of the object is prior to our knowledge of that intention. We first know being, and only later can we know being *as* known.

64 Perhaps in this direction is the answer to Dadosky's objection (in a private conversation) of the relativity of colours to the light and other circumstances: the fact that the same colour is seen differently is not enough to affirm that the object depends on the subject. What is at stake is the complexity of vision, the influence of the medium of perception and the distinction between the quality in the thing and in the organ. Cornelio Fabro speaks of a proportional objectivity of the secondary qualities. In any case, the real quality will always be decisive for the colour that is seen: in fact, the objection begins with the supposition that the colour (real quality) is the same. It is arguably possible to explain the difference in vision by means of physical causes. Cf. Fabro, *Percezione*, 79, 454, 480 and for a similar answer to the example of Dadosky, cf. also ibid., 620-621.

3. Context and Interpretation

Finally, it may be argued that everything receives its proper meaning in its own context, and without context nothing can be properly understood.[65] However, and in response, nothing can be related to its context if it is not first understood in itself. The context can certainly add important features, increase intelligibility, but not give primordially that intelligibility. Again, the problem is the lack of consideration of the priority of the *relata* (though not as such) to the relation. And if there is a priority of the whole over the parts in perception, that priority cannot be extended to the universe, or to the context. The "whole" of everyday perception is given as such, in the form of a certain unity, but the context as a whole is not primordially given.

Cognitional Theory's concept of interpretation is related to the foregoing considerations. This concept depends on the alleged priority of the relation over its *relata which we have previously discussed*. It is argued that data have no meaning if they are not unified, and intelligence works out this unity by relating the data. The context, then, as the complex of relationships, is always the key for the interpretation (understanding) of the data. Now, the argument continues, the context changes (development of history), and so the interpretation of the data changes as well. As can be seen, this argumentation may lead to relativism, not perhaps in the sense that the interpretation of a certain thing at a certain time is indefinite, but certainly in the sense that the intelligibility of anything depends on its relationship to a necessarily changing context (history).[66] Because this way of arguing is grounded on the principles pre-

65 Cf. Gregson, *The Desires of the Human Heart*, 94.

66 Cf. ibid., 74-78; Sala, *Lonergan and Kant*, 29; for an interesting critic of the philosophy of language as nominalism or conceptualism, cf. Templeman, "Clearing the Ground," 241, 243. It is clear enough that Lonergan does not want to be a relativist (Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 104ff; Lonergan, "Method in Theology," 473), but I don't think he really succeeds in supporting his claim.

viously discussed (the priority of the relation vs. the priority of the relata), the response to it could be the same as in point "a" of this section. That is, the relation among the data is not known before the data themselves. Therefore, the relation may indeed modify accidentally our understanding of the related data (because the relation to something else *happens* [*accidit*] to the already understood data) but the relation itself cannot modify substantially this understanding (since the relation happens precisely to *this* piece of data, that is, the relation presupposes the thing which is related). Both the *context* itself as a complex of relations and the *relation* between the datum and its proper context presuppose an understanding of the related things. The context is made up of things, and not things made up by their context. A context presupposes a plurality of things, a plurality presupposes unities and, therefore, those unities are previous to the context.

V. JUDGMENT AS THE POSITION OF THE REAL

In one way or another I have already referred to judgment several times. Let me now make some other observations that may be useful.

I agree with Lonergan regarding the fact that human knowledge is completed in the deepest sense in judgment.[67] It is in the act of judgment that we *consciously* (in the sense of "reflexively") know reality, and so the perfection of knowledge is attained. I disagree with Lonergan's notion of reality, insofar as for him being (*ens*) is posited by the affirmation, and so receives its objectivity and reality (*esse*) from the subject.[68] A "bright idea" becomes real when, according to the laws of sub-

67 Lonergan, "Insight Revisited," 265: "Human knowledge as not intuitive but discursive with the decisive component in judgment." Cf. Lonergan, *Insight*, 365; Lonergan, "Cognitional Structure," 212-213.

68 Cf. Vertin, "Finality," 271, 275; Vertin, "Affirming a Limit and Transcending It," 122f.

jectivity and faithful to them, the subject affirms the content of consciousness as real.

I agree with Lonergan in the fact that affirmation is not left to pure subjectivism, but it must respect certain laws.[69] I also agree in that the subject affirms the reality of the intelligible idea when the latter is connected in some way with the data of sense experience. Lonergan speaks about verification.[70] But to verify is to ascertain the correspondence of a statement with reality.[71] What correspondence can there be between diffuse data of sense experience and an intellectual proposition? It is difficult to see in what sense Lonergan speaks about verification, or on what grounds. No intelligible content can be verified in experience, because (for Lonergan) nothing intelligible is there.[72]

As I have suggested, the affirmation of existence is not an attribution in the sense of an addition (physical attribution), but an attribution in the sense of predication (cognitional attribution). When we say "this tree is" we do not mean to say that we give being to the tree, but that being is something that belongs to the tree. My attribution is a recognition of the tree's own being, not the position of it, as the position of something that was not there. When we attribute existence to something,

69 For him they are a priori laws; for me they are the first principles, and depend on the notion of *ens*, which is a posteriori.

70 Cf. Lonergan, "Insight," 188.

71 Cf. Templeman, "Clearing the Ground," 239, 241.

72 Instead, and together with St. Thomas, there is something intelligible in the concrete, insofar as what we understand (the nature of a dog) is in the thing itself (the particular dog) with a different mode of being (not abstracted from particular determinations, as in the mind, but imbedded in those particular determinations, even if distinguished from them). The term "intelligible" means not only the abstracted mode of being of things in our mind, but also that which we understand or can understand, and this is the nature or whatness of things. The nature of something is *part* of the concrete, as the concrete's formal, specific or essential aspect. There is no reason to deny that one and the same perfection be in two different modes of being, as St Thomas argues in ST I, q. 84, a. 1, c. (cf. Ayala, *The Radical Difference*, 115ff).

we mean to say that "this thing" is radically *given*, posited *to* us through sense experience. As is clear, this is related to what has been said before: the object of experience is unified, its intelligible content is given, and so its absolute position through the senses is also given.

Now, what are the conditions of possibility of the affirmation of existence? In my view, a correct account of judgment, and especially of the affirmation of existence, can be given only by departing from the perception of *ens* in the simple apprehension.[73] Intelligence not only perceives an intelligible unity, but also its absolute position before consciousness, its unquestionable "presence," its being (*esse*) as existence, as a fact.[74] This perception of existence is dependent on sense experience (even though it is not a sensible content), and is not a separate formal intelligible content, but a *mode* of the content.[75] This amounts to saying that the real concrete being is perceived by intelligence as "something *that is*," where the "is" depends originally on the actual perception of the senses.[76]

This account better explains why the affirmation of existence is connected with sense experience.[77] This connection postulates that intelligence is able to "touch" the content of

73 Lonergan recognizes also the centrality of insight, though insight is not equivalent to simple apprehension.

74 And so not the *esse ut actus essendi*, that is, the *esse* as *principium quo*. Cf. Pablo Rossi, "La Fondazione Teorica Del Valore Della Conoscenza Nel Realismo Tomista Di Cornelio Fabro" (Rome, 2013), 2 (henceforth as "Presentazione"). Rossi obtained his doctoral degree with this thesis. What I quote here is his presentation for the public exam.

75 Cf. Fabro, *Percezione*, 519.

76 Cf. ibid., 515, 523-524; Rossi, "Presentazione," 2.

77 And why we do not confuse *on a regular basis* things that are just imagined and real existent things. The old skeptical argument based on human error, used by Maréchal among others to raise doubts about the perception of existence, is absurd: an error implies that what is natural is not to make mistakes (otherwise, the error could not be perceived as such). Lonergan also confutes the theory of error. Cf. Maréchal, *Maréchal Reader*, 62-69; Vertin, "Affirming a Limit and Transcending It," 117; Lonergan, *Insight*, 368-370.

sense experience, not alone though, but through the senses. This "postulate" should not be a surprise, because everyone who speaks about sense experience is presupposing that intelligence is not foreign to the realm of the sensible. The doctrine of the *conversio ad phantasmata* is grounded on the same presuppositions. The question of the interaction between sensibility and intelligence might appear as a difficult metaphysical problem but, again, the problem is not the fact, which seems evident: the problem is the explanation of the fact.[78]

Perception, then, is the intelligible apprehension of the real and concrete thing as "something that is," but not independently of sense experience: intelligence apprehends "in" the senses the reality (*esse* as existence) of what is. An elemental judgment will be grounded in this implicit synthesis (*something* that *is*), as an unfolding of it.[79]

In judgment, human being participates consciously of the perfection of being (*ens*). When we judge, we know something "perfectly" because we not only know it, but we know that it "is." Here knowledge is completed, in the sense that we consciously take possession of the *reality* of something and, for this reason, only in judgment is there truth (which is the proper perfection of the intellect). In this, I agree with Lonergan.

In my view, however, we are the ones who participate reality *passively* (participation as "taking part from"). In other words, in knowing, we are the ones perfected by the entity of another thing: we do not participate *actively* (participation as "communicating something to," as "sharing my own with" someone else), that is, we do not participate actively our own perfection to the data, as Lonergan seems to suggest. Instead, judgment is the intentional appropriation of the perfection of being. Not a perfection we posit, but a perfection we have received, because it is a perfection we did not have (i.e., the per-

78 For Fabro's Thomistic explanation, cf. Fabro, *Percezione*, 227-234.

79 Cf. Percepción del Ente (2013).

fection of the object).

Human knowledge is the remedy of our radical finitude and imperfection,[80] it is the means of "salvation." Human beings' perfection lies in their cognitive openness to the other.[81] We do not need to save the "out there world" from unintelligibility. Instead, we need to be saved from loneliness by Reality, who is offering its friendship at the threshold of our souls.

CONCLUSION

Cognitional Theory is built upon two presuppositions: the theory of experience as a perceptual mosaic and the principle of immanence. Thus, Lonergan's position of the critical problem could be expressed in this way: "What am I doing when I know, *if experience is considered as data without organization, meaning and existence*?"[82] and "What am I doing when I know, *if the content of knowledge can never be more than a subjective modification, in the sense that nobody can know anything outside of him or herself?*" The difficulties I have shown in sustaining these presuppositions strongly suggest a revision, not perhaps of the whole theory, but certainly of its foundations. It is true enough that every revision will try to be more attentive to data, understand them better and judge, therefore, more responsibly about the matter at hand. But we do not need to presuppose that those

80 Cf. Aquinas, *Questiones Disputatae De Veritate*, q.2, a.2.

81 I am not saying that freedom is not important, or even more important than knowledge. It is out of the purpose of this paper to work out this relationship.

82 For the three basic questions, cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Theology and Understanding," in *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 4, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 132; Michael Vertin, "Rahner and Lonergan" (Course hand-outs, University of Toronto, 2013), Handout #16; Lonergan, "Method in Theology," 468. The first question suggests in my view a subjectivistic starting point, because it asks about knowledge as an action without taking into account its object, as if we could think about knowing without first thinking in what we know, or as if knowing were not in itself a dual phenomenon.

data have no intelligible content of their own. Instead, more attentiveness to data should lead us to realize that they are unified, and a better understanding of cognitional process should lead us to recognize that knowing is not about completing the data, but about perfecting ourselves with what is truly given.

Only the truth will set us free, free to embrace again (or not!) the fulfillment of our desires in the Other. Our radical desire for perfection does not mean that we already possess perfection, but exactly the opposite. If we open ourselves to the other, some remedy to human being's radical poverty might be found: *some* remedy by natural knowledge, and complete remedy (*salus*) by grace. If instead we lock ourselves up in the "immanentistic castle," we may have a sense of peace and control for a while, but we risk starving to death for lack of supplies… Nowadays, human beings are increasingly consumed by the existential void, and some have no further strength for lowering the castle's drawbridge and letting hope enter again. The problem of knowledge is, in this sense, not simply an academic concern but the very key to understanding and renewing our modern culture.

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Existential Analysis of Daily Life in Times of Pandemic[1]

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1 I leave aside the discussion of whether we are really facing a pandemic or whether it is a manipulation of language by the World Health Organization (henceforth abbreviated as WHO) in order to call a pandemic something that is not.

> Thus, the expression 'God is dead' is not one simple formula of unbelief among others that Nietzsche holds in common with Prodicus of Ceo or D'Holbach and Lamettrie… it expresses above all the 'destiny of the West' in the loss of the Sacred and Transcendent that the *cogito* itself has given it with the purpose of making *homo faber* emerge over *homo sapiens*, to assert the primacy of science and technology over the wisdom of philosophy and the impetus of art and poetry. Its negation is a protest and suffering for a world that is going out of itself and feeds on the forgetfulness of the spirit and the ignorance of its negations.[2]

SINCE THE BEGINNING of the year 2020, we have been living in an unprecedented situation.[3] A situation that will probably mark a turning point in the history of humanity. However, it is not the purpose of these lines to make a judgment on the situation that people worldwide have had to live through, but rather an existential analysis of man in our society based on the disconcerting events that we are experiencing.

Neither are these lines an analysis of society itself, nor an analysis of the many contradictions which show that our society is guided–and this was very much exposed in these times of coronavirus—by ideology and not by truth.

I say "ideology", because it believes itself to be the owner of the truth, and with Covid-19 it could be seen that it also believes itself to be the owner of life and therefore of freedom. A very clear example of this is abortion. Our society in general could be said to be an "abortionist" society; this does not mean that

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2 Cornelio Fabro, *Momenti dello spirito*, vol. 1 (Assisi - S. Damiano: Sala Francescana, 1983), 98.

3 The statement does not refer so much to the pandemic, which is not the first nor will it be the last that men in this world will experience, but to the way in which the world in general faced it.

abortion is something that is licit and practiced by all men, but it does mean that it is a common practice, which is a clear sign of this ownership of life and of truth. Of life because they decide about the life of others, the unborn in this case, without any scruples; of truth because, against all evidence, they proclaim that this unborn child is not a child. But this is not the only sign that society feels itself to be the owner of life: wars, euthanasia, concentration camps, massacres, etc., are other things that show this reality and, as it was said above, the way world leaders reacted to the pandemic seems to be one more sign of this.

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Covid-19 exposed this truth, which our affluent and consumer societies frequently want to make us forget: the consciousness of our indigence. Indigence that, paradoxically, they want to cover up by exalting it, that is to say, by creating a great quantity of goods that are not necessary, but that make life more pleasant: man feels the need for superficial or unnecessary things and he anesthetizes the true needs or the true desires for which he was created.

From the moment he is conceived, man is a helpless being. And as he acquires consciousness of himself, he becomes more conscious of his frailty, despite what our ego wants to make us believe, since from the moment he is born until he dies, he is in need and cannot cannot fend for himself. From that natural helplessness in which we are conceived and from which we will never be free, arises the risk of life. And these times of pandemic have reminded us of this reality with facts that many times we do not want to see. For this reason, man has had to take refuge in his home in order to escape from this virus that is everywhere and no one knows where or how it gets there; the truth is that although we have taken refuge in our homes, the virus has managed to cross those very trenches and attack much of our population reminding us of this truth: life is a risk.

Yes, life is a risk, even before seeing the light of the sun, each individual "I" is at risk. The devastating number of deaths per day that occur in the wombs of mothers who think they own the lives of their children,[4] is nothing more than a confirmation of this. However, no thought is given to that; one does not think that even after leaving the womb and beyond the first years of life when we are totally dependent on our parents or those who take their place, we are at risk, and the deadly viruses remind us of this truth: the risk of daily life.

A risk that no scientific advance can eliminate. Man is a fragile being; his body is constantly exposed to external agents that attack him from without and from within - like this virus - and that weaken (although recovered from the attack the body can be strengthened) or kill him. The body, which is the principal intermediary of daily life, since daily life or the life of the "I" on this earth does not exist without the body,[5] is constantly at risk—not only because of this virus that is attacking us but also because of so many other circumstances: fires,

4 It is interesting to note the fact that at least on the day of writing these lines it is estimated that the virus has saved more lives than it has killed. Indeed, one of the side effects of the fear and enclosure that has been instilled in the population has been that many women have not aborted their children. The *France 24* website points out, for example, that if measures are not taken to ensure that women around the world have safe access to abortion, it will result in 9,500,000 women who will not have abortions. Perhaps the numbers are inflated as it is a pro-abortion article and it seeks to get governments to declare abortion as an essential activity, however, the number is quite significant compared to the number of deaths from Covid-19, which at the time of writing this are in the million: "If these closures continue, the projections made by the charity Marie Stopes International (MSI), which provides contraceptive and abortion services in 37 countries and estimates that 9.5 million women and girls would lose access to abortion services this year due to the pandemic, will be realized" ("9,5 millones de mujeres no podrían acceder a un aborto seguro en 2020 por la pandemia," April 17, 2020, https://www.france24.com/es/20200417-9-5-millones-de-mujeres-no-podr%C3%ADan-acceder-a-un-aborto-seguro-en-2020-por-la-pandemia).

5 In fact, both death and states of unconsciousness stop daily life permanently or momentarily, respectively.

accidents, natural disasters, diseases (of many kinds and more serious than Covid-19), hunger, cold, stress and other psychological illnesses that our society seems to foster in a particular way, among many other causes that we could enumerate. Risks that, beyond the illusions that science makes us have, can never be removed. Science may progress and create means to avoid death at some particular moment or extend the life of some particular subject for a certain time, but death is present and will be present, because the body of man is prone to corrupt and sooner or later it cannot conserve life.

The pandemic has also made clear the truth just mentioned, that the body is only an intermediary in daily life;[6] it has made clear that my "I" is one thing and my body another. How can it be that an "I" is not afraid of catching covid-19 that could cause the death of its body? Beyond the fact that my body is mine and cannot be someone else's; [7] my body is distinguished from my "I", the body puts the "I" in contact with the world and

6 For those who are not used to the existential reflection of daily life, it is important to clarify that man develops himself within three spheres that are in contact or are intertwined without being absorbed or annulled; they are: to be in the world, to be in the body, and to be in the "I". "Man, because he is in the world, is in a determined situation which will condition him by placing certain limits on his existence . . . . Man has a real dependence on the world insofar as he needs the world not only to develop his life but also to live; precisely because of this the world, in the existential order, is a foundation for man" (Alberto Barattero, "Antropología espiritual. Para una antropología de la participación. Aportes de Cornelio Fabro" (PhD diss., Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum, 2017), 315). "Man has a certain body that, if on the one hand it conditions him, on the other hand it is the intermediary between the 'I' and the world, and for that reason the body is the main actor of daily life, to the point that daily life in the world finishes with the death of the body, which is the exit of this world" (ibid., 317). Because he is in the "I", man is free and "it is in the hands of the freedom of each 'I' to decide for the Absolute or to reject the Absolute by deciding for worldliness" (ibid., 320).

7 The problem of transplants that would involve donating a part of my body, but not my whole body, is left out, because it would take us off topic. It also leaves aside the problem of brain transplants that generate a serious personality problem.

the "I", precisely for this reason, must take care of its body so as not to increase the risk of daily life. But it is the "I" and not the body that decides whether or not to expose the body to a certain risk.

But our society, in general, does not want to think about the risk of daily life; because thinking about it would mean changing one's way of living, living no longer in view of this earthly life or in view of death ("being for death"), which is desperation, but in view of eternity, which is hope. But no one wants to think about this, and so we act, almost unconsciously, with the thought that one lives only for this earthly life and that one will always live in this earthly life; which leads us to look for passing securities with the desire that they will provide the security of life, a security that never comes;[8] a desire for security that only produces or causes selfish behavior.

Security of life, for which all men long, is simply a desire that can never be achieved absolutely in this life. Yes, it cannot be attained in an absolute way neither internally because the individual "I" finds nothing but dissatisfaction and selfishness;[9] nor can it be achieved externally, and this pandemic has shown us this, in an absolute way; think for example, how this pandemic has put the whole world on edge regardless of whether it was created in a laboratory or passed naturally from a sick animal to a human who ingested it, or even, as some go so far as to maintain that it has been spread throughout the world in a violent way and not by transmission from human to hu-

8 A clear symptom of this is the anxiety that many people have about getting the Covid-19 vaccine in order to be safe from it. Everyone talks about it being the solution, but no one wonders if that vaccine will be 100% effective, which in fact it probably won't be any more effective than the influenza vaccine is, so it won't give that desired security (cf. Jared S. Hopkins, "Covid-19 Vaccine Trials Need Only a Fraction of People to Get Sick," *Wall Street Journal: Business*, October 1, 2020).

9 Obviously, because this is an existential reflection, we speak of natural or earthly life without entering into the field of the supernatural and what the grace of God can produce in each person.

man; the reality is that it has made everyone taste up close the insecurity of everyday life.

The virus also made it clear that man, in search of a security that never comes, can manipulate reality, but cannot change it. No matter how much a president says that all of us are going to get through this pandemic together, not everyone managed to get through the pandemic. No, the virus made it clear that we cannot change reality with our thoughts, that reality is not completely in our hands and frequently it escapes us, because we are not creators of the world or of our bodies.

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Another consideration that comes to light is the lack of accuracy in science. For years, beginning with the mistake of identifying certainty with truth, an understanding has been created that science—the repetition is worth it—is an exact science, like mathematics, which does not err and is therefore the only valid knowledge.[10] Thus, philosophy and theology have been discredited. But there is a double error in this supremacy given to science, which the pandemic has exposed.

The first is that not all scientific theories or conjectures are exact, nor even correct. Many times the media makes us believe that what is a mere working hypothesis is accurate, and the WHO has given indications of how to act based on such

10 "The constitutive element of modern philosophy, from the methodological point of view, is the equivalence of truth-certainty and, therefore, of truth-science: the edifice of science with its axioms, with its demonstrations and experiments, with its corollaries. In science man becomes a light of himself in the world and dominates it: the world, with the progress of mathematical and physical sciences, becomes *regnum hominis* (the kingdom of man) . . . . Truth tends to 'exactness' and the application of mathematical science to physics wants to give precisely the guarantee of absolute exactness: in possession of such absolute exactness, man feels himself in possession of absolute truth, as God, the certainty that God has of mathematical truth, it is affirmed, cannot be superior to that of man" (Cornelio Fabro, *L'anima: introduzione al problema dell'uomo*, ed. Christian Ferraro, vol. 12, Opere Complete (Segni, Italy: EDIVI, 2005), 220-221).

scientific conjectures.[11] The second thing that was revealed is that the security that scientific progress has given to man—who has begun to believe himself to be lord and master of life, and that man was close to achieving life without end[12] here on this earth—was nothing more than an illusion or utopia.

Science, and medicine in particular, in moments of pandemics have shown man that they have no interpretative answers but only, and to a limited extent, informative or descriptive ones. In moments of pandemics they could not give an answer to life and death; they could not explain man or the virus: both for science and medicine, man and the virus are a mystery that they can only describe and, with difficulty, explain the action of one upon the other.

But analyzing deeper the different discrepancies that have taken place among the scientists, whether it be about the coronavirus, or about the recommendations to overcome the pandemic, or about the cure of the disease, or how to avoid contagion, etc., and above all the certainty with which each scientist speaks and contradicts the other. . . the question is worth asking: aren't all these discrepancies a clear example of an attempt to take possession of the truth? Because the message, at least as it reached the ordinary man through the media, was always in the line of affirming or assuring something that is simply a

11 As an example of this you can see this article from June 8, 2020 where it is reported that the WHO announces that it has changed its position regarding the use of mask based on a new study: Ralph Ellis, "WHO Changes Stance, Says Public Should Wear Masks," https://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20200608/who-changes-stance-says-public-should-wear-masks.

We do not want to object whether it is right or wrong that the WHO has given indications based on a working hypothesis, we simply mention the fact that it based its indications on hypotheses that were not corroborated.

12 It is said life without end rather than eternal life, because the Catholic concept of eternal life is much more than a life without end or that does not end; the promise that eternal life does not end is not the main characteristic of eternal life and it is nothing in comparison with other goods that God will grant, according to the promises that Jesus Christ has made, to all those who reach it.

"*pre-print*," that is, preliminary articles that have not yet been corroborated, and yet, are published as if they were.[13]

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Another fact that should be highlighted is the voices of freedom who rose up against the dictatorship that they perceived as wanting to impose itself through the very organizations created to defend rights and protect citizens.[14] The WHO, the highest authority on health issues, guardian of the rights of citizens with respect to health, which ought to protect citizens, has been denounced for having been disloyal to those whom it was supposed to protect.[15] But, leaving aside whether the

13 "Preprints are preliminary reports of work that have not been certified by peer review. They should not be relied on to guide clinical practice or health-related behavior and should not be reported in news media as established information" ("medRxiv," https://www.medrxiv.org/). In this regard, the declarations of Pampa G. Molina, a science journalist, are interesting: "We see 'according to a study' and we believe that it is the Lord's word, when science is not done this way . . . . Sometimes, these articles are not the result of experiments that follow the scientific method, but rather hypotheses that are the result of anecdotal evidence and the experience of their author" (Sergio Ferrer, "Paciencia, todo lo que leas sobre el coronavirus va a cambiar," March 21, 2020, https://www.eldiario.es/sociedad/paciencia-leas-coronavirus-va-cambiar_1_1011293.html). As a result of the great amount of misinformation regarding the coronavirus, a professor of Experimental Psychology stated: "People should know that science does not give certainties, but it is the only thing to hold on to" (José Luis Zafra, "La gente debe saber que la ciencia no da certezas, pero es lo único a lo que agarrarnos," https://www.agenciasinc.es/Entrevistas/La-gente-debe-saber-que-la-ciencia-no-da-certezas-pero-es-lo-unico-a-lo-que-agarrarnos).

14 Perhaps the strongest is Physicians for the Truth which has associated more than 1000 professionals (Doctors, Researchers and Health Experts) from all over the world who "question the dominant narrative around the Covid pandemic" ("Medicos por la Verdad," https://www.medicosporlaverdad.com/).

15 One of the first countries to accuse the WHO of disloyalty was Taiwan, for failing to act in December when they were told what was happening in Wuhan (cf. "Taiwan Says WHO Failed to Act on Coronavirus Transmission Warning," March 19, 2020, https://www.ft.com/content/2a70a02a-644a-

WHO acted in good faith or followed the economic interests of those who support it—as it has been accused of doing—since this exceeds our existential analysis (which is nothing more than a simple reflection on the "I" and its relationship with the world),[16] it is worth asking if this fact is not a confirmation that the individual "I" is potentially a tyrant over every other "I" when it sets itself up as a maximum authority without a superior authority (the Absolute or God) to which it must be accountable.

To understand this, we start from the fact that according to the social doctrine of the Church, politics and those in government, international organizations and their leaders, who are at the service of the community, must arrange everything for the common good of society. The individual is subordinated to the state in order to achieve a greater good. Thus, the state, in a positive way, supports the individual to meet the needs the individual cannot procure on his own. However, this principle of subsidiarity has certain restrictions since the state, or any institution, cannot absorb the vital space of each individual by taking away his freedom and responsibility. The state must not substitute or interfere in the activity of individuals, since this would imply an abuse of authority.

What we are trying to say is that the "I" is the presence of the spirit and the subject of original freedom; it is not and cannot be a function of a whole. It is not possible to subordinate individual freedom to the whole, despite that in its deepest

11ea-a6cd-df28cc3c6a68). The United States also reported that it was late in raising the alarm about this new virus because it was too "Chinocentric" (cf. Peter Beaumont and Sarah Boseley, "What Does the WHO Do, and Why Has Trump Stopped Supporting It?," *The Guardian: World news*, April 15, 2020).

16 It is important to note that while each individual is an "I", the "I" of the other individual, which is not perceptible but deductible from the experience each has of his own "I", is part of the world. For every "I" there is only one "I" and only one body, one's own, in which this "I" is found and which acts as an existential intermediary with the world. For existential reflection, the body of the other "I" is part of the world.

root this right is an inalienable or untouchable right, no matter how many efforts the international organizations or national governments (of dictatorial or democratic court) make, the real "I" cannot be lost;[17] nobody is able to annul radical freedom.[18] However, that is precisely what those who govern are trying to do when they try to make the individual "I" be assumed by the universal, that is, when they want to take responsibility for free choices away from the individuals and make them from above. Despite the intentions—even assuming good intentions—of the rulers,[19] in light of the existential analysis it would seem that the way they have handled the pandemic was none other

17 Perhaps in some serious pathological state it may be that the "I" loses its responsibility, but this does not mean that the "I" is assumed by another, since the "I" is an absolute in solitude.

18 "The original or fundamental or constitutive or radical freedom is not identified with but is prior to the psychological freedom; this latter refers to not having impediments to act, or rather to consider freedom or that one is free because it is not prevented to do or to act. On the other hand, radical freedom is prior to any choice because it is the freedom that wants to love, that loves to love. It is precisely for this reason that it is radical because it is not conditioned by anything, but is prior to all conditioning. It is the first movement that sets in motion the rest of the faculties in man, the 'to want to choose or not to choose', which is at the root of every movement and by which the rest of the movements of the rest of the faculties are carried out." (Barattero, "Antropología espiritual," 236-237)

19 Sometimes it is difficult to assume the good intentions of the rulers since they do not have the same discourse in similar situations. For example, the reaction to the so-called "Covid parties" in Washington State was totally negative—people made those parties in order to get Covid-19 and create antibodies to be immune—: "We also need to use this time to use good common sense and be smart as we move through this pandemic so that we can begin to reopen our Community," said Meghan DeBolt, the county's community health director (Minyvonne Burke, "Coronavirus 'parties' in a Washington County Linked to a Rise in Cases, Officials Say," May 6, 2020, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/coronavirus-parties-washington-county-linked-rise-cases-officials-say-n1201146). Using common sense means following government directions to the letter and not doing anything against them, for example, Covid parties. However, the rulers of that same state did not raise their voice against the "Black Lives Matters" demonstrations a few days later that involved a crowd of people without any of the so-

than to take over the freedom (under both physical and psychological pressure) of the citizens and decide regarding their lives, taking the responsibility away from each one of them.[20] This fact was aggravated by a peaceful acceptance, and even in many cases, an active acceptance, by the citizens.

This is an important point in this existential analysis we are making, one not purporting to be a criticism of the actions of governments.[21] Even in assuming the good intention of the

called "social distance" —because it is not social at all. You can also notice the contradiction in the same speech of DeBolt who admits that "health officials stress that there is much we don't know about COVID-19," however, he assures that "COVID-19 parties, are not part of the solution." How do you know that it is not the solution when you recognize that there is much you don't know about the virus? (ibid.).

20 We are not considering the moral qualification of such acts.

21 Beyond the total discrepancy with the closure carried out in many of the countries and even considering it illegal for several reasons, among which can be listed, firstly that all types of people without any distinction have been forced to stay in their homes, when the information that was known at the time of the closure of the countries and that is still valid today is that the chances of death by Covid-19 are high in people over 65 years (later it was learned that those who had certain diseases such as diabetes, etc. were also vulnerable), i.e., not all the population was at high risk of dying from the disease. Second, the measures adopted were not sufficient to prevent contact between people, since not all activities were prohibited, but rather certain so-called essential activities continued to be carried out, so that contact with potential Covid-19 infections continued to exist. In fact, infection continued in all countries that decreed confinement. In addition, some virologists say that the confinement itself lowers the defenses so that these essential exits were more risky than under normal conditions. I believe that it was also an abuse of power to unilaterally and without a philosophical-theological foundation determine what these essential activities were. Thirdly, and perhaps the main reason, there was no proportion between the good effect that was intended to be achieved and the bad effect that followed from confinement: family violence, excessive alcohol consumption, halting the economy, getting countries into debt, closing schools, excessive television and internet consumption, etc. Fourthly, the effectiveness of such a rule was not properly tested by means of experimentation; in fact, to this day, the mode of contagion is not precisely determined. It is not possible to take a health measure of such magnitude without first experimenting and even debating on a sci-

authorities—of wanting to protect the populace and in having acted with correct conscience in the face of a health alert that demanded that such measures be taken to save the populace,[22] there are some questions that arise from an existential point of view: Can a government assume the personal responsibility of a citizen? Is not the citizen the first to be responsible for his or her health? Is not each individual responsible for taking care of his or her body and therefore for making the free decisions necessary to take care of it? Isn't locking someone up against his or her personal freedom? Shouldn't the government have aided citizens to decide to stay in their homes rather than to force them?[23] Shouldn't the government have helped citizens to take responsibility for their lives rather than assume it for them?

The problem is not really new, for years people—especially because of the media—have been trying to replace the responsibility of citizens in a peaceful attack on the freedom of every individual "I". It is a problem further compounded by the peaceful acceptance by citizens in a kind of anesthesia of freedom, since it is easier to let others make the decisions for oneself, since it is easier for others to think and decide what to do. . . a suicide of freedom.

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Perhaps one of the things that has been uncovered by the situation experienced these months is that democracy is an ideological system in disguise. No ideological system, whether Marxist or capitalist, materialist or spiritualist, respects the freedom of individuals. Freedom within an ideological system can do nothing more than follow the rules of the system; and

entific level the effectiveness of the measure.

22 We refer mainly to the closure of activities that were decreed in the vast majority of countries in the world.

23 For example, defending the right to keep a job and even receive a salary in case of absence from work due to the risk of contracting Covid-19.

the democratic rulers, as well as the communists, have done no less than restrict the freedom of their citizens under the guise of protecting the lives of their citizens.

It is true that in addition to the obligatory quarantine decreed in the wake of the pandemic, many of the authorities added the appeal to the citizen's responsibility under the excuse that we all were responsible for taking care of the lives of our neighbors. But it is also true, that there was no choice: they did not appeal to the conscience of the citizens to stay in their homes but rather they were forced.[24]

Yes, our democracy is a disguised system and like any ideological system, even though it appeals to freedom (freedom of expression, freedom to decide, etc.), it does nothing more than impose rules in a dictatorial manner, restricting the freedom of citizens.[25] But it is, as I said, an ideological system in disguise, which is why many citizens are convinced that these attacks on freedoms are in the interest of freedom even when the same contradictions in these discourses show that they are nothing more than an ideology, which like any ideology, represses and restricts freedom. And the coronavirus exposed one of these contradictions in the official discourse of Western societies. A society (mainly its leaders) that fights for the rights of euthanasia, from one day to the next, locked up not only the elderly so that they don't die but also the adults and the young, who are the ones who have to work to support the elderly and the children. A society that fights to take away the rights of children in their mother's womb in order to kill them in the very bosom of

24 Obviously, a generalization is made of what happened since not all countries imposed quarantine in the same way or even within countries each province or state provided different measures and in different ways. But, it is believed that this was the general pattern.

25 For example, isn't it an attack on freedom, the imposition on companies to hire a minimum number of employees with certain connotations or qualities or characteristics? If it is a free and democratic country, don't companies have the right to hire the employees they consider best qualified to do the job without having to take into account their sex, color, etc.?

maternal love, now protects them and takes away the most elementary rights such as that of a healthy socialization[26] so that a virus does not kill them.[27]

Another aspect was exposed with this pandemic, namely the tyranny to which our society is heading due to the lack of personal responsibility to which man is being led. Because man is free, he is responsible for his actions; no one can take away this duty and elementary right of all freedom. But our society, from various angles, seeks to remove this duty/right possessed by all. Society wants men not to think, but to act according to the pre-established parameters and the official discourse—a camouflaged way of restricting our freedom—and one of the areas in which this is evident is in the subject of legal suits.

Today man is not responsible for his actions, but rather he who did not warn me that my act could have bad consequences for me is the one responsible. Western societies, especially so-called first-world societies, base their actions on what is permissible and what is not permissible; if it is not forbidden, then it is good for me, and if it had negative consequences for me, the guilty party is the one who allowed it or at least did not warn me of the harmful consequence for me.

This has had its consequences in many of the decisions that our rulers have made regarding Covid-19. In many cases, regardless of whether or not these decisions have been thoroughly reflected upon, those in power have simply followed the instructions of health workers without measuring the consequences in other areas, because otherwise they would have been subjected to social lynching for being responsible for the

26 The wrongly called social distance is an anti-social detachment that, according to our way of thinking, will have great consequences in the formation of the personality of children if it is prolonged in time.

27 Please note that hospitalization and death from Covid-19 in children is not common ("Children and COVID-19: State-Level Data Report," accessed November 14, 2020, http://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/children-and-covid-19-state-level-data-report/).

deaths caused by Covid-19. In other words, it doesn't matter if they locked up the population unjustly; what matters is that they are not blamed for not taking care of the population and being responsible for the fact that citizens have become sick and died,[28] as in fact happened with the president of Brazil who refused to follow the instructions to close the country.

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The pandemic also demonstrated that man's freedom is not conditioned by the situations he lives in. Mandatory quarantine restricted freedom in that it curtailed the freedom of thousands or millions of citizens who, overnight, could do nothing but stay in their homes. It is true, and it became clear, that man has a real dependence on the world. It is true, and it became clear, that the world not only helps to develop the life of the body, but also puts it in danger and can cause death. The world influences man for good, but also for evil. Man can also condition or modify the world for good or evil.[29] However, neither the virus nor quarantine could cause every one to lose his freedom. Yes, and I am not referring to all those who voluntarily broke the quarantine by not respecting the provisions of the rulers, but I refer to that radical freedom that makes the "I"

28 For example, in the debate of the candidates for vice president of the United States, Kamala Harris, vice-presidential candidate for the Democratic Party, blamed Trump for the number of cases and deaths from the coronavirus that have occurred in the United States, saying it was "the greatest failure of any presidential administration in history of our country" (Reid J. Epstein and Maggie Astor, "Kamala Harris Calls Trump's Virus Response the 'greatest Failure of Any Presidential Administration'," *The New York Times: World*, October 8, 2020).

29 If the virus came out, by mistake or voluntarily, from a laboratory as is the most sustainable theory, it is an irrefutable proof that man can modify the world for the worse. In fact, the US president claimed to have evidence that Covid-19 came from a laboratory (cf. Maanvi Singh, Helen Davidson, and Julian Borger, "Trump Claims to Have Evidence Coronavirus Started in Chinese Lab but Offers No Details," *The Guardian: US news*, May 1, 2020).

emerge above the concrete situation in which he finds himself and by which he decides to direct his life for good or evil.

This pandemic made us aware of that phenomenological truth that comes to light in the existential analysis, many times forgotten by us, and that is that each one's "I" that is in a body,[30] in my body, is distinguished from my body. The "I" and the body are distinguished as the "I" is distinguished from the world, the body is the intermediary between the "I" and the world, the "I" comes into contact with the world through the body, even if the contact is only at a distance. But that the "I" is not identified with the body is disclosed in these times of pandemic by the very fact that it cannot fully dominate the body. The "I" has a certain dominion over the conditions of the body, but not over its causes. Particularly it was revealed that it has no power over the biological and physiological structures of the body in constituting itself (because it could reconstitute them once destroyed by the virus and many time it couldn't) and in its basic functions (because it would not allow the virus to deceive its vital system as in fact it deceives it in order to live from it).

It is an primary fact that the "I" is not the body but in the body and that therefore it is not allowed to make use of its body since it is not the owner of its body, but discovered it when it was born, just as it discovered the world and therefore it must respect and take care of its body, because it has been given to it, without saying entrusted.

The "I" is distinct from the body and thus the death of the body is not the death of the "I". The "I" as an existential absolute cannot die; with the death of the body the "I" does not disappear. Death is the end of the relationship between the body

30 It is important to remember, for those who are not used to the existential analysis, what was said in note 5 regarding the existential reflection that differs from the metaphysical reflection according to which the essence of man is composed of a form of substance (soul) and prime matter (body), so that this phenomenological analysis that we are doing is not misunderstood.

and the "I" and consequently the end of the relationship between the "I" and the world since the "I", as separated from the existential intermediary that is its body, can no longer enter in relation with the world.[31]

Every "I" can have a double relationship with his body, that of an intermediary with the world and that of an object, which in reality, the latter is an abuse of his relationship with the body, in that he begins to use it as if he were its owner, just as man uses things as if he were its owner. It is a deformation of the relationship with the world and with the body, which are no more than intermediaries for freedom or freedom's intermediaries.

But, going back to death, it is a fact that it knocked on the door, I would dare to say, of everyone; yes, and I am not so much referring to those who, because of the coronavirus or not (because beyond the fact that it seems that in times of coronavirus people only die of coronavirus, certainly there were people who died and die of other causes) have died in these times of pandemic or have had a loved one who has died, but it knocked on the door of everyone because of the widespread fear (fair or unfair, real or infused) of death.

In these times the fear of death or the anguish of death, to use a purely Kierkegaardian expression, was and still is (although to a lesser extent at least in some countries since the population was no longer informed daily about deaths from coronaviruses) universally the everyday occurrence. What will become of the materialistic theory that wants to diminish the importance of death with its proposition that with death nothing changes, but that we simply return to the matter from

31 We leave aside mystical experiences with Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, as well as magical experiences with the dead, which beyond their veracity or not, the very fact that they are not with all the dead is a sign that they are not natural experiences; these will be, for those who accept them, supernatural the first and preternatural the second, but that is why they exceed the field of this work.

which we came? But, if nothing changes, why fear? If nothing changes, why do we resist death and do not want to die? It could be that this time of pandemic is showing us the incoherence of that thought, a thought that is more hopeless than hopeful. And then, what is life? If death is a material change, why do we have life, what is the difference between living and not living, if it is the same matter, if there are the same elements? Why can't medicine and science maintain life if they can keep the body functioning? To all those who connected them to a respirator, why at certain moment this respirator could not make those lungs, which an instant before death were in the same condition as an instant after death, continue to breathe? What is the difference? All these questions that science will not be able to answer, it will only be able to give an answer of facts, "the lungs did not hold anymore", but strictly speaking the answer is not satisfactory, even in some cases the lungs could have kept on breathing but they did not keep on breathing because that body stopped being an animated body.

Yes, every "I" resists separation with the body. Because of that belonging of the body to the "I" and that function of intermediary between the "I" and the world, every "I" resists death. But perhaps this resistance to death that we all see to a greater or lesser degree is not also a condemnation of idealistic philosophy? The idealistic philosophy, despite doing so in different ways, arrives at the same conclusion as the materialists: "man is a being for death" and downplays death. In the deepest part of every "I" there is a resistance to this conclusion that can only lead to despair.

Yes, the idea of immortality that comes from the depths of the "I", that comes from that yearning all men have to live forever and not to die, from that yearning that men of justice have—since if with death everything ends, if we all run the same fate with death, life is totally unjust and man is the most unfortunate of beings on this earth and among them the man of good, the man who lived sacrificing himself night and day be-

cause he did not want to walk on the paths of evil. Deep within, man rebels against this saying: "as soon as man comes to life, he is old enough to die"; man rebels against the horizon of the nothing that is always knocking at his door, because he never knows what will happen in the next moment, but he knows he does not want everything to end with death. Man wants death to be a starting point and, therefore, a point of hope, a hope of arrival, a hope of finding.

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In Christian circles, one thing that has been much discussed is the divine origin of this pandemic, or better, whether the pandemic was a punishment from God (which as seen in Holy Scripture, is a punishment for good, for conversion or at least to stop the evil that man was doing on earth) for the evil that man was spreading throughout the world. But if there is something divine in this pandemic, as in every natural or provoked catastrophe, it is the call to give importance to eternity and to stop looking at and giving weight to the passing thing that today is and tomorrow (with my death or the corruption of the thing) is not. Yes, the pandemic is undoubtedly a divine call to ponder eternity. Yes, aside from the fact that men have not emerged from their superficiality or, in wanting to emerge from it have not done so, the pandemic was an opportunity that God gave to men to halt that frantic race for having and possessing, and to ponder being: what is having and possessing without being? What is the use of having and possessing if I am not more, if I do not have being? To have and to possess are not absolute and cannot be first because they are in dependence on being.

Leaders at all levels gave precautions and offered hope (human, of course); even in those leaders who encouraged their people to pray, their messages were not about preparation for death, but on the contrary, about victory against the pandemic and warnings against what they called recklessness (like leav-

ing the house). Leaders—sons of the century in which we live—who did not have the courage to prepare their peoples for death, who did not have the courage to deliver to their peoples the message of eternal hope; they did not have the courage because they are sons of the century in which we live: all material well-being, little or no spiritual well-being.

Yes, world leaders act as if they and all those in their charge would live forever; they deny by words and facts (even those who talk about praying and asking God) the reality of death; they want to turn their backs on it, and the pandemic did nothing else than show them that death is around the corner. This pandemic had the providential purpose of making people think about death, or at least of stirring men to return to the thought of it, which in general they (even religious people) want to keep as far away as possible, since it is a bothersome thought.

Yes, this pandemic is a loving hand extended by Divine Providence to men so that they might stop living in front of the temporal and shadowy goods of this world and become aware of eternity, that everything in this world passes away, but that the "I" does not pass away, but the life of the "I" continues because it longs for eternity. Yes, when man looks at death from afar he does not feel the pulse of eternity within himself; actually he does feel it, but he thinks that the shadowy goods of this life satiate that pulse. When death is near—and the pandemic made it or makes it feel close—man realizes that none of that satiates that deep longing possessed by all and that God promised to satiate: heavenly beatitude.

Yes, God in his loving providence willed or permitted this pandemic so that we men may remember that we must live in the face of death, which is nothing more than living in the face of eternity. Because the idea of death or eternity is the only one that can transform man's life, since life becomes preparation for death, which is nothing else than preparation for eternity.

Because if freedom is commitment to the Absolute or Absolute Good, then death only reminds the "I" of this absolute

task that it has in this life, a task that cannot be replaced by any other commitment, to commit freedom to the shadowy goods of this life is not true commitment nor is it true freedom, it is rather to lose freedom.

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How true are these words of Kierkegaard: "Christendom properly consists of the thought that death is our only essential consolation: the day of death is the true *dies natalis* (birthday) and the nostalgia for eternity must ever grow. But, in fact, one idolizes the sensory clinging to life; and when one speaks of desiring death, one understands the condition of one who probably does not even believe in immortality. And this in Christianity, in which we are all Christians."[32]

32 Søren Kierkegaard, *Diario*, 3rd, trans. Cornelio Fabro, 12 vols. (Brescia, Italy: Morcelliana, 1980–1983), n. 3061.

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The Lack of a Thomistic Foundation in Individual-Person Distinction of Jacques Maritain

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On the brink of the 20th century, Pope Leo XIII called for a renewal of Thomistic theology and philosophy with his encyclical *Aeterni Patris*. Among those who formed part of the resurgence was the prominent French philosopher, Jacques Maritain (1882-1973). Even though he is most widely known for his influence in matters of political philosophy, he considered himself primarily a metaphysician and drew his social conclusions from his philosophical principles. The most influential of these principles for his social theory was the anthropological distinction of the individual and personal poles in man. Despite being a self-avowed Thomist and claiming that this distinction could be found in St. Thomas, it was fiercely contested by contemporary Thomistic philosophers and theologians from the world over. Seeing the inevitable modernist consequences of this distinction, they set out to demonstrate it was not compatible with St. Thomas's corpus. The centrality of this seemingly obscure question cannot be underestimated. If Jacques Maritain constructed his social doctrine on this distinction, and if this distinction depends upon it being derived from St. Thomas, the negation of the latter would result in the deconstruction of his social affirmations. Without pretending to have the last word on the matter, this essay argues that Maritain's opponents were correct in challenging that this divide could be found in St. Thomas and therefore, his political philosophy must be re-evaluated.

That being the case, it must be admitted that Jacques Maritain appears to have lived wholeheartedly in accord with the faith he professed. Despite being born to unbelieving parents and beginning his college years as an agnostic, he converted to Catholicism under the influence of Henri Bergson and Léon Bloy. As a layman, he married Raïssa Oumansov, but they agreed to live continently. Throughout their marriage she assisted him greatly in his writing and intellectual pursuits.[1]

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1 *Jacques Maritain: Philosopher, Teacher, and Defender of Human Rights*

These would make him into one of the most influential Catholic social thinkers of the 20th century. By 1920s he became involved and contributed to French Catholic social movements; first the traditional leaning *L'Action française* and then the more liberal minded magazine *Esprit*, founded by Immanuel Mounier. As ambassador of France to the Holy See from 1945 to 1948 he became friends with Cardinal Montini who would go on to become Pope St. Paul VI. At the close of the Second Vatican Council, this same Pontiff honored him by presenting him with his "Message to Men of Thought and Science." Some assert that much of the Council's social doctrine follows the current of thought of Maritain.[2] Another saintly Pope of the 20th century, John Paul II, esteemed him sufficiently to quote him in a papal encyclical.[3] His influence extended outside the Church as well, allowing him to contribute to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. After the passing of Raïssa, he decided to spend the last years of his life in a monastery with the Little Brothers of Jesus.[4] In brief, he gives the impression of having been an authentic and faithful Catholic.

REASONS TO QUESTION MARITAIN

With such an exemplary personal life of faith, it might be strange to accuse his philosophy of unorthodoxy. But this accusation is far from novel. During his life, numerous philosophers

(Formed, 2020).

2 "Pero el momento más glorioso para las ideas maritenianas, que le significaría un triunfo en toda la línea sobre sus desperdigados opositores, sobrevendría recién unos cuantos años más tarde, con la sanción de la constitución *Gaudium et Spes* por parte del magisterio, especialmente su consagrado principio de la autonomía relativa de lo temporal" (Roberto Bosca, "La herejía democrática. El impacto de Maritain en el magisterio social," *Cultura Económica* 30, no. 83 (August 2012): 40).

3 Cf. John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, September 14, 1998, sec. 74.

4 William Sweet, "Jacques Maritain," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2019, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2019).

and theologians from diverse nations strongly critiqued him and called into question the orthodoxy of some of his conclusions in social matters as well as his supposed Thomistic metaphysical basis for said conclusions.[5] The Canadians Charles De Koninck[6] and Louis Lachance, O.P.[7], Spanish Leopoldo Eulogio Palacios[8], Italian Antonio Messineo[9], SJ., were among the more prominent in the international debate. Perhaps the most polemic was Fr. Julio Meinvielle, an Argentinian philosopher, who first attempted to demonstrate the incompatibly between Maritain's "New Christendom" and the teachings of the Church with his work, *De Lamennais a Maritain*[10] wherein he identified Maritain's teaching with the condemned positions of Félicité Lamennais. According to Meinvielle, some of the dubious ideas expounded by Maritain include the idea that history is inevitably progressing forward,[11] that Church is merely a universal means of fraternity,[12] and the Church's social influence was only necessary during the Medieval Age when secular societies had not fully developed.[13] Following this, he published another work in which he delved into the philosophical

5 Chad Pecknold, "False Notions of the Common Good," *First Things*, April 23, 2020.

6 Charles de Koninck, *De la primacía del bien común contra los personalistas* (Madrid: Cultura Hispánica, 1952).

7 Louis Lachance, *L'Humanisme politique de Saint Thomas. Individu et État* (Ottawa: Éditions du Lévrier, 1939).

8 Leopoldo Eulogio Palacios, *El mito de la nueva Cristiandad* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Dictio, 1980).

9 Antonio Messineo, "L'Umanesimo integral," *La Civiltà cattolica* 107, no. 3 (1956): 449–463.

10 Julio Meinvielle, *De Lamennais a Maritain* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Nuestro Tiempo, 1967). It could be argued that Meinvielle fails to take into account the development of Magisterial doctrine which took place in the Second Vatican Council since this work was originally published 20 years before. However, in later editions he maintains his position in light of the Council's *Dignitatis Humanae* and also addresses Maritain's *Le Paysan de la Garonne*.

11 ibid., 18.

12 ibid., 34.

13 ibid., 37.

foundations underlying Maritain's "New Christendom".[14] It's a bold polemic work[15] in which he seeks to demonstrate the following: 1) that Maritain's erroneous conception of the person results in an anti-Christian perspective of life; 2) that a society based on the person-individual distinction is the same as the secular city of man; 3) that the person-individual distinction as presented by Maritain cannot be found in St. Thomas Aquinas. While this fiery debate which developed during Maritain's lifetime has largely been forgotten, their points are no less valid today.

A more contemporary writer, Joseph G. Trabbic, in a review of a reissue of two of Maritain's works, challenged a few areas of Maritain's political thought.[16] First, some of the Democratic principles proposed by Maritain regarding freedom would prevent Christian doctrine and the natural law from playing an integral role in determining social norms. For example, the freedom of religion, freedom of self-determination, and inviolability of conscience, which are central to his Christian Democracy, could be appealed to as justification for numerous anti-Christian and unnatural behaviors. The second issue which Trabbic sees is that Maritain considers Democracy to have a privileged relation with Christianity. However, church history reveals that she has worked well with other structures of government and has never advocated one form over another. Still, Maritain seems to present the promotion of Democracy as an obligation for believers despite many popes of the 19th and 20th centuries which critiqued democratic tenets.

14 Julio Meinvielle, *Crítica a la concepción sobre la persona humana* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Epheta, 1993).

15 Charles de Koninck wrote to Meinvielle saying it took "courage" to write what he did but that it did much good. *Lettre de C. De Koninck à Jules Meinvielle*, 19 July 1951. Cited in Michel Florian, *La pensée catholique en Amérique du Nord* (Paris: Desclée De Brower, 2010), 264.

16 Cf. Joseph Trabbic, "Some Critical Comments on Maritain's Political Philosophy," August 16, 2012, https://thomistica.net/news/2012/8/16/some-critical-comments-on-maritains-political-philosophy.html.

Among other contemporary critics, Yves Floucat is of particular interest because his disagreements with Maritain regard matters which he was challenged over during his own lifetime.[17] While Floucat is sympathetic to much of Maritain's writings, he does not hesitate to call into question the person-individual distinction. He does this by first refuting Maritain's claims that it is based on St. Thomas Aquinas. Maritain had affirmed "Thomistic personalism stresses the metaphysical distinction between individuality and personality."[18] But Floucat points out that, since St. Thomas never explicitly refers to such a distinction, it is not relevant in his political philosophy. In fact, St. Thomas will speak of the material facet of the human person[19] while Maritain held that personality had nothing to do with materiality. Also, St. Thomas referred to the citizen who is part of society as a person, and not as an individual.

Secondly, Floucat is obliged to admit that the Maritanian distinction and comments associated with it lack metaphysical rigor[20] despite Maritain's self-assurance and earlier mentioned haughty claims that it would not be grasped by all ("especially sociologists"[21]) on account of its required exercise in "metaphysical insight to which the contemporary mind is hardly accustomed."[22]

THE CENTRALITY OF THE DISTINCTION

At the heart of Maritain's renowned political philosophy is his metaphysical distinction of man into individual and person.

17 Cf. Yves Floucat, *Jacques Maritain ou la fidélité à l'éternel* (Paris: FAC Éditions, 1996).

18 Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, trans. John F. FitzGerald (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), 13.

19 Even though "this flesh, these bones" do "not belong[…] to 'person' in general, nevertheless do belong to the meaning of a particular human person" (ST I, q. 29, a. 4)

20 Floucat, *Jacques Maritain ou la fidélité à l'éternel*, 111.

21 Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 14.

22 ibid., 7.

He may have written and contributed to numerous philosophical disciples, but he always "wanted to be considered, above all, a metaphysician."[23] In fact, all his political conclusions are founded upon his metaphysical principles. As he himself stated, his metaphysical distinction of man into a person and an individual led to many of his social conclusions.[24] *In The Person and the Common Good* he emphasizes that "it is all important to distinguish between the individual and the person."[25] In fact, that entire work is an attempt to "make explicit [the distinction's] meaning and develop its consequences in social and political philosophy."[26] As mentioned above, he lamented that his broad social vision would not be generally understood since it is based upon this distinction which "requires an exercise of metaphysical insight to which the contemporary mind is hardly accustomed."[27] It is a "difficult distinction (especially for sociologists…)."[28] In his *Crítica de la concepción de Maritain sobre la persona humana*, Meinvielle affirmed all Maritain's "social philosophy is founded precisely on the person as a part of society and of the universe."[29] And again, it is "in his famous digression regarding individual-person, upon which he constructs the whole of his political philosophy…"[30] Leonardo Palacios, a fiery Spanish critic, said that without the individual-

23 Cornelio Fabro, "Problematica del tomismo di scuola. Nel 100 anniversario della nascita di J. Maritain," *Rivista di Filosofia Neoscolastica* 75, no. 2 (1983): 195.

24 "This distinction between the individual and the person when applied to the relations between man and the city, contains, in the realm of metaphysical principles, the solution of many social problems" (Jacques Maritain, *Three Reformers: Luther, Descartes, Rousseau* (London: Sheen & Ward, 1928), 11).

25 Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 34.

26 ibid., 14.

27 ibid., 11.

28 ibid., 14.

29 Meinvielle, *Crítica a la concepción sobre la persona humana*, 110.

30 Julio Meinvielle, "The Distinction between the Human Individual and the Human Person," trans. Nathaniel Dreyer, *The Incarnate Word* 5, no. 1 (May 2018): 71-72.

person distinction, Maritain's political theory becomes "unintelligible"[31] and that it is "the supreme law that defines the relations between religion and politics."[32] Jose Omar wrote that this distinction was the "key to understanding both his 'integral humanism' and his social-political thought, particularly the relation between man and society."[33] His widely acclaimed and influential affirmations in political philosophy and subsequent implications for Catholics in society necessarily flow from the distinction.

For example, one concrete reason why this distinction is pivotal is because it provides the answer to the perennial social question of assessing the relationship of the singular human being to the political society. On the one hand, how can the person who is a universe unto himself and ordered to goods which go beyond those of the political society, integrate into it and therefore be ordered to goods which the temporal city is ordered to? Put another way, how can man, who is little less than a god (cf. Ps 8:5) be subordinate to the society? On the other hand, should not the sum total of many singular persons which make up a society be greater than any one in particular? So, which is greater? Which has more dignity? The singular human person or the state? As the French philosopher rhetorically asked, "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?"[34] Americans can perhaps relate to this discussion by recalling John F. Kennedy's famous inaugural proposal in which he seemed to favor the superiority of the individual to the state by saying "Ask not what you can do for your country, but what your country can do for you."

Arguments have been proposed in favor of both possibili-

31 Palacios, *El mito de la nueva Cristiandad*, 101.

32 ibid., 123.

33 Larios Valencia Omar, *Antropologia e política dell'umanesimo integrale. Attualità del pensiero di Jacques Maritain* (Fossano, Italy: Esperienze, 2010), 57.

34 Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 11.

ties. Since the state is composed of many individuals, it would seem to have preeminence over each of its parts. Moreover, its end is the good of each person who make it up (common good) whereas the end of one human person is merely a singular good. Against these affirmations it could be point out that the state is not a substance like a person but only the accidental aggregation of parts, and that which is substantial is greater than that which is accidental. Furthermore, man is made for the supernatural end of the Beatific Vision whereas the state has an earthly or temporary end. Utilizing his individual-person distinction, Maritain enters the debate proposing a solution of man as an individual is below the state and man as a person is above the state.

Since this distinction is at the heart of Maritain's social philosophy, it must be carefully evaluated. If found to be a valid anthropological distinction, many of his conclusions could be upheld. If not, a re-examination is in order.[35] For even though Jacques Maritain, a faithful Catholic, would not have come to certain conclusions which are blatantly incompatible with the faith, his disciples, using his principles, have done just that.[36] This makes sense since, according to Andres Bonello, "those who analyze his principles can't help but observe that his principles are liberal, condemned by the Magisterium of the Church on different occasions."[37] In fact, his final work, *The Peasant of*

35 Proving that Anselm's proof for God's existence is invalid is not the same as disproving God's existence, but it does mean that another argument or proof must be presented for it.

36 *The New York Times* review identified it as "a shock to friend and foe alike… It appears to call a halt to the modernist revolution that Maritain himself did much to inspire" (as cited in Jacques Maritain, *The Peasant of The Garonne: An Old Layman Questions Himself about the Present Time*, trans. Michael Cuddihy and Elizabeth Hughes (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1968)).

37 Andrés José Bonello, "Reconstrucción Histórica y Teorética de la Crítica del Tomismo Comunitarista a la Distinción Individuo-Persona de Jacques Maritain" (PhD diss., Pontifical Urban University, 2019), 192.

the Garonne (1966), was written in an attempt to correct these interpretations which he personally disagreed with, but which followers felt to be logical development of his thought. Francisco Biot, for example, lamented that the elderly Maritain did not realize that the very modernist errors he denounced in *The Peasant of the Garonne*, were the consequences of the principles which Maritain continued adhering to. Biot said that "we should not be surprised that [on account of his age] … he cannot understand how he helped put into effect these very things he is now denouncing."[38] The explanation for how this is possible is given by Cornelio Fabro who wrote, "ideas are like arrows that, once loosed, do not always follow the intention of those who loosed them; rather, they fly according to the thrust and trajectory that is proper to their charge of energy."[39] Maritain might have loosed an arrow distinguishing man as person and man as individual with upright intentions, but he might not have had the sufficient foresight to understand the modernist consequences which necessarily follow from said distinction

THE DISTINCTION ITSELF

First of all, what is this distinction? One of Jacques Maritain's primary goals of writing The Person and the Common Good was precisely to answer this question.[40] Therein, he begins by quoting St. Thomas's definition of the human person before passing onto a linguistic consideration of the term "person." In doing so, he notices an apparent contradiction since the word sometimes connotates a kind of selfishness which is

38 Francisco Biot, *Temoignage Chrétien*, December 15, 1966 cited in Meinvielle, *De Lamennais a Maritain*, 333.

39 Cornelio Fabro, *Introduzione all'ateismo moderno*, 3rd, ed. Marcelo Lattanzio, vol. 21, Opere Complete (Segni, Italy: EDIVI, 2013), 197.

40 He identifies *The Person and the Common Good* as a "clear synthesis of our position on a problem about which there have been numerous and (as I like to believe) involuntary understandings" because "the true sense of the distinction has not always been grasped" (Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, Acknowledgments and 14).

egotistic, while at other times it is praiseworthy, as in the case of saints, martyrs, and heroes who have strong personalities. The apparent contradiction is due to the complexity of the "I" which is caught between two poles: "a material pole… and a spiritual pole."[41] He describes the spiritual pole as concerning the "true personality" while the material pole, called *individuality*, does "not concern the true person." For Maritain, the individual is converted into the egotistic center of all things and is what Pascal refers to when he says "the self is detestable." On the other hand, the spiritual pole which refers to the true person, is the "source of liberty and bountifulness." Maritain believes St. Thomas was referring to this pole when he defined person as "that which is most noble and most perfect in all of nature."[42] It's significant to note that, before Maritain goes on to develop the distinction between the material *ego* and the spiritual *self*, he describes it as "fundamental" in the doctrine of St. Thomas. That is to say, he does not consider himself to be doing anything else but transmitting the Angelic Doctor's own ideas.

Maritain develops further the nature of each pole. Regarding the material pole, he affirms that "outside of the mind, only individual realities exist,"[43] so that individuality can be seen as opposed to the state of universality which things only possess in the spirit or mind. Individuality, therefore, is what gives unity and indivision to realities therefore causing them to exist. Only individual realities have the act of existence. Once again, reportedly basing himself upon the Angelic Doctor, Maritain writes that individuation in material beings comes from their matter so that man is distinguished from another man by his material character which makes him an individual.[44] Because of this connection between the material element of a man

41 Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 33.
42 ST I, q. 29, a. 3.
43 Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 34.
44 ibid., 35.

"which excludes from oneself all that other men are" and individuation, said individuality could be described as the narrowness of the ego always trying to grasp for itself.[45] This exclusion between individuals only separates them but does not give them any sort of dignity with respect to the other beings. This dignity proper to man is to be found in the other pole, the spiritual pole.

The spiritual pole or condition is what confers upon man a dignity above any other material being and makes us free persons. Man is both an individual and a person who "subsisting spiritually, constitutes a universe unto itself, a relatively independent whole within the great whole of the universe."[46] This is in stark contrast with individuality which just makes us parts of a whole. By saying man is a person, one is affirming that in the depths of his being he is a whole that is more than a part. This "wholeness" and independence is what define the person and make him superior to the state. If the materiality is what individuates man from others, the spirituality is what unites him to others and allows communication and communion to occur.

Recalling that the individuality comes from man's material makeup, it can be said that all his limitations and lowliness come from matter while all his transcendent capacities derive from his spiritual pole which is the foundation for his personality. So Maritain holds that the material reality has to be transcended in order to reach the heights which man is called to on account of his spiritual nature. Matter, for Maritain, is the source of evil in man whereas the spirit is the source of what is good in him. Hence he speaks of the lower "tendencies that are in me because of matter."[47]

45 ibid., 37.

46 ibid., 40.

47 Jacques Maritain, *Pour une philosophie de l'éducation,* in *Œuvres Complètes*, VIII, (Paris, France : Éditions Saint-Paul, 1989), 807, cited by Bonello, "Reconstrucción Histórica y Teorética de la Crítica del Tomismo Comuni-

Now, with language such as this, it should not be surprising that some critics saw in Maritain's anthropology something approaching Cartesian dualism. Having heard the outcry, the French philosopher now dedicates some time to clarify the notion of contrariety between the two poles. He insists the distinction does not divide man into two: "they are not two separate things. There is not in me one reality, called my individual, and another reality, called my person."[48] From one point of view, the whole being is an individual and from another it is a person, just like a painting is both physical reality and a work of beauty. Furthermore, despite matter being the source of individuation, referred to as "detestable" by Pascal, described as "the narrowness of the ego,"[49] and always grasping for itself, it is not evil. It is good because man's existence depends on it and because it is related to his personality. "Evil arises," however, "when, in our actions, we give preponderance to the individual aspect of our being."[50] This can be described as a fall into materiality or individuality. As a result, man must go through the arduous process of orienting his life towards the personality if he wishes to become what he is and not head towards the "detestable ego whose law it is to grasp or absorb for itself."[51] The clarification can be summarized as follows: there are not two but a single human being whose moral essence depends on the primacy of the spiritual pole; therefore, formation consists in making the personality prevail.

The rest of *The Person and the Common Good* is an application of this principle to the relationship between the individual and the political society. But as was mentioned earlier, these relations are mere consequences of the anthropological distinction treated up to this point. Therefore, since this essay is an at-

tarista a la Distinción Individuo-Persona de Jacques Maritain," 36.

48 Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 43.

49 ibid., 37.

50 ibid., 43.

51 ibid., 44.

tempt to critique that distinction on account of its false attribution to St. Thomas, our consideration of Maritain's *The Person and the Common Good* will here conclude.

THE CENTRALITY OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Jacques Maritain makes a convincing argument for the existence of this distinction. But underneath it all, and this is of fundamental importance, he considers this to be a faithful development of St. Thomas Aquinas's writings on the human person. As he states in the Introduction, "Our desire is to make clear the personalism rooted in the doctrine of St. Thomas. … Thomistic personalism stresses the metaphysical distinction between individuality and personality."[52] While this distinction is the source of his political philosophy, St. Thomas is in turn the source of this distinction.

Repeatedly, Maritain will affirm that this bipolar state of man is affirmed by St. Thomas. One way he attempts to demonstrate this is by citing an apparent contradiction in St. Thomas which would be solved by the distinction. On the one hand, Aquinas says the person is to the community what the part is to the whole[53] (and therefore ordered to it) but, on the other hand, the person is not ordered to the political community in a complete way.[54] So Maritain concludes that Aquinas is referring to this distinction when speaking of the relation of man to society without using the terms "person" and "individual". As an individual, man is a part who submits to the whole of the state; as a person, man is a whole who is independent and above the state.

Furthermore, Maritain does not claim to have used Thomas only as a starting point of his metaphysical speculations, but rather uses Aquinas's tools to explain the distinction. Throughout the entire work he repeatedly cites St. Thomas, uses

52 ibid., 43.
53 ST II-II, q. 64, a. 2.
54 ST I-II, q. 21, a. 4, ad 3.

Thomistic terms to justify his position, has an entire section dedicated to St. Thomas' position, and refers to other Thomists for support, most notably Garrigou-Lagrange.[55] Unsurprisingly, he identifies himself and is identified by others as a Thomist.

Therefore, if he is merely trying to develop a Thomistic teaching within a Thomistic framework, the fundamental question is whether or not this distinction is in fact to be found in St. Thomas Aquinas. If Maritain had attempted to present this distinction as something original, a proper to himself, the authentic Thomistic position would not be as pivotal. But he chose to make himself depend on Thomas. Though Maritain does not make an argument purely from authority, it is dependent upon Aquinas like the foundation of a building. And Thomas is not just the base. He has Thomistic pillars holding up the roof, Thomistic buttresses preventing the walls from buckling, and Thomistic shingles protecting it from foreign elements. Take all that away and the structure crashes. To determine that Aquinas's anthropology did not include and is in fact incompatible with this distinction would undermine Maritain's thesis. It would be akin to attributing to St. Augustine a particular point based entirely on one of his treatises only to find out that the treatise was merely ascribed to Augustine and was actually authored in the 15th century. As it stands, that Augustinian argument does not hold water and would need to be defended in another manner. In the same way, if the individual-person distinction is not Thomistic, Maritain's entire argument is founded on invalid principles and therefore the conclusions cannot stand.

55 Initially supportive of Maritain, and even attributed as a discoverer of the distinction, Garrigou-Lagrange would later show reserve about certain conclusions of his. (cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, *Gesù che ci redime*, Città Nuova, Roma 1966, 118 as cited by Bonello, "Reconstrucción Histórica y Teorética de la Crítica del Tomismo Comunitarista a la Distinción Individuo-Persona de Jacques Maritain," 50).

THE THOMISTIC POSITION

As stated, everything depends on upon where St. Thomas Aquinas actually stands regarding the distinction of these opposing poles in the human person. In this section we will consider the differences between the two. First, Aquinas does not oppose person and individual; second, Aquinas's understanding of "person" is distinct from Maritain; finally, there are three ways in which their respective ideas of "individual" diverge.

The first divergence lies in the opposition between the material and spiritual poles that necessarily follows from their attributes, regardless of Maritain's claim to the contrary. He declared it would be "illusory" to understand the poles as opposed to each other[56] and that such is not his intention.[57] But it seems that his attempt to clarify his position is insufficient and that opposition between the individual and person are inevitable. In fact, he did notice this conflict in their attributes and so asked, "What do these contradictions mean?"[58] He present the poles as two principles which are essentially opposed: they derive from opposed roots (spirit and matter); they produce in man opposite effects (submission vs. freedom); in their social application they have opposing relations (subordination to the state vs. superiority to the state); and struggle with each other for supremacy to impede or produce man's ultimate perfection. With this being the case, it seems unavoidable to conclude that the nature of the two poles necessarily entails opposition. With the attributes Maritain attributes to each pole, there is essentially a clash occurring between the

56 "There is nothing more illusory than to pose the problem of the person and the common good in terms of opposition. In reality, it is posed in terms of reciprocal subordination and mutual implication" (Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 65).

57 "We must emphasize that they are not two separate things." (ibid., 43).

58 ibid., 33. The opposition is further emphasized a little later when he transitions from describing one pole to the other: with the phrase "It is the material pole… On the contrary, St. Thomas' expression refers to the spiritual pole…" (ibid.).

person and the individual, between the personality and materiality, between the individual and the spiritual nature of the soul.

What does St. Thomas have to say about the matter? Does he hold the person and individual to be in opposition? No, it is obviously incompatible with Thomas's definition of a person as "an individual substance of a rational nature."[59] Here, the Angelic Doctor includes the notion of individual within the definition of person; the words "*substantia individua*" form part of the definition as a reference to singulars in the genus of substance while the "*rationalis naturae*" of the definition refers to singulars in genus of rational substances. Being a part of the very definition of person, individual is not placed in opposition to person nor is it incompatible with it. Person cannot be separated from individual in man because a person is a perfect individual of an intellectual nature and, vice-versa, every individual of an intellectual nature is a person. To cease being an individual is to cease being a person. It would be akin to opposing "animal" and "man." If man is defined as a "rational animal," it would be illogical to describe "man" on one end of a spectrum with "animal" on the other for animal forms part of the very definition of man. In the same way, if Maritain adheres to the Thomistic notion of person, he has no basis for confronting them as he does.

Another fissure between the thought of Maritain and Aquinas is in their respective conceptions what is meant by "person". St. Thomas says, "'person' in any nature signifies what is distinct in that nature: thus in human nature it signifies this flesh, these bones, and this soul, which are the individuating principles of a man, and which, though not belonging to 'person' in general, nevertheless do belong to the meaning of a particular human person."[60] Looking at this, it is clear that, for St. Thomas, the definition of "person" contains within itself

59 Cf. ST I, q. 29, a. 1.
60 ST I, q. 29, a. 4.

all the essential individualizing principles. Wherever there is a person, there are the principles which individualize him such as "this flesh, and these bones". For Maritain, however, the person is unrelated to matter; everything material in man is joined to his individual pole. The principle of individuation, matter signed by quantity, is a characteristic of this latter pole.[61]

If the personality of a man were to come exclusively from his spiritual pole, as Jacques Maritain holds to be the case, a separated soul would be a person since it lacks nothing proper to personality. For St. Thomas, on the other hand, a person is a complete being.[62] Which is why he denies that a separated soul is a person since it lacks its material component.[63] A person properly speaking requires the union of both principles. On account of this necessity, there are two beings with a rational element which, for St. Thomas, are not persons: the separated soul and the human nature of Christ; they are not persons because they are not individuals.

Furthermore, Maritain's notion of individual is not in keeping with St. Thomas's. The former's theory of individuality in man has already been described above as being the source of incommunicability. Things are separate from one another and cannot enter into communion with each other because of the individual pole. It is exclusive of other beings and opposed to universality. On the other hand, for St. Thomas, the personality is what makes one distinct from others. The personality of a human being produces individuation in that it is incommunicable. Put another way, a nature becomes incommunicable when attached to a person. This comes out in St. Thomas' Trinitarian theology where the Divine Essence, even though it is one (individual), cannot be a person, because if it were, it would be incommunicable; but it is communicated to the Fa-

61 Cf. Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 34-37.

62 "A person signifies something complete and self-subsisting" (ST III, q. 16, a. 12, ad 3).

63 Cf. ST I, q. 75, a. 4.

ther, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Or again in Aquinas' Christology, the individual human nature of Christ is communicated with the Son of God. It has this possibility, despite its individuality, because it is not a person. A particular nature is singular in a way, but is not limited to a definite subject unless it is the nature of a person. Hence, for St. Thomas' theological system, the particular human nature is individualized only when it is a person. The concepts of person and individual are distinct, but they are united in such a way that they need one another.

Along with his misconception of individual, Maritain also fails to understand the fullness of St. Thomas' notion of the individual as something distinct from others as well as undivided in itself. The *Summa Theologica* tells us that it takes two elements for a being to be an individual; it must be indistinct in itself, and also distinct from others.[64] This interior unity is what makes something to be one being (*ens*), and its distinction from others is what requires it to have its own act of being (*actu essendi*) that is not received. For example, a human being is an individual because it has its own act of being; but a person's hand does not, therefore it is not an individual. An individual has its own act of being, and is therefore subsistent. If the individual did not have its own act of being, it would not be divided from other all other beings since it would receive its act of being from something else to which it would necessarily be united. This is impossible in Thomas's thought since, as was pointed out in the citation from the *Summa,*[65] an individual is defined as one distinct from others. So again, the true individual, is one that subsists, that exists on account of its own act of being that is not shared with any other. But this Thomistic notion is richer than Maritain's position which simply attributes to the individual pole the function of individuating the substance. Maritain's

64 "The individual in itself is undivided, but is distinct from others" (ST I, q. 29, a. 4).

65 ST I, q. 29, a. 4.

principle of individuation can solve the problem of the multiplicity of a single form, but it does not give intrinsic unity to the substance.

Yet another difference between the two theologians in question is that Maritain holds individuality to come only from the material aspect of man whereas for St. Thomas, it is derived from both the material and spiritual parts of man. For Maritain, individual realities, which exist only outside the mind,[66] come from materiality. That is, individuality has its ontological roots in matter.[67] Supposedly, this is St. Thomas's view as well: "According to the Angelic Doctor, [material beings'] individuality is rooted in matter."[68] For the Angelic Doctor, it does not come from the merely material aspect of dimensive quantity but rather from the substantial form from which come all perfections. Examining the question of individuality from the theological point of view, St. Thomas uses his metaphysical principles to sustain that individuality of man does not come only from that part which is produced by the matter signed by quantity. The human nature of Christ, which is entire as a nature, is not a person because it can be assumed by a higher being.[69] Nor is it an individual since it is not an incommunicable nature (i.e. it can be assumed by another), and, as mentioned above, an individual is that which is undivided in itself but separate from (i.e. not communicable with) others.[70] So the individuality of the human person which is made up of a body and soul, is not limited to the individuation that comes from matter signed by quantity. Rather, the individuality of the human person is based on the act of being which allows a separate existence. The only difference between individuality and personality in a human being is that the latter adds a notion of ratio-

66 Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, 34.
67 ibid., 36.
68 ibid., 38.
69 Cf. ST III, q. 4, a. 2.
70 Cf. ibid, ST I, q. 29, a. 4.

nality to the individuality.

CONCLUSION

Reiterating what was said at the beginning, Jacques Maritain was an exemplary Catholic but his political philosophy is far from infallible. Like many great thinkers, the unravelling of the nuances of Maritain's philosophy continues long after his passing. While it was beyond the scope of this work to consider the far-reaching consequences of his teachings, they are themselves of great concern. The purpose of this work was to demonstrate the instability of their foundation. A tree is known by its fruits, since they are easier to observe; but if the roots can be studied, they will provide a much more accurate diagnosis which includes whether or not the future fruits will be healthy or sickly. And it seems that the roots of Maritain's tree of social teaching are not absorbing moisture from the Thomistic spring. Other springs can truly lead to healthy trees and nourishing fruits; but to present your produce as Thomistic, but not actually being such, leads one to question what kind of fruit it is. Put another way, if Maritain's distinction is not actually Thomistic, he loses not just the foundation upon which the distinction is built, but also many elements throughout his writings, since the dependency on what is believed to be St. Thomas is found throughout his writings. Jacques Maritain might have been a fine Catholic, but he does not seem to have been so fine a Thomist which, in his case, makes quite a difference for his intellectual contributions.

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Morality and Law in the Thought of Cornelio Fabro

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To speak about morality and law in the thought of an author like Cornelio Fabro is not an easy endeavor. This is not so much due to the complexity of the topics themselves, but to the fact that among his writings—except for some sporadic publications—we find few studies dedicated exclusively to morality and law.[1] We find rather various allusions to these two topics dispersed in numerous volumes, publications, and articles of his abundant intellectual production. For this reason, studying morality and law in the thought of Fabro necessarily implies "going deep," so to speak, into his work as a whole.

Fabro is a philosopher, and—as any *good* philosopher—he concerns himself with arriving at the root of the problem. To do so it is necessary to look for the foundation of the real and to study its structure; not only to show how the structure of our thought and our structural tendencies are linked together in a dialectical relation, but also to show how each in its own turn is intrinsically oriented to the real. We find a clear affirmation of what has just been said summarized in the preface of his *opus maius* on metaphysics entitled *Partecipazione e Causalità*;[2] in-

1 Among the contributions explicitly dedicated to morality and law we find: Cornelio Fabro, "La struttura dialettica del valore," in *Fondazione della morale. Atti del V Convegno di studi filosofici cristiani* (Padua, Italy: Liviana, 1950), 334–341; Cornelio Fabro, "I diritti dell'uomo nella tradizione ebraico-cristiana," *Studi cattolici* 10, no. 66 (November 1966): 4–12; Cornelio Fabro, "Valore permanente della morale," in *Il problema morale oggi (Atti del Convegno di studio del Comitato Cattolico Docenti Universitari, Roma 31 maggio – 2 giugno 1968)* (Bologna, Italy: Società editrice il Mulino, 1969), 331–385, later published in Cornelio Fabro, *L'avventura della teologia progressista* (Milan, Italy: Rusconi, 1974), currently published in Cornelio Fabro, *L'avventura della teologia progressista* (EDIVI, 2014); Cornelio Fabro, "Lo stato paladino della vita morale?," *L'Osservatore della Domenica*, November 22, 1970, no. 47, 2; Cornelio Fabro, "Grandeza y limites de la moral natural," *Ethos* 8 (1980): 9–16; Cornelio Fabro, "L'ordine morale in 19 tesi," *Studi cattolici* 28, no. 276 (February 1984): 83–87; and Cornelio Fabro, *Dio. Introduzione al Problema Teologico*, 2nd ed., vol. 10, Opere Complete (Segni, Italy: EDIVI, 2017).

2 Fabro himself considers it his most important work of metaphysics

deed he declares that speculation cannot stop at the study of the relation of the essence to the act of being (*esse*) but "must found the constitutive belonging of being to man and of man to being, thus clarifying at the same time, why man looks for himself in being and why being is illumined in man."[3] This statement could offer ideas for more than one conference; here we will limit ourselves to highlight that, while on the one hand man is made for being, and it is only *in* being and *through* a correct notion of *being* that man can understand something of himself—thus *man looks for himself in being*—on the other hand, and at the same time, *being is illumined in man*, because only man is able to stand before the real with a metaphysical approach and form a *resolutio ad fundamentum*.

Whether considering morality or law, Fabro does not concern himself with individual problems, except in sporadically putting forth an occasional example. The Friulian philosopher wants to form a *resolution*, to seek the foundation of morality and law, because he is convinced that only in this way, in going to the roots, will it be possible to resolve each problem without falling into any type of aporia.

I have decided to divide this paper into six points that will all be treated in the light of the thought of Cornelio Fabro. In the first point we will see the intrinsic connection that exists between freedom and morality; next we will mention a topic very dear to our author, which considers the necessary connection between the *destructio metaphysicae* and the *destructio ethicae* in modern thought; following this we will show why, for Fabro, an ethic that tries to exclude a transcendent Absolute necessarily

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when he describes his intellectual itinerary toward the end of his academic career. Cfr. Cornelio Fabro, *Appunti di un itinerario: versione integrale delle tre stesure con parti inedite*, ed. Rosa Goglia and Elvio Celestino Fontana (Segni, Italy: EDIVI, 2011), 46.

3 Cornelio Fabro, *Partecipazione e Causalità Secondo S. Tommaso D'Aquino*, 2nd ed., ed. Christian Ferraro, vol. 19, Opere Complete (Segni, Italy: EDIVI, 2010), 9.

leads to aporias; in the fourth point we will consider the greatness and the limits of natural morality according to Fabro, in order to then consider the permanent value of morality and to conclude with another topic very dear to him, that of the moral qualification and the existential constitution of the person.

FREEDOM AND MORALITY IN THE THOUGHT OF CORNELIO FABRO

Anyone who is familiar with Fabro's thought, even in a general way, knows perfectly well that he dedicated a large part of his academic activity to the study of freedom. Fabro's interest in freedom began right after the publication of his doctoral thesis, during World War II, when in 1940 he had his first encounter with existentialism. Later, in the second half of the 1960s, he began to give a series of courses on freedom in different universities. For the rest of his academic career his studies on freedom continued to intensify, especially with the courses given at the University of Perugia.[4] A fruit of these studies and insights for the lessons, in addition to the course notes—many revised by Fabro himself—were the numerous contributions and conferences on freedom given in the '70s and early '80s, culminating with the publication of the volume *Riflessioni sulla libertà* (1983), a collection of some of the contributions of greater theoretical density. Given that freedom is one of the principal themes studied by our author, it is easy to understand

4 Among the courses taught in the chair of Theoretical Philosophy of the University of Perugia we recall: *La crisi della ragione nel pensiero moderno* (1966-1967), *Essere e verità* (1966-1967), *Essere e libertà* (1967-1968), *Il problema della libertà nell'Esistenzialismo* (1968-1969), *La libertà nel Marxismo* (1968-1969), *La libertà in Hegel* (1969-1970), *La libertà in Kierkegaard* (Seminario, 1969-1970), *L'uomo e la filosofia* (1970-1971), *Esperienza, scienza e filosofia* (1971-1972), *Filosofia della religione* (1971-1972), *Libertà e storia* (1972-1973), *I fondamenti esistenziali della libertà* (1973-1974), *Tempo e storia* (1974-1975), *L'io e la storia* (1975-1976), *L'io e l'esistenza* (1975-1976), *Ideologia e libertà nel pensiero moderno* (1977-1978), *Essere nel mondo* (1979-1980), *Essere nel corpo* (1979-1980), *Essere nell'io* (1980-1981).

why on several occasions—almost by necessity—he also treats of morality. Indeed, freedom is, in a certain sense, the place of morality. In truth, only by presupposing the existence of freedom as the underivable core of the person is it possible to speak about morality. Counsels, exhortations, precepts, prohibitions, rewards, and penalties would have no meaning—as St. Thomas reminds us—if there were no freedom.[5] Freedom and morality are intrinsically bound, because freedom in man is certainly a condition of possibility for morality. Therefore, a correct notion of morality presupposes a correct notion of freedom, and from an erroneous notion of freedom an inadequate notion of morality necessarily follows. After some years of research on freedom in Fabro's thought, I believe I can affirm with some certainty that it must be understood as a synthetic reality, as a metaphysically founded and existentially self-founding plexus. The Friulian philosopher sometimes speaks of freedom as *a plexus of objective necessity and subjective contingency* referring precisely to these aspects, the metaphysical and the existential, which are always coexistent in it.[6]

We believe that it is precisely because of this very close connection between freedom and morality, of which we have already spoken, that Fabro often resorts to a text that serves as

5 In an article in the Summa Theologiae in which the Angelic Doctor asks *Whether Man Has Free Will?* (*Utrum homo sit liberi arbitri)*, he begins precisely in this way: "I answer that, Man has free-will: otherwise counsels, exhortations, commands, prohibitions, rewards and punishments would be in vain" (ST I, q. 83, a. 1). English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *Ia QQ, 1-119*, 5 vols., The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas 1 (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 1981), 416. "Respondeo dicendum quod homo est liberi arbitrii: alioquin frustra essent consilii, exhortationes, praecepta, prohibitiones, praemia et poenae" (Leon 4.307a). Also in the mature VI disputed question *De Malo* on human choice, we read: "Si enim non sit aliquid in nobis, set ex necessitate mouemur ad uolendum, tollitur deliberatio, exhortatio, preaeceptum, et punitio et laus et uituperium, circa quae moralis philosophia consistit" (*Quest. De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1; Leon.23.148a).

6 Cfr. Cornelio Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla libertà*, 2nd ed. (Segni, Italy: EDIVI, 2004), 216.

a prologue to the work on general morality by Aquinas. At the beginning of the Prima ST I-II, we read:

> Since, as Damascene states (*De Fide Orthod.* ii. 12), man is said to be made to God's image, in so far as the image implies *an intelligent being endowed with free-will and self-movement*: now that we have treated of the exemplar, i.e., God, and of those things which came forth from the power of God in accordance with His will; it remains for us to treat of His image, i.e., man, inasmuch as he too is the principle of his actions, as having free-will and control of his actions.[7]

Both texts—that of Aquinas and that of Damascene, to which Aquinas makes reference—indicate, according to Fabro, "the primary originality of freedom as participated creativity: a pure act of emergence of the 'I' in the existential structure of the subject as person."[8] In fact, under the existential aspect, or in the dynamism of the action and in the existential self-constitution of the person through the exercise of freedom, the will has the first place not only insofar as it is the universal principle of movement (St. Thomas calls it the *motor omnium virium* on some occasions), but also and above all, insofar as it is a formal moral principle.[9] Once again, Fabro's assertion has a

7 ST I-II, Prologue. English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *Ia IIae QQ. 1-114*, vol. II, The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas (Notre Dame, IN: Christian Classics, 1981), 583. "Quia, sicut Damascenus dicit, homo factus ad imaginem Dei dicitur, secundum quod per imaginem significatur intellectuale et arbitrio liberum et per se potestativum; postquam praedictum est de exemplari, scilicet de Deo, et de his quae processerunt ex divina potestate secundum eius voluntatem; restat ut consideremus de eius imagine, idest de homine, secundum quod et ipse est suorum operum principium, quasi liberum arbitrium habens et suorum operum potestatem" (Leon 6.5ab).

8 Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla libertà*, 9.

9 Cf. ibid., 69.

Thomistic foundation; in fact, according to the Angelic Doctor: "He who has a will is said to be good, so far as he has a good will; because it is by our will that we employ whatever powers we may have. Hence a man is said to be good, not by his good understanding; but by his good will. Now the will relates to the end as to its proper object. Thus the saying, *we exist because God is good* has reference to the final cause."[10]

We therefore see that freedom and the morality of man for Fabro, as for St. Thomas, are intrinsically connected, to the point that man is morally qualified by the exercise of his free will. These statements, which seem obvious to us, whether because we have some familiarity with the texts of Aquinas, or because we are convinced that the responsibility for good and evil fall to the will of the person, are not so obvious in modern thought. Thus we pass to the second point, in which we want to show that the current ethical upheaval has its root in the rejection of metaphysics.

DESTRUCTIO ETHICAE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE *DESTRUCTIO METAPHYSICAE*

A theme particularly dear to our author concerns the destruction of ethics by modern thought. One of the authors most studied by Fabro, other than St. Thomas, was certainly Søren Kierkegaard. Fabro dedicated more than fifty years of his life to the study and translation of the works of the Dan-

10 ST I, q. 5, a. 4, ad 3. English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *Ia QQ, 1-119*, 26. "Ad tertium dicendum quod quilibet habens voluntatem, dicitur bonus inquantum habet bonam voluntatem: quia per voluntatem utimur omnibus quae in nobis sunt. Unde non dicitur bonus homo, qui habet bonum intellectum, sed qui habet bonam voluntatem" (Leon. 4.61b). We also find a similar statement in a more mature text: "Simpliciter autem et totaliter bonus dicitur aliquis ex quod habet voluntatem bonam, quia per voluntatem homo utitur omnibus aliis potentiis. Et ideo bona voluntas facit hominem bonum simpliciter; et propter hoc virtus appetitivae partis secundum quam voluntas fit bona, est quae simpliciter bonum facit habentem" (*De Virt. in comm.*, a. 9 ad 16).

ish philosopher, and although the motives that led him to explore in depth the thought of this author are diverse, one is certainly of fundamental importance in the Fabrian itinerary: that of Kierkegaard's critique of Hegelian idealism and more generally of modern thought. The criticism of the Danish philosopher attacks modern thought in its fundamental applications, both under the metaphysical and the moral aspects. For Kierkegaard, modern philosophy in general, and Hegelian philosophy in particular, lacks ethics.[11] The fundamental reason is seen by Fabro in the fact that the *destructio ethicae* is a direct consequence of the *destructio metaphysicae*:

> For Kierkegaard, as for Aristotle and St. Thomas, the *destructio ethicae* goes hand in hand in modern philosophy with the *destructio metaphysicae*, which is immanent in the *cogito-volo*, which "frees" man from any relationship of dependence on the Absolute and therefore on every law and every transcendent sanction, out of which "duty" remains an empty formal instance . . . . Without theological transcendence, no absolute duty is given because there is no universal law: there is only the law that man gives to himself. The claim of the absoluteness of the moral order against the invasion of the relativism of history is the *leitmotiv* of the charge of immorality that Kierkegaard makes against modern thought.[12]
>
> All Kierkegaardian pseudonyms are pledged to vindicate the ethical application—or rather its consistency—against the dissolution which it suffers at the hands of modern immanence . . . . ethics is not autonomous but refers to the Absolute

11 Cf. Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla libertà*, 183.
12 ibid., 183-184.

> understood in a personal sense, that is, the Absolute of religion.[13]

Without transcendence, the foundation is lacking, and the absolute of the Hegelian system, which is immanent, is an impersonal absolute that cannot, nor ever could be, the foundation [of morality]. Fabro recalls that "Kierkegaard's criticism does not strike. . . only at Hegel. . . but captures modern thought at its root, denouncing the loss of every ethical and religious value, of the moral dignity of the person, and of his relationship to God."[14] But for Fabro, the fundamental problem is a metaphysical problem. It is principally a problem that has its root in an erroneous *philosophical beginning*. For Fabro, a beginning from pure thought does not exist, nor can it exist. Thought is only possible through the first contact with *ens*, and eliminating this first contact is a devastating mental artifice.[15]

13 Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla libertà*, 157.

14 ibid., 185-186.

15 Let us clarify that when we speak of first contact with being we are referring to the apprehension of the *ens* as *primum cognitum*, that is, of what St. Thomas speaks in different places of his works and with different nuances, when he states that "illud autem quod primo intellectus concipit quasi notissimum. . . est ens" (De Veritate, q. 1, a. 1). This is what Fabro, after a careful study of Aquinas' numerous texts, calls *original synthetic apprehension*. With this precise terminology, our author wants to indicate that it is not an operation of the judgment, which presupposes it, nor of the *simplex apprehensio*, which concerns the essences, but something that *precedes* both operations. We are therefore speaking about a particular apprehension of the intellect in which all the faculties are involved; thus it is called *synthetic*; it signifies, moreover, an immediate contact (that is, without mediation) with the real, and for this reason it is called *original*. This particular apprehension is constitutive of the consciousness of the real in act and, being the *first* contact with the *ens*, it is the principle that gives *intentionality* (trans. "intenziona") to thought itself, like light, which simultaneously actualizes the visibility of bodies and the visual faculty itself. Fabro sometimes calls it a *fundamental transcendental* because it is the foundation and the first object of all knowledge. Cfr. Cornelio Fabro, *La prima riforma della dialettica hegeliana*, ed. Christian Ferraro (Segni, Italy: EDIVI, 2004), 229; Fabro, *Partecipazione e*

Indeed, once the constitutive relationship of man to being and of being to man that forms in this first contact is eliminated—artificially—everything else is precluded: metaphysics is undermined at its base, a correct understanding of reality, of its structures and its dynamics, is rendered impossible, and consequently the way to the transcendent Absolute is also precluded. If transcendence is lacking, everything resolves in immanence, and even in the dynamic-operative plane a correct understanding of the activity of man toward attaining his end is rendered impossible. Hence from the *destructio metaphysicae* follows—necessarily—the *destructio ethicae*.

> The problem then, Kierkegaard insists against Hegel and idealism, is not to dissolve the individual into the impersonal Subject; it is not even, [Kierkegaard] could say against Heidegger, to conceive and dissolve man into the horizontal dimension of time. This happens in Hegel—as Kierkegaard has shown—and is repeated in Heidegger—we add—because from the beginning they empty being of *ens*, bringing it back to nothingness, that is, reducing it to pure thought.[16]

We therefore see that a valid restoration of ethics and morality is possible only through the return to a sound metaphysics, in which the constitutive relationship between man and being is restored and in which a correct understanding of the real, its structures, its dynamics, and its finalistic order, is made possible.

Without metaphysical transcendence there is not and there cannot be moral order; this is the situation in which we find ourselves today. It is a phenomenon of universal proportions

Causalità Secondo S. Tommaso D'Aquino, 173; Cornelio Fabro, "Per un tomismo essenziale," *Aquinas* 8, no. 1 (1965): 21.

16 Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla libertà*, 185-186.

that verges on collective hallucination, in which the notion of sin seems to disappear, because the very eternal law that sustains morality is denied. Thus we find ourselves, for the first time in the history of Christianity, before the pretense of establishing a faith without dogmas and a morality without laws and without sanctions; it is the scenario obstinately desired by Karl Rahner.[17]

INTRINSIC APORETIC NATURE OF AN ETHIC WITHOUT GOD

With this title we want to demonstrate that not only for Fabro and Kierkegaard, but even for St. Thomas, the attempt to conceive an ethics without God—a morality that excludes any revealed datum and that particularly excludes the revelation of original sin—inevitably leads to aporias.

Fabro distinguishes the formal from the existential sphere within ethics. In Thomistic ethics, if we move within the formal sphere, the ultimate end of man, which is the good in general (*bonum in communi*), is not an object of choice but only of intention (*intentio*); thus man has an innate tendency, necessary, natural, toward the good in general. If instead we consider the existential sphere, which is that in which man moves in real life, Fabro is convinced that the ultimate end is an object of choice; furthermore, he is convinced that this is also the position of St. Thomas. Man is called to choose the ultimate end of his life, toward which he will have to direct all his other choices.[18]

Regarding the thought of Kierkegaard, Fabro points out that one can distinguish two ethics for the Danish philoso-

17 Cf. Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla libertà*, 119-120.

18 This is one of the points on which many "Thomists" are still opposed to the Fabrian reading of Aquinas which is eminently clear; see in this regard: "Orizzontalità e verticalità nella dialettica della libertà" and "La dialettica di intelletto e volontà nella costituzione esistenziale dell'atto libero" in ibid. and Cornelio Fabro, "Atto Esistenziale e Impegno Della Libertà," *Divus Thomas* 86, nos. 2-3 (1983): 125–161.

pher: the first is that which Kierkegaard calls *ideal*, which is exhausted in the precepts understood in a formal sense and does not take into account original sin; the second ethics is instead that which presupposes and considers original sin.

> While the first ethics presupposes metaphysics and conceives of sin as a possibility, the second presupposes the dogma that presents it (as it were) as a fact of reality, not however of a simple individual but which extends as sin to the whole of [mankind] . . . . Kierkegaard profoundly observes that the passage of sin from possibility to reality cannot be explained by any ethics since this is freedom itself . . . . At the basis of the new ethic then is not the transparency of reason, but the paradox; that is, the "new beginning" of faith that man is intrinsically a sinner, that it was by (the abuse of) his freedom that he was lost, and therefore he has need of grace to be saved.[19]

These reflections are set out in the Danish philosopher's well-known doctrine of the three stages of life: the aesthetic stage, the ethical stage, and the religious stage. But according to Fabro, Kierkegaard's thought leads to a reducing of these three stages to two, and man is necessarily destined to the alternative between the aesthetic life and the religious life:

> despite the three-fold division, even the Stages present an either-or, since the ethical stage no longer has its own autonomy: in fact, it is either connected to the religious stage or it falls into the aesthetic life. The ethical stage is therefore the decisive existential stage . . . .

19 Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla libertà*, 160-161.

> In the religious sphere. . . the ethical task does not admit exceptions, because every man must be "before God" to whom alone belongs judgment . . . .
>
> But the foundation of this power and duty is the theological Absolute or the relationship of man's double dependence on God: of metaphysical dependence in virtue of creation and of moral dependence in unconditional obedience as a free being.[20]

A moral philosophy that tries to prescind from being founded in a transcendent Absolute is necessarily aporetic. The autonomy of Kant's morality is a striking example. According to Fabro, Kant is a necessary step for understanding all the problems of the modern spirit.[21] It is no coincidence that his moral theory has been the most followed for over two centuries in the various systems of morals or law that have tried to prescind

20 Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla libertà*, 161-162. Kierkegaard clearly saw this need for a theological foundation for morality, and he expresses it, as Fabro does well to point out, with his formula of the "theological suspension" that we find in the work *Fear and Trembling*. In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard takes into consideration the figure of Abraham who is called by God to sacrifice his son Isaac; the philosopher presents the episode as the ethical-religious situation *par excellence*. How is it possible that God, who commands not to kill and asks men to take care of their children and who, moreover, in this particular case had promised Abraham numerous descendants through his only son Isaac, now asks Abraham to sacrifice his son? This is possible because the religious sphere goes beyond the ethical sphere and the relationship to God breaks direct relationships (father-son) in the sphere of immanence and transfers them, saving them in the sphere of transcendence (Cfr. ibid., 159). In this way Abraham becomes the "father of the faith," for his absolute obedience to the Absolute, for his absolute faith in God, who asks everything for our good and would never require us to sacrifice that which we love most if it were not because he loves us infinitely and has reserved something greater for us. It is the theological suspension of ethics understood as a merely natural moral philosophy.

21 ibid., 283.

from a transcendent absolute. But if man's duty is not founded on a transcendent absolute, it must necessarily be founded on man, and man cannot be the foundation of morality. This is precisely the error of Kantian formalism: the claim to be able to found duty (*Sollen*) in man himself. Fabro often ridicules this position by referring to a text in which Kierkegaard compares Kant's morality to the blows with which Sancho Panza strikes himself on the back to punish himself:

> Kant thinks that man is a law unto himself (autonomy), that is, that he is bound to the law that he has given himself. But this, in the most radical sense, essentially lays the groundwork for the lack of any law and for pure experimentation. This [law] will lack seriousness, like the blows that Sancho Panza gives himself on the back. It is impossible that in A I can effectively be more severe than I am in B, or that I could even desire myself to be so. If one must be serious, constraint is required. If what binds is not something higher than the I itself, and it is up to me to bind myself, where then as A (the one who binds) shall I find the severity that I do not have as B (the one who must be bound), once A and B are the same I?[22]

"The 'constraint', of which Kierkegaard speaks is of a metaphysical and not a psychological nature: it indicates the insertion and dependence of human rule on the law and eternal truth."[23] Kant explicitly excludes a transcendent foundation to the point of affirming:

22 Søren Kierkegaard, *Diary 1849-50*, X2 A 396. Italian trans. Søren Kierkegaard, *1849-1850*, trans. Cornelio Fabro, vol. 6, Diario (Brescia, Italy: Morcelliana, 1981), n. 2771, 70.

23 C. Fabro, *Dio. Introduzione al Problema Teologico*, 129.

> Morality, insofar as it is based on the concept of the human being as one who is free, but who precisely therefore also binds himself through his reason to unconditional laws, is in need neither of the idea of another being above him in order for him to cognize his duty, nor, in order for him to observe it, of an incentive other than the law itself.[24]

So while in Thomistic realism both the physical and the spiritual world are founded on a first principle that supports every creature in being and moves it in its operations, for Kant the spiritual world of man must be sufficient and autonomous in itself. God, for Kant, is not the foundation of the moral order, but only the One who confers the connection between the merit of observing the law and happiness. Since man has no power to unite the merit of observing the law with happiness, then there must be—according to Kant—an omnipotent moral Being under whose solicitude this happens. It is only in this sense that, for the philosopher of Königsberg, morality leads to religion.[25]

Therefore the foundation of morality for Kant is the autonomy of man's will, which he calls the categorical imperative

24 Immanuel Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, 1st ed. (1873). English trans. from Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2009), 1. The Italian translation is Fabro's: "The precise formula of this transcendental anthropological atheism is given by Kant himself, and we read at the opening of the work intended for the foundation of religion: 'La morale, in quanto essa è basata sul concetto dell'uomo como essere ('Wesen') libero ma che appunto per questo obbliga pure se stesso mediante la sua ragione a leggi incondizionate, non ha bisogno né dell'Idea di un altro essere al di sopra di lui per conoscere il suo dovere, né di uno stimolo altro dalla legge stessa, per prenderla in considerazione'. Kant summarizes the exposition made in his previous works: 'Hence on its own behalf morality in no way needs religion (neither objectively, in regard to volition, nor subjectively in regard to capability); rather through the power of pure practical reason it is sufficient to itself (*ist sie sich selbst genug*)'" (Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla libertà*, 290-291).

25 Cf. ibid., 291-292.

of duty, which is the only absolute positive affirmation that man possesses. Fabro affirms that the Kantian system is compact and coherent, but immediately afterwards he questions whether it is truly realistic, that is, whether it corresponds to the practical demands of the real man and if it could become effectively operative. The question is this: Can the categorical imperative be the foundation of the law? Or, to state it another way: Can the law have the categorical imperative as an absolute guarantee? Furthermore: Can the categorical imperative be the *vis obligandi* for compliance with the law? The answer to these questions is very exacting, but according to Fabro, it has already been given in the negative by the development of post-Kantian philosophy which, by not finding a solution, has eliminated morality and, when it maintained it in some way, reduced it to a formal consideration of one's duty, just as in Kant. The Kantian "you must" is like an empty container that can receive any content. Even brigands, says Fabro, are convinced that they obey the moral imperative of their ideology when they kill. The categorical imperative can justify any ethics and any policy, so long as they are presented in a universal form; this is what the ethical-legal systems try to do.[26] For Fabro rather,

> in the foundation of the moral law the relationship to the Creator is constitutive not only as a real dependence, as revealed in irrational nature, but it is constitutive a second time as a foundation for the human consciousness of the morality of the norm itself: God is the Supreme Good, source of every good, which has therefore assigned to man a particular natural (rational) law which has the meaning and value of a law only insofar as it is a "participation of the eternal law" of God [Cf. ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2].[27]

26 ibid., 295.
27 ibid.

Moral life for Fabro "is not a monologue but a dialogue between man and God that takes place in the secret of the conscience of the individual I."[28] Thus, without reference to God—who created the world, man, and the very nature of man—no law of absolute value that is equal for everyone is possible. And although Kant would also like to satisfy this legitimate demand for universality and absoluteness of the law, it must be said that his categorical imperative:

> can become a *prius* only insofar as it is a *posterius*. It is a *prius* in the existential order, but [only] insofar as it is a *posterius* in the creatural order, that is—according to the Thomistic formula—insofar as the natural law of man derives from and is founded on the eternal law of God. The *status creationis* becomes therefore the necessary foundation of the *status moralitatis*.[29]

Although Fabro recognizes that Kant was one of the few who truly felt the problem of the ultimate foundation of morality—indeed, he maintains that morality must have an absolute value—it must be acknowledged that this absolute value cannot come from man, and

> Kant, in affirming it, is in a serious error or rather—what is worse—is the victim of a serious illusion. The illusion of moral atheism or atheistic freedom is to assume that man is a law unto himself (autonomy), that is, that he is able to be bound by the law that he has given himself.[30]

28 Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla libertà*, 295.
29 ibid., 296.
30 ibid., 297.

It is true that, according to Kant, man must be considered as an end in himself and cannot be treated as a means, but man cannot be the ultimate end. Fabro affirms that:

> Just as man can be the *finis legis moralis*, but not the ultimate end, so too he cannot be the *custos legis ultimus*, and every human criminal law—regardless of its shortcomings and difficulties of application—inevitably lacks something with respect to the quality of the crimes.[31]

In fact, man, as guardian of the law, would never be able to issue a perfect judgment, precisely because of its creatural condition that makes human judgment subject to errors or, at least, to imperfections. Only God can be the ultimate guardian of the law, because only He can judge with exact justice, although he always does so with infinite mercy. For Fabro it is therefore clear that the ultimate *vis obligandi* of the law must come from a first principle that transcends man:

> There is not only a law that I give myself as a maxim. . . but there is also one that is given to me by a higher legislator, who stands up to educate and imposes constraint upon me: I must have my help from another who may be severity, although he is also meekness. Therefore, the last *vis obligandi* of the law must come from a First principle that transcends man, that is, from Him who created him. The moral autonomy of Kant is an orphan, abandoned to itself, and can be gathered in by anyone—as has been stated—from the totalitarian state to the anarchist movements. And so it has been. Kant was and remains the prestigious father of the modern and contemporary ideologies

31 ibid.

> that have dissolved religion and Christianity: a result that he would have disdainfully disavowed.[32]

This is, however, what has happened, and we see the consequences. Fabro is convinced that man comes to atheism not only on the foundation of materialism, but also by the demand for a completely autonomous freedom, without the eternal law and without divine sanction.[33]

We conclude this point by reiterating once again that a morality that tries to prescind from a transcendent Absolute will inevitably end in aporias, especially in that of pretending to found a law that is universal without a foundation that is absolute. In a morality that claims to be universal, the relationship to God as the only transcendent absolute is constitutive, not only as a real dependence, but also in that God founds the morality of the norm itself in the human conscience. In rational creatures the law is in fact present not only as ruling and measuring but also as ruled and measured; God has given man a particular natural law that takes into account the peculiarity that man is a rational and free being. But such a law has the meaning and value of a law only insofar as it is a participation in the eternal law.[34]

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32 Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla libertà*, 297.

33 Cf. ibid., 298.

34 Here is the great difference between Kant and St. Thomas. Both see in man the presence of a moral law, Kant expresses it in a very poetic way in the famous text in the conclusion of the Critique of Practical Reason: "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more frequently and persistently one's meditation deals with them: the starry sky above me and the moral law within me. Neither of them do I need to seek or merely suspect outside my purview, as veiled in obscurities or [as lying] in the extravagant: I see them before me and connect them directly with the consciousness of my existence. The first thing starts from the place that I occupy in the external world of sense and expands the connection in which I stand into the immensely large, with worlds upon worlds and systems of systems, and also into boundless times of their periodic motion, the beginning and continuance thereof. The second thing starts from my invis-

ible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world that has true infinity but that is discernible only to the understanding, and with that world (but thereby simultaneously also with all those visible worlds) I cognize myself not, as in the first case, in a merely contingent connection, but in a universal and necessary one. The first sight, of a countless multitude of worlds, annihilates, as it were, my importance as an animal creature that, after having for a short time been provided (one knows not how) with vital force, must give back again to the planet (a mere dot in the universe) the matter from which it came. The second sight, on the contrary, elevates infinitely my worth as that of an intelligence by my personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the entire world of sense, at least as far as can be gleaned from the purposive determination of my existence by this law, a determination that is not restricted to conditions and boundaries of this life but proceeds to infinity" (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2002), 203). But the presence of this "moral law within me" of which Kant speaks is by no means a participation in the eternal law; In fact, God only comes into play to ensure the connection between the merit of my actions and the resulting happiness. In St. Thomas, on the other hand, God is seen as the absolute and transcendent foundation of the moral law and of the very morality of the law which in man is a participation in the eternal law; thus he answers when asked if there is a natural law in us: "I answer that, As stated above (q. 90, a. 1, ad 1), law, being a rule and measure, can be in a person in two ways: in one way, as in him that rules and measures; in another way, as in that which is ruled and measured, since a thing is ruled and measured, in so far as it partakes of the rule or measure. Wherefore, since all things subject to Divine providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law, as was stated above (a. 1); it is evident that all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as, namely, from its being imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends. Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others. Wherefore it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end: and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law. Hence the Psalmist after saying (Ps. iv. 6): *Offer up the sacrifice of justice*, as though someone asked what the works of justice are, adds: *Many say, Who showeth us good things?* in answer to which question he says: *The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us*: thus implying that the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light. It is therefore evident that the natural law is nothing else than the rational creature's participation

THE GREATNESS AND THE LIMITS OF NATURAL MORALITY

For Fabro, it is clear that the greatness of natural morality derives from a theological and not a historical or cultural factor. The natural moral law is *a participation of the rational creature in the eternal law* and it is precisely from this insertion into the eternal law that the natural law derives its *vis obligandi*. The Thomistic foundation recalls the biblical principle that man is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Due to this principle, man is placed in a situation of transcendence with respect to finite and temporal realities and is in a situation—so to speak—of affinity with God and of aspiring to eternal happiness. But the greatness of natural morality does not derive only from the fact of its being preparatory for participation in divine life, which man later obtains through Grace and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit; the same natural morality, thanks to the unity of the person, is purified in the Christian and sublimated in the

of the eternal law" (ST I-II, q. 91, a. 1; English trans. from Thomas Aquinas, *Ia IIae QQ. 1-114*, 997). "Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est, lex, cum sit regula et mensura, dupliciter potest esse in aliquo, uno modo, sicut in regulante et mensurante; alio modo, sicut in regulato et mensurato, quia inquantum participat aliquid de regula vel mensura, sic regulatur vel mensuratur. Unde cum omnia quae divinae providentiae subduntur, a lege aeterna regulentur et mensurentur, ut ex dictis patet; manifestum est quod omnia participant aliqualiter legem aeternam, inquantum scilicet ex impressione eius habent inclinationes in proprios actus et fines. Inter cetera autem rationalis creatura excellentiori quodam modo divinae providentiae subiacet, inquantum et ipsa fit providentiae particeps, sibi ipsi et aliis providens. Unde et in ipsa participatur ratio aeterna, per quam habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum et finem. Et talis participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura lex naturalis dicitur. Unde cum Psalmista dixisset, Sacrificate sacrificium iustitiae, quasi quibusdam quaerentibus quae sunt iustitiae opera, subiungit: Multi dicunt, quis ostendit nobis bona? Cui quaestioni respondens, dicit: Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine: quasi lumen rationis naturalis, quo discernimus quid sit bonum et malum, quod pertinet ad naturalem legem, nihil aliud sit quam impressio divini luminis in nobis. Unde patet quod lex naturalis nihil aliud est quam participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura" (Leon 7.154ab).

unity of and dynamic participation in activity itself.

> We could almost say, with a formula that better adheres to life, that while natural morality does not differ *materially* in believers and non-believers, in Christians and non-Christians (the *lumen rationis* is identical in all, just as human nature is identical), it is however necessary to admit that *formally,* or better *existentially*—that is, considered within the dynamism of freedom—the *forma agendi* of the Christian is unique, and therefore the same natural morality operates under the irradiation of grace and its gifts. Thus if we can speak about its lower "limits," which are the suggestions of private and public passions, the defects of the person, and the mystifications of the politic—we speak of empirical limits and impediments to the use of freedom—which freedom has the duty to despise and to break. So too, but in the opposite sense, one can recognize the limits that freedom and the moral law feel from above, in the sphere of divine vocation and grace—but these are no longer limits but invitations, guarantees, and comforts for the last flight of consecration to the supreme Good in Christ.[35]

Thus the greatness and the limitations of Christian morality live in the same atmosphere, which is the tension of man's freedom, and they draw from the same source, which is the mystery of God always present and active, albeit in different ways, in believers and non-believers, in saints and sinners.

35 Fabro, "Grandeza y limites de la moral natural," 13-14. Italian text is taken from *Sermoni dell'Oratorio*.

THE PERMANENT VALUE OF MORALITY

The theme of the permanent value of morality is treated by Fabro on several occasions. We will refer to one of his contributions to a conference of the *Catholic Committee of University Professors*, held in Rome in 1968. For Fabro there is a permanent value of morality when there are essences, that is, when there are structures in reality and permanent natures. Freedom is the first subjective root of morality, while divine law is its objective form.[36] Freedom and norm are not for Fabro dialectical moments but constitutive for each other, in each other, indeed as there is no freedom without norm, neither is there norm without freedom. And while on the one hand the sense of freedom seems to arise solely from man's subjectivity, on the other hand freedom has meaning in reality only if it is mediated by transcendence.

After having also spoken in this contribution of the *dissolution of morality in modern thought as a consequence of the destruction of metaphysics*—a theme we have already mentioned—Fabro goes on to consider the *crisis of morality in modern theology*. For Fabro there are two positions that one can assume before the immanentism of modern philosophy and the radical humanism of contemporary philosophy: one that radically challenges the principle of immanence and another that considers the situation as irreversible and thus envisages the beginning of a "new theology."[37] The latter position has been adopted by some theologians who have introduced new existential principles into theology, such as that of Heidegger of "being in the world" and that of Jaspers of "being in the situation." These new principles have led to what is called "the morality of the situation," according to which there are no objective and immutable moral principles, but rather man derives

36 Cf. Fabro, "Valore permanente della morale," 331-332.

37 This is the line of Barth-Tillich-Bultmann, which led to the so-called "theology of the death of God" which exploded immediately after the War under the influence of D. Bonhöffer.

his mode of behavior in historical reality from his mode of being in the world.[38]

This "new theology," having accepted the principle of immanence, has consequently eliminated transcendence and therefore has also eliminated any distinction between the natural and the supernatural order. The latter is in a certain sense dissolved into the former, because everything is immanent in the world. It is the process of secularization operated by progressivist theology.

With the disappearance of metaphysics, the supernatural order has also disappeared and with it the absolutism of morality, with nefarious consequences. A heteronomous morality, founded on a principle external to human consciousness and subject to sanctions that proceed from a transcendent order, no longer exists. The origin of this change is to be sought in Kant, with whom the passage from heteronomous morality to that of the autonomous is made. But the true origin, even further upstream, is metaphysical, and is to be found in the reduction of being to being of consciousness. If being is now reduced to the being of consciousness—as the principle of immanence proclaims—and all transcendence is excluded, whether with regard to knowing or to being, then it is obvious that it no longer makes any sense to speak of a morality founded on a principle external to consciousness. The consequences are very grave, because the foundations of morality have been turned upside-down. This is why Rahner, a "Catholic" theologian, has no difficulty in accepting, for example, the well-known theses of P. Bayle, who affirms the possibility of a "society of atheists" founded on a natural morality that rejects metaphysics and any religious presupposition.

Fabro summarizes the reasons that led Protestant theologians, and some Catholic theologians, to oppose the dogmatic and moral theology of the Catholic tradition. He lists five:

38 Cf. Fabro, "Valore permanente della morale," 345.

First, *the denunciation of Hellenism* and the necessary abandonment of metaphysics. Thus they claim that the Council of Trent was a serious error and *Pascendi* a mistake, simply because these are still anchored in metaphysical principles and notions.[39]

The second reason is *the assumption of modern immanence* with the reversal of the relationship between being and thought. In the immanence of modern thought, *being no longer founds thought* but *thought founds being*. This for Fabro—who expounds it extensively in his writings—leads to atheism, to the falsification of the notion of freedom, and to the elimination of the true concept of sin.

A third reason is *the promulgation of "secularism,"* which has led to *desacralization* and *demoralization*, or to the claim of man's independence in being and acting from every extra-human principle and rule, according to the formula used by Bonhöffer: *"Etsi Deus non daretur."*

The fourth reason: *the acceptance of absolute evolutionism*. Fabro particularly refers to Teilhard de Chardin's cosmo-anthropocentric evolutionism.

The fifth reason: *the inevitable acceptance of absolute historicism*. Once metaphysics and the immutability of dogmas and morals have been confiscated, it is obvious that the reality of man ends up being conceived as his actualization in history.

What solution does he offer to this situation? Fabro firstly proposes a return to an extreme semantic sobriety regarding the magisterium and dogmas. He then reiterates the need to strongly reaffirm the existence of a natural, universal, and im-

39 *Pascendi* (*Dominicis gregis*, encyclical of [Pope St.] Pius X, published in 1907) strongly condemns this position, because revealed dogma would lose all meaning if it came to lack metaphysical principles and if the distinction between the natural and supernatural order were eliminated. Furthermore, without clear and stable notions of nature, essence, person, relation, etc., the fundamental dogmas of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, and of creation itself out of nothing would lose all meaning and importance.

mutable law founded upon and participating in the eternal law.[40] Yet before all this, we repeat once again, he is convinced of the need to restore a sound metaphysics. The problem at the base of all these problems is principally philosophical. If we do not start again from the metaphysics of being, a morality in which the only norm is the situation will be a logical consequence:

> The law is in fact the pole of the relationship of subjectivity to the Absolute, of man to God, and without this relationship there is no morality, there is no effective distinction of good and evil, but only a dialectic: the condition, in fact, of morality in modern thought. Such a morality, completely immersed in historicity and drawing its momentum from subjectivity, would take its norm only from the situation.[41]

In this new morality—Fabro notes—the relationship between time and eternity and the corresponding relation of temporal action—eternal reward or punishment—is completely absent; thus terms such as Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, have now fallen into disuse.

MORAL QUALIFICATION AND EXISTENTIAL CONSTITUTION OF THE PERSON IN THE THOUGHT OF CORNELIO FABRO

I would like to conclude this work by mentioning a theme particularly dear to Cornelio Fabro regarding the moral qualification and the existential constitution of the person. I have decided to briefly touch on this theme to show the surprising

40 Cf. Fabro, "Valore permanente della morale," 355-360.
41 ibid., 361.

affinity of Fabro's thought with one of the most important magisterial documents on morality, the encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, the 25th anniversary of which is commemorated this year.

We in 2018 are now half a century past the cultural revolution of 1968. During this revolution, the alleged right to various types of freedom (sexual freedom, freedom from the State, freedom from the family, freedom from any type of authority, etc.) was repeatedly claimed. One of the mottos of 1968 was: "forbidden to forbid," expressing the desire of the promoters of the revolution to do away with any restrictions. During these 50 years from 1968 to today, an ever more pressing request for freedom in the various spheres of human life has been issued, and we have now reached extremes that were unthinkable a few decades ago: we think, for example, of the alleged "freedom" that today claims to be able to choose one's own sexual gender, or the alleged "freedom" to decide what type of "family" to form, or even the alleged "freedom" for a couple of the same sex to have a child; the "freedom" to use drugs, upsetting one's own perception; the "freedom," sometimes even called the right, to kill defenseless and innocent life through abortion; and so we could continue with a very long list of alleged "freedoms" that the man of today demands and to which he claims to have a right. In such a situation we understand how important it is to have a clear notion of what freedom is, in order to evangelize a world in which man believes that freedom is an absolute value and that nothing surpasses it; nothing that regulates, nothing that limits and measures. Curiously, we see that the more these pseudo-freedoms seem to advance, new and increasingly insidious forms of slavery paradoxically grow and establish themselves: we think, for example, of the *dictatorship of relativism*, the *global economic dictatorship*, the dictatorship of the *cultural hegemony of the lobbyists*, the *dictatorship of media* and the latest pitfalls of the *dictatorship of informational technology*.

These new pseudo-liberties and these new forms of the op-

pression of freedom impose a new model of humanism that is totally anti-natural and radically anti-human. For this reason, we believe that rediscovering the meaning, roots, and above all the foundations of freedom is extremely important and necessary. Fabro was concerned with this; providentially, precisely during the years of the revolution of 1968, he began to give his numerous courses on freedom at the University of Perugia, anticipating both the current situation and the appeal of St. John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor*. In fact, in the encyclical the Pope urges a more profound study of the nature of freedom and its dynamisms:

> The heightened concern for freedom in our own day has led many students of the behavioral and the theological sciences to develop a more penetrating analysis of its nature and of its dynamics. It has been rightly pointed out that freedom is not only the choice for one or another particular action; it is also, within that choice, a decision about oneself and a setting of one's own life for or against the Good, for or against the Truth, and ultimately for or against God.[42]

Later, still in the same encyclical letter, the Holy Pontiff states with great profundity:

> Human acts are moral acts because they express and determine the goodness or evil of the individual who performs them. They do not produce a change merely in the state of affairs outside of man but, to the extent that they are deliberate choices, they give moral definition to the very person who performs them, determining his profound spiritual traits. This was perceptively noted by Saint

42 John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, August 6, 1993, 65.

> Gregory of Nyssa: "All things subject to change and to becoming never remain constant, but continually pass from one state to another, for better or worse… Now, human life is always subject to change; it needs to be born ever anew… But here birth does not come about by a foreign intervention, as is the case with bodily beings…; it is the result of a free choice. Thus, we are in a certain way our own parents, creating ourselves as we will, by our decisions."[43]

Free acts not only produce a change in the state of things external to man, but as deliberate choices, they morally qualify the person who performs them and determine his profound spiritual physiognomy. Through these acts we are, in a certain way, our own parents, creating ourselves as we will and with our choices giving ourselves the form we desire.

In his speculations on freedom Fabro certainly anticipated the thought that John Paul II expresses in these texts of the encyclical letter; in fact, he dealt with these issues in a very in-depth way in his studies. As early as 1971, he affirmed that:

> It is through the choice of the ultimate personal end that the fundamental morality of the human act is constituted and that the human will is said to be good or bad, and it is through the development of this choice that the moral personality of man is formed and qualified in its integrity.[44]

For Fabro, free acts are moments, or rather *instances* (*istanti*) in which our refusal of God or our adhesion to Him is decided. The encounter between man and God occurs at the *instant* of

43 John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 71.

44 Cornelio Fabro, "Orizzontalità e verticalità della libertà," *Angelicum* 48, nos. 3/4 (1971): 339.

choice, and the choice is given for an act of freedom. The *instant*—which is a category inherited from Kierkegaard—is also the point in which God with the Incarnation, by an act of freedom, has inserted himself into time and history. For us men, however, the instant of choice is the point where, through freedom, we can insert ourselves into eternity. It is therefore freedom that makes contact with God possible in our existence, and it is *in it* and *by it* that man morally qualifies himself and constitutes his own personality.

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Don Giuseppe de Luca

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Translated by Giulio Silano

(Hand-written note: A Sr. Rosa Goglia, un esempio di fedeltà alla Chiesa. 19.iii.83. P. Fabro.)

Twenty years after his death, the memories almost become clearer, even if our meetings can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The first was almost half a century ago, when he lived in Via delle Sette Sale and was the Chaplain of the Hospice for the Aged in Piazza S. Pietro in Vincoli. My recollection goes along with that of the rickety carriage that carried the Sisters of the Hospice, two in number with the cap on their head and recollected in prayer, to collect throughout Rome the support for their protégés. An elderly gentleman, certainly an inmate, sat on the box and held the reins of the thin horse that ran resigned and dignified on the noisy cobblestones of the Capital, not yet as wretchedly noisy as it is today. Don Giuseppe lived in that atmosphere of humility that he himself fed and in which he was strengthened almost by a mysterious osmosis. It would be good if someone more informed than I am on this side of his life, perhaps the indivisible sister Nuccia, would uncover for us this, which is perhaps the most delicate and intense side of his priestly dedication. That time, too, like the few others that followed, I went to see him at his invitation: the Church of S. Agata dei Goti in Suburra, where I then lived, was a few hundred meters away. Don Giuseppe was a friend of Professor Reverberi, my unforgettable teacher at the Lateran University, and I think he was the one who gave him my name. He welcomed me without ceremony and without words, but not coldly, and quickly I had a strange, sudden impression that made me immediately feel at ease and did away with any embarrassment on my part.

The writer, already famous for his critical essays, friend of Croce, Papini, Bargellini and the literary elite of the "Frontespizio" of that time - which had been the tasty morsel of the reading of our youth - was there before me, wrapped in his indivisible cloak and he spoke to me in a calm voice and without emphasis, but with an intense participation that showed

through the slowness of the speech and the depth of the gaze. He spoke not of himself and of his things, but of myself and of the things that he hoped, almost willed, would be my own: he wanted to stand next to me, I immediately understood this, on the journey of service to the Church that I was just about to begin. It is true that my life of studies not long afterwards changed track, but I learned that Don Giuseppe was not surprised. I did not have the courage to see him again, I felt ashamed, almost as if I had betrayed him. A few years later, I ran across him again, and it was he who immediately removed all my embarrassment speaking to me of philosophy, showing a mastery of the subject that amazed and cheered me: he had read my own things and went from theme to theme, from author to author, if not with the mastery of the specialist, which he did not pretend to have, then with the sincere affection of the friend who cared to move within a common continent.

There is no doubt that this continent of the spirit for Don De Luca was the Church, always and only the Church: not any Church, but the Catholic and apostolic one, that is to say, the Roman one, and for this reason it mattered to him to be a Roman priest. He was born in Lucania, but he was Roman by election, and not only by domicile, Roman by passion and enamorment, if this expression can convey something of the fire that the universality of the spiritual mission of Rome can ignite in the soul of an artist of shivering purity and dissatisfaction, as he was and increasingly showed himself to be with the passage of time. He suffered, and he said it without ambiguity, even sometimes with picturesque expressions, for the deafness and cultural inefficiency in the official circles of the Roman Curia. On this point, he had some disagreement with the then Substitute of the Secretariat of State, Mons. Montini, on the orientation of the FUCI (Federation of Italian Catholic University Students), as noted by his attentive biographer, Romana Guarneri. This passion of his for culture, the passionate claim that he made for it both in his writings and in his personal encounters, his

prodigious and creative publishing activity, aimed only at the prestige of the spirit, to an elevation in quality, not to an overflow in quantity: at the antipodes , therefore, - let it be said with respect for all - of what is today intended, in the Church of the post-Council, by terms that would certainly have made him shiver, like acculturation, horizontalism and similar terms proper to the theological plebeianism. The Church always remained for him the City on the mount, because it was the City of God.

The evidence of this testimony of his, singular and unique in Italy in its coherence, is to be found in his writings. For the most part, they are occasional texts that he spread everywhere, like leaves on the trees in spring, in magazines and parish or club reviews. More than the hagiographic volumes or the gigantic project of the history of piety, for which he wrote an admirable prologue; even more than the direct collaboration that his pen provided to Pope John, in my opinion - and I do fear making a mistakes - his name will remain tied to this lesser production, which is not at all lesser for a priest who wants to be such, and Don Giuseppe very much wanted it, paying dearly for his coherence. I refer above all to his edifying works, as found in the Commentary on the feast-day Gospels, in the powerful existential reflections published in *Bailamme*, in the *Scritti sulla Madonna* (Writings on Our Lady) and last (but not so much the last) in the *Anno del Cristiano* (*Year of the Christian*), just now off the press (1981). Let us briefly mention these two last collections, perhaps not because they are the most important for the cohesion of the content and the systematic rigor of the structure, but for the spontaneous flow of their loving elevation.

I report only a few thoughts in random order. I spoke above of Don Giuseppe as an "ecclesial Priest;" it is the title that I have chosen for this fraternal testimony. And, to begin with, the theme of the "mother," as in the patristic and mystical literature that for him had no secrets, joins for him Mary and the Church with an indissoluble bond. In this comparison,

his appeal to the "Planctus Virginis" is surprising and moving, less thunderous but more compassionate and delicate and moved than that of Jacopone. And we are not surprised by his naive and devout comparison of the face of Christ of Raffaello's Transfiguration in the Vatican with that of Mary of Titian's Venetian Assumption in Santa Maria Gloriosa:

"… that face of Mary has become the force that draws her on high because all tending and all given to God; it is a face that I never tire to gaze upon and envy … This face of Mary, so intensely, so intensely absorbed in God, so truly taken up… Mary flies by the sole virtue of the eyes and face fixed in God (pp. 133 ff.)." A refined esthete and a fervent devotee, Don Giuseppe, in his literary apostolate, lives the continuous presence of Mary in the splendor of her attributes as Mother of God and Mother of the Church, sustained by a lively and audacious imagination and by a ready and profound theology; in this, he surpasses all the religious writers of the 20th century, approaching his favorite teacher, St. Alphonsus dei Liguori.

When he talked about Mary, Don Giuseppe was transfigured and his pen ran fast and joyful. The names, which Christian piety has given to Mary, are a wonder for him! an ecstasy of piety, an astonishment of poetry … – Our Lady of Mercy, of Good Counsel, of Comfort, of Consolation, of Confidence, of Perseverance - and so on … and again: the Our Lady of the Star, of the Goldfinch , of the Rocks … And above all the titles taken from the mysteries: Our Lady of the Annunciation, Our Lady of Sorrows (venerated in his Roman Seminary), the Seven Sorrows, the Immaculate and so on. And Don Giuseppe, with a mystical intuition, wished to add his own title, the "Queen of Silence," that is, of listening to the inner source of the Word of God: "Our Lady was silent because she kept the Word of the Father: she was always listening: *Conservabat verba*. She was in perpetual adoration … She had a clean heart… No creature was closer than She; close in space, close in spirit, close in heart to the Son, who was also, in his humanity, her son and hers only."

And since we are at the height of the Roman summer, which this year does not want to let up its heat, there is also the title - a title all Roman! - of "Our Lady … of rest" which Don Giuseppe never let go.

The little piece is from June 1955, and it is one of his most sparkling: "In what sense do we have to take Our Lady on holiday with us? … because our affection for Our Lady must have a rest, a vacation, a holiday. Not a pause, but a phase of quiet and recovery, of rest and not of effort, of enjoyment and not of protest …" Not only in illness, in trials, in the troubles of life as "extrema ratio:" "Mary must to be *also* the companion of our joy, the abyss of our peace and serenity, the adamantine peak of our prayer to God… In short, the Madonna must come with us on holiday precisely because together with the Madonna, one is not only well when one suffers, but one is especially well when one enjoys oneself. We have reduced our whole religious life to a kind of niggardliness and mendicity." And so "… let the Madonna really be the star of the sea, if we meet at the sea, and queen of the mountains, if we meet on the hills or on the Alps". And this also because the Madonna is *causa nostrae laetitiae*! "The Madonna of this new world is like the dawn, like the spring, like the incandescent immaculate opening. The day of our joy has opened up in history at the appearance of Mary, because from Mary was born our day, who is called Jesus … How, then, can we possibly be sad?" Speaking of Our Lady, Don Giuseppe is always at ease, whether he plucks the petals of the Litany, or dwells on her mysteries, or considers the value of popular piety. I take at random a text of December 1953: "For a Catholic, Our Lady used to be an incredible love. Not a pietism, not a superstition, it was an incredible love. The lukewarm, the envious, the bitter ones were scandalized by it … The Madonna has always been the great devotion of the peoples and the class of the poor. She was the mother of the orphans, the hope of sinners, the consolation of the afflicted … Among us Catholics, just to say *Madonna* is to feel the heart at peace, and the eyes

full of tears. It is the most familiar and highest word, the most daily and the rarest, the cheapest and the most prodigiously precious, what the heart of man has that is most intimate and solemn." But one might never end quoting from the incandescent river of this poem: "Love for Our Lady is one of the most beautiful things of Christian life, when it is truly love. The lives of the Saints, when we reach the chapter on their love for the Madonna, become, so to speak, a melody: the famous passages, the pieces that everyone knows by heart." And I end with Don Giuseppe's advice to his readers, such as any good parish priest can give to his faithful: "to sow the day with greetings to Our Lady, even only with the two words: "Hail Mary." These are the words of the angelic greeting, the first bars of the dialogue of human salvation … A greeting to Mary means, so to speak, to give birth to Jesus in the action that we are carrying out, in the hour that we are living." This is true devotion, in genuine and total elevation. And here I wish with full intent - in this frantic post-Council that fortunately Don Giuseppe has not experienced - to recall his condemnation of the rampant "acculturation" (bad word, even as a neologism!) or of Christianity as an expression of culture - almost as if its task were not above all that of proclaiming the Kingdom of God, but that of the ambiguous adventure of the intelligence - for which some would like in our day to delegate a Secretariat or some similar organ. His context is instead the description of popular pilgrimages, particularly dear to him, such as those at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Divine Love that touched even Carducci (as he remembers on p. 197) during his Roman stop to the bliss of tears: "Those good people who walk ahead of me, disordered, colorful, different, climbing up to the small sanctuary of Castel di Leva, are not strangers, but brothers … Indeed, the people go to the Divine Love, and those who do not go there disdain being a people and twist their nose. On the contrary, the people are right, and unfortunate is he who dares to be scandalized by the snacks, the sounds, the songs, the joy …" And Don Giuseppe

concludes with a style like the "Imitation of Christ," referring to what, on a similar occasion, the great physicist Enrico Fermi had called the "Wisdom of the humble," as he, too, was moved by the depth of feeling of the Umbrian peasants: "*The Christian life is not culture, not even Catholic culture. The Christian life is essentially to know God and to love him. Whoever knows this, even if he does not know it otherwise that by fulfilling it, knows everything* (italics mine)." And here he concludes, as he alone can: "I am not ashamed to go often to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Divine Love … Looking up at the Madonna, my eyes become filled with silent tears, between the song and the cry of the pilgrims. O Mary, how can you not help us to love God and love each other? How can you not help us to receive the Holy Spirit, you who received him as no other creature ever received him and will receive him, with so much fullness and purity, with so much joy and among so many sorrows, with so much humility and so much power, and as you have been, are and will be the most human and, if I may say so, the most divine of creatures?"

Dear Don Giuseppe, one can and must certainly say it. And you were able to say it with emotion and enthusiasm, with devotion and joy … as few in the whole history of the Church: few, like you, knew how to see the Church in Mary and Mary in the Church, the Mother who welcomes her children gloriously and mercifully. And few, like you, have felt and expressed on all the chords of love and trust the filial emotion toward Her whom God wanted as Mother · of his Son and our Mother, full of grace and all beautiful among all creatures.

Dear Don Giuseppe, who knows what welcome Our Lady will have extended to you twenty years ago, when you left us, when you left this world that you loved so much, taking with you the many images of Mary from the highest artists and the piety of the humble as a bundle of all the flowers, the enchantment of all the perfumes, the harmony of all the songs. So now I see you up there beside the Mother of God in the circle of the Marian doctors before the Damascene, Bernard, Alphonsus de

'Liguori … exulting and placated in your insatiable thirst for grace and beauty.

Ecclesial priest and therefore Marian; artist, critic, historian of piety, spirit of many chords, few like Don Giuseppe have lived that unity of consciousness which Catholic mysticism and modern culture recall - in opposite ways, but with the same aspiration. Educated to a robust theology, sensitive to the most mysterious and subtle calls of the spirit, a friend of theologians and poets of rank, advisor to artists and politicians who have influenced Italian cultural life in a decisive way and so a complex figure in his inexhaustible dynamism: in reality, the man presented himself face to face with an intense and fascinating simplicity that opened one's soul to receive and to give. It does not at all seem exaggerated to me, both for richness of soul and breadth and depth of the gaze, to see in Don Giuseppe De Luca the Italian Newman of the twentieth century, as the return of that highest one whom he admired and loved also by giving us a precious selection of his writings.

And here I must close, not only for reasons of time, but also of capacity, that is, of incapacity, this indication of my encounter of spirit with Don Giuseppe. But from here ought to start the mission of his work in the Church of the post-Council: few like him have been able to live the drama of faith and the ecstasies of devotion, or to scrutinize the mystery of death and the consolation of grace and the sacraments. And I would then make bold to present a proposal: why, in some ecclesiastical university in Rome, particularly in that of the Lateran, which was his own, is not established a chair dedicated to the study of his exceptional production of spiritual theology, to the analysis of his prophetic word for an authentic "Theologia mentis et cordis" of contemporary man?

Book Reviews

Alva Noë
Strange Tools: Art and Human Nature

Hill and Wang
(Reprint Edition: 2016)
304 pages; $21.00
ISBN: 9780809089161

Alva Noë is a professor of philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley, where he also serves as a member of the Institute for Cognitive and Brain Sciences. His other books include *Action and Perception* (2006) and *Out of Our Heads* (2010). In these earlier volumes, Noë examines cognition and perception and develops his view of the enactive theory of perception, a theory that can be partially summarized as he writes in *Action and Perception* (7): "To understand consciousness in humans and animals, we must look not inward, into the recesses of our insides; rather, we need to look to the ways in which each of us, as a whole animal, carries on the processes of living in and with and in response to the world around us. The subject of experience is not a bit of your body. You are not your brain. The brain, rather, is part of what you are." In other words, perception is an experience, not simply of one object, but rather of a whole context that gives meaning to that object. As a continuation of these earlier works, in the present volume Noë addresses the question of art and its relation to human nature. Given his emphasis on the whole context for understanding our perceptions, what can be said about aesthetic experiences?

While I greatly appreciated Noë's earlier works, both for the depth of the scientific studies cited and the clarity of his thought, I found the present volume to be lacking both. The former is perhaps more understandable, since there are limited studies on the arts and neuroscience, but the latter's ab-

sence was much more profound and noticeable. Part of this stems from his understanding of philosophy and art: at the conclusion of the book, Noë simply states that "Philosophical disagreement is . . . aesthetic. You can't prove a philosophical position any more than you can prove that a painting is or is not a worthwhile work of art. . . . Philosophy is not a science" (203). Ultimately, Noë's philosophy is not concerned with "the facts. What is at stake is how we assimilate, make sense of and, finally, evaluate the facts" (203).

This is not philosophy, *per se*, but perhaps phenomenology. If Noë had claimed his book concerned the relationship between phenomenology, cognition, and art, then simply this modification would make the work much more successful. However, the reader is left feeling that perhaps the text tries to do too much in too short a length. For instance, although Noë makes reference to early cave paintings to show that aesthetic organization is intimately related to human nature, his examples of art are limited almost exclusively to contemporary art. Indeed, in a lengthy section regarding pop music, with references to visual art, he makes a bold claim:

> Where is the work happening? When it comes to artists like [Sol] LeWitt, the art is not in the specific gesture, or the hand, or the look, or the individual object; it is, finally, in something like the conception. When it comes to pop artists like Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, Jay Z, or David Bryne, the work is not in the music; it is located somewhere else. *Pop music isn't directed to music* (172 – emphasis mine).

Perhaps as a tip to the enactive view, Noë argues that pop music is directed *to the musician*, to his persona, his charm, and his experience. In other words, pop music as art directs us to a person and the experience of the person; the "music" itself,

that is, the combination of pitches and tones, is of secondary importance. Pop music as art is concerned with the artist.

Noë argues that art challenges our perceptions, our organization of the world, and this is why it is so essential to our lives. This is perhaps true of modern art, and these are the examples that Noë cites at length. In this there is some truth. However, our author largely neglects most art from the first cave drawings to the 1850's, with the exception of a brief and far from convincing discussion of two works by Leonardo da Vinci and a few works that obviously support his claim. That art is meant to be an experience I think can be justified, but the argumentation seems superficial and forced, and, to tell the truth, the logical movement of the argument is not as clear as in his earlier works.

Indeed, in Chapter 17, Noë offers "A Very Abbreviated and Highly Opinionated History of Aesthetics." The philosophers considered are Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Heidegger, and Dewey; this parallels his consideration of art: a few at the beginning, a little in the middle (Kant receives a brief treatment), and many at the end.

This book is not without its advantages; the enactive view in neuroscience is relatively new, and Noë is to be commended for trying to see the relations between his neuroscientific views and aesthetics. His appreciation for modern art is insightful, and contributes greatly to his theory. However, the book feels forced and that it leaves much to be explored and further explained. For the author, since there is no right or wrong in philosophy, this is acceptable, but for those who are looking for clear insights and definitive or even partial conclusions, this volume leaves a great deal to be desired.

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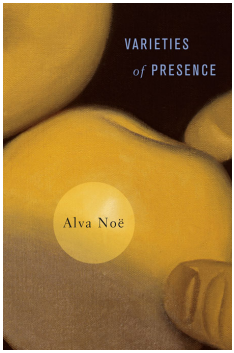

Alva Noë
Varieties of Presence

Harvard University Press
(2012)
188 pages; $40.00
ISBN: 9780674062146

Alva Noë is a professor of philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley, where he also serves as a member of the Institute for Cognitive and Brain Sciences. His earlier volumes include *Action and Perception* (2006) and *Out of Our Heads* (2010).

Much like these works, *Varieties of Presence* is a compilation of papers printed previously (or forthcoming when the book was originally printed). In his preface, Noë outlines the purpose of his text: "In this book I investigate the phenomenon of presence. My main idea is that presence is achieved, and that its varieties correspond to the variety of ways we skillfully achieve access to the world." This is in keeping with the enactivist approach to perception framed by the author in his earlier works.

Although the chapters were originally free-standing papers, the text flows smoothly. The introduction provides a number of critical concepts for understanding what follows, lines of thought that weave in and out throughout the text. For instance, the author insists that "Perception is a transaction; it is the sharing of a situation with what you perceive" (3). This means that perception is a dynamic process that concerns, not simply *what is received*, in the sense that one perceiving is simply a passive recipient of data, but rather that the subject actively engages in perception by means of movement and interacting with the environment. It is in this sense that things can be said to "appear" or "to be present" for the perceiver.

From here, Noë launches into several different conversations: for instance, Chapter One, "Conscious Reference," considers the "presence-as-absence" of objects of thought and proposes that a theory of perception must be a theory of access to objects. Chapter 2, "Fragile Styles," critiques the common theory of perception as representation, and instead proposes in broad terms a theory of access. The third chapter, "Real Presence," concerns the distortions in perceptions of objects, for instance, that a round coin appears elliptical when viewed from a certain angle, a problem Noë solutions by his theory of "presence-as-absence" and enactivist perception. The following chapter, "Experience of the World in Time," is short, but engages in discussion of acoustic phenomena and how they can be perceived in time. The fifth chapter, "Presence in Pictures," examines the odd case of presence in photographs: surely a person in a photo is present, in a sense, but in another sense, the picture is *not* the person, and hence they are *absent* at the same time. It is this conundrum that Noë seeks to explain, specifically through "presence-as-absence." "On Over-Intellectualizing the Intellect," the sixth chapter, our philosopher delves into the connection between perception and thought: does perception precede thought, or is there perception without thought? This chapter also engages in a consideration of art and the aesthetic experience. Lastly, in "Ideaology and the Third Realm," Noë, taking a question posed by Frege, probes the question of how concepts and thought are related.

Noë's text provides an interesting introduction to the author's works and thought. Although his earlier texts, *Action and Perception* and *Out of Our Heads*, are not required reading before approaching this text, the works certainly help to clarify the foundations, psychological, biological, and philosophical, of his approach.

While much of Noë's work is still debated and argued about, I would like to offer one perspective of it as consid-

ered from the point of view of Thomism and perennial philosophy. The author shows a marked preference for modern and contemporary philosophers, such as Kant, Wittgenstein, Frege, and Putnam, among others. The author shows some familiarity with ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, albeit in a fragmented and superficial way (for example, on page 107, he seems to indicate that when Hillary CIinton or the pope are depicted in art, they can enter as an efficient cause in the production of the art, when it seems clear that he means exemplary or final cause).

Nonetheless, there seems to a number of aspects in which Noë's thought could be seen as compatible with Thomism. He rightly points out the different sorts of "presence," which correspond, roughly, to real and intentional presence, and also indicates the importance of "relation" in a way that, with some explanation, could be interpreted in a Thomistic sense.

What could be Noë's greatest contribution to Thomism is the overarching understanding of perception not as simple association of elements but rather as a holistic process that engages the organism and its abilities. In this, although much further research is needed, it seems that there could be an opening to Thomism by means of a further examination of the estimative and cogitative powers, which enable animals and humans, respectively, to perceive the "affordances," or values, of the world around them.

Further research must be done, but Noë at least provides some important reflections that Thomists who wish to serious engage in dialogue with modern neuroscience and psychology would do well to take into account.

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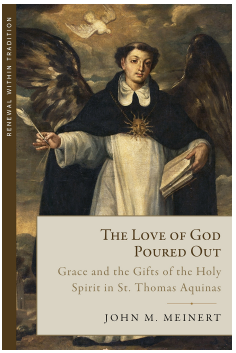


John M. Meinert
The Love of God Poured Out: Grace and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in St. Thomas Aquinas

Emmaus Academic
(2018)
312 pages; $34.95
ISBN: 9781947792388

John Meinert's *The Love of God Poured Out* is part of the Renewal within Tradition series: theological works composed by various authors. In line with the method of Thomas Aquinas, the collection challenges contemporary theological liberalism with the truth. Works within the collection address the thought of St. John Paul II, thought of Thomas Aquinas, interpretations of the Second Vatican Council, and more.

In *The Love of God Poured Out*, Meinert provides an integrated vision of Aquinas' thought on the moral life by reading his treatises on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and grace within the greater context of his other works. Meinert writes that "the centrality of God and the interrelatedness of all aspects of Aquinas' work stand or fall together " (3). Meinert argues well that Aquinas' thought on the gifts of the Holy Spirit is enhanced and only properly understood when read alongside his works on grace.

In chapter one, Meinert meticulously presents the settled positions and disputes on issues surrounding grace and the gifts with particular attention to post-*Aeterni Patris* Thomistic thinkers. This provides the background for Meinert's argument. The topics addressed in this chapter include: the existence and division of actual grace; the relation between the gifts and actual grace; the division of habitual grace; the necessity of grace; the distinction between the gifts and the virtues; the connectivity, endurance, and excellence of the gifts; and the ne-

cessity of the gifts and merit. Examination of these topics with much commentary from secondary literature brings to light the disunity and multiform misinterpretations that "arise from an insufficient attention to the analogous nature of Aquinas' writings" (75). More often than not, Thomas' thought on particular subjects is separated and examined as if in a petri dish, yet, such a divisive method leads necessarily to falsities or at least half-truths.

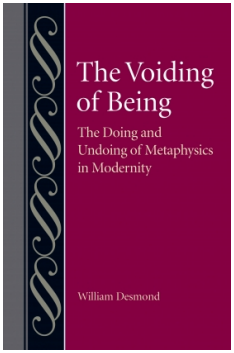
The heart of Meinert's work is found in chapters two and three wherein he interprets Aquinas' thought on grace and the gifts. In chapter two, the author uses Aquinas' works on grace to interpret Aquinas' thought on the gifts; in chapter three, he uses Aquinas' works on the gifts to interpret his thought on grace. An integral understanding of the gifts gives a deeper understanding of grace and vice versa. The author contends that without an adequate understanding of grace in the Thomistic sense, knowledge of the gifts is deficient. The gifts appear with clearer distinction from the infused virtues and they "stand at the height and primary place in the supernatural life because it is by them that God moves us to every supernatural action" (126). The gifts bring the Holy Spirit into the center of the picture as a key player in the ordinary activity and spiritual life of the believer.

In chapter four, Meinert applies his arguments from chapters two and three to the settled positions and disputes of Thomistic thinkers. He challenges and contributes valuable points and raises important questions within the discussion of Thomists, especially as enunciated particularly in chapter one. His arguments support and fortify Pinckaers' position on the importance of the gifts in the supernatural life. Nevertheless, Meinert goes further: the gifts are at the heart of the supernatural life.

Meinert's integral and analogous reading of the texts of Aquinas provides a wholistic understanding of the Angelic Doctor's teachings on the gifts and grace in the Christian moral

life and distinguishes his interpretation from more fragmented ones. This inquiry into Thomistic thought, which may be difficult for those who are less familiar with such detailed distinctions, provides an adequate, scholarly study and contributes to the Thomistic conversation.

Sr. Mary Queen of the Rosary
Washington, DC



William Desmond
The Voiding of Being: The Doing and Undoing of Metaphysics in Modernity

Catholic University of America Press (2019)
312 pages; $65.00
ISBN: 9780813232485

In *The Voiding of Being: The Doing and Undoing of Metaphysics in Modernity* (*Voiding of Being*), William Desmond offers a series of reflections on the status of metaphysics today and what he terms a metaxological response (cf. 7). William Desmond is a professor of philosophy at Villanova University, a visiting professor of philosophy at Maynooth University in Ireland, and a professor of philosophy emeritus at KU Leuven in Belgium.

In *Voiding of Being*, Desmond demonstrates an acute familiarity with modern philosophy. Indeed, much of this work is a discussion of the effects of the thought of Kant, Hegel, and Heidegger on the notion of being in philosophy. The three mentioned philosophers are by no means the only thinkers Desmond brings into the discussion. The thought of Heraclitus, Aristotle, Aquinas, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Descartes, Pascal, Spinoza, and Hume, to mention some names, is brought up at various points in the book.

Desmond's style is at times poetic: "The saying is as important as the said; and sometimes the saying says more than the said" (178). This leads to many turns of phrase such as "transcends downward," "ontological stupor," and "agapeic mindfulness" (79, 108, 182). It is a hard read for the reader not accustomed to this poetic style: "The nonbeing of the no-thing of the self-concealing origin is hard to disentangle from being as nothing" (46). There are frequently densely packed sentences

and paragraphs which to a Thomist are likely strange:

> I myself do not think that the intermediating space between immanence and transcendence is to be described in dualistic, dialectical, or deconstructive ways. I would rather a metaxology of immanence in which the hyperboles of being bring us to ontological thresholds exceeding fully immanent determination. The ontological intimacy of given being is an immanent hyperbole of what itself cannot be contained in any completely immanent frame (169).

A central thesis that ties the chapters of this work together is that doing metaphysics, seeking to understand and explain being, ultimately leads to diminishing the notion of being. For Desmond, being "is overdeterminate in the sense of exceeding our determination" (17). He suggests that philosophy, particularly modern philosophy, seeks to make being something determinate. In doing so, being is voided; being loses content and meaning. As a response to this tendency, Desmond proposes a metaxology. Derived from *metaxu* and *logos*, metaxological metaphysics is "a *logos* of the *metaxu*, a wording of the between" (7). Since Desmond has authored many articles and books developing his metaxology, *Voiding of Being* may not be the best introduction to his thought. While not simply a collection of previously written articles, many chapters of *Voiding of Being* are updates and expansions of previously published works.

Desmond's central thrust in *Voiding of Being* is entirely on point. Being is foundational for metaphysics. Yet in seeking to understand being, the content of being is diminished in much of philosophy. Desmond's solution to develop a metaxological metaphysics derived from modern philosophy is certainly interesting, but from a Thomistic point of view not necessary. Cornelio Fabro points out the solution to this very real prob-

lem of being is to be found in the Thomistic notion of participation. The *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*, being pure act, contains all perfections in their plenitude. Beings (*ens*) have the act of being (*esse*) by participation from the *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*. Possessing the fullness of all perfection, the *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* most certainly exceeds our determination. Through the metaphysical doctrine of participation, created beings receive their perfections from *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* and remain intimately related to it.

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