

JOHN PAUL II

Man and Woman
He Created Them

A Theology of the Body

Translation, Introduction, and Index
by Michael Waldstein



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NOTE ON THE COVER ART: In the Sistine Chapel's *The Creation of Adam* by Michelangelo, we see that as God looks down at the passage of energy from his right arm through his index finger into Adam's left hand, he affectionately holds Eve under his other arm, her left hand resting gently above his wrist with her index finger slightly raised. Though she is still only an idea in God's mind, her eyes are intensely fixed on the eyes of Adam, who turns toward God's face and returns her look.

Reproduction of John Paul II's handwritten instructions for the theology of the body provided through the courtesy of Fr. Jan Głowczyk, director of the John Paul II Archives, Dom Polski, Rome.

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For this revised printing, the English translation of the Italian text has been checked against the original Polish text. Thanks are due to Grzegorz Ignatik for his painstaking work.

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Introduction by Michael Waldstein



THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION was heralded by its advocates as a breakthrough for human development, for the freedom and happiness of the person. Wilhelm Reich, a student of Freud who saw himself at the forefront of the revolution, believed that the free availability of sexual pleasure beyond the limits imposed by the patriarchal Christian family would lead to health and happiness. It would even prevent insanity, mysticism, and war.

Sexual energy is *the* constructive biological energy of the psychological apparatus that forms the structure of human feeling and thinking. “Sexuality” (physiological vagus function) is *the* productive vital energy, simply speaking. Its suppression leads not only to medical damage, but also quite generally to damage in the basic functions of life. The essential social expression of this damage is purposeless (irrational) action by human beings: their insanity, their mysticism, their readiness for war, etc.... The core of life’s happiness is sexual happiness.¹

A key element of the sexual revolution was the invention and general availability of effective contraceptives. Here too, hopes were high. Margaret Sanger, theoretician and founder of the Planned Parenthood Federation, urged women to revolt against sexual servitude. The first step in this revolt, she argued, is the use of contraceptives, because “no woman can call herself free who does not own and control her own body.”² She elaborates thus: “What effect will the

1. Wilhelm Reich, *Die sexuelle Revolution* (first published in 1936), 15th ed. (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1999), 18–19; 22.

2. Margaret Sanger, *Women and the New Race* (first published in 1920; Elmsford, NY: Maxwell Reprint, 1969), 179–80; quoted according to Mary Shivanandan, *Crossing the Threshold of Love: A New Vision of Marriage in the Light of John Paul II’s Anthropology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 187, no. 35.

practice of birth control have upon women's moral development?... It will break her bonds. It will free her to understand the cravings and soul needs of herself and other women. It will enable her to develop her love-nature separate from and independent of her maternal nature."³ The more abundant love life made possible by eliminating the fear of pregnancy is the answer, Sanger adds, to women's search for deep meaning in their lives, including the religious and mystical dimensions of meaning. "I would even go so far as to state that there is no other source of true contentment or understanding of life values than that which comes from the realization of love in marriage.... In leading her successfully, nay triumphantly, through this mysterious initiation [of sex] he [that is, her husband] becomes for her a veritable god—worthy of her profoundest worship.... Through sex mankind may attain the great spiritual illumination which will transform the world, which will light up the only path to an earthly paradise."⁴

More than half a century after Reich and Sanger's utopian hopes, it is important to ask whether we have truly found "the only path to an earthly paradise" and "the core of life's happiness." In particular, has contraception enabled men to emerge in women's lives as "veritable gods...worthy of profoundest worship"? Or has it tended to transform them into episodic "users" and "consumers," who can dispense with their feminine objects of enjoyment once erotic excitement ebbs away?

In his *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (TOB), Pope John Paul II proposes a sexual politics of the radical gift of self of man and woman to each other, profoundly different from mere use and consumption.⁵ From the very beginning of his ministry as a priest, he remarks in an important autobiographical passage, he had a special love for love. Deeply struck by the beauty of love between man and woman, he committed himself "to the service of 'fair love,' because love is fair, it is beautiful. After all, young people are always searching for the beauty in love."⁶ Some of the most sensitive

3. Sanger, *Women and the New Race*, 179–80; see Shivanandan, *Threshold of Love*, 187.

4. Margaret Sanger, *Happiness in Marriage* (New York: Blue Ribbon Books, 1940), 121, 126, 271; see Shivanandan, *Threshold of Love*, 188, no. 43.

5. See Graham J. McAleer, *Ecstatic Morality and Sexual Politics: A Catholic and Antitotalitarian Theory of the Body* (New York: Fordham University, 2005).

6. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 123.

and illuminating passages of world literature on erotic love can be found in TOB. John Paul II's argument has a compelling self-evidence because he allows love itself to show its beauty.

Yet, the full greatness of John Paul II's vision only emerges when one sees his concern for spousal love in the larger context of his concern about our age, above all for the question of scientific knowledge and power over nature, that is, the characteristically modern question of "progress." He argues that "the essence of the Church's teaching" about contraception lies in a more critical judgment about "the domination of the forces of nature" by human power (TOB 123:1). Like Reich and Sanger, John Paul II sees the question of contraception primarily as a question of "what *true progress* consists in, that is, the development of *the human person*" (TOB 133:3). He is concerned, no less than Sanger, with the quest for freedom, with "owning and controlling" one's own body, but he sees such individual autonomy (which is the only freedom Sanger speaks about, exactly like Descartes and Kant) as standing in the service of a still greater kind of freedom, "the freedom of the gift" (see Index at FREE).

The main purpose of the following Introduction is to present this larger context of John Paul II's vision as it emerged in his works before his election as Bishop of Rome. Wojtyła's theological and philosophical concerns have their roots in the spousal poetry and theology of St. John of the Cross (Section 2 of the Introduction). They took on a particular profile in an intense philosophical and theological dialogue with Immanuel Kant (Section 3) and Max Scheler (Section 4). The understanding of this dialogue allows one to grasp Wojtyła's concerns as a whole as documented in his seven major works published before his election (Section 5). In this light, one can approach the purpose of TOB (Section 6) as well as its structure and argument (Section 7).

Readers who do not wish to explore the larger context of TOB in so much detail may wish to jump from Section 1 immediately to Sections 6 and 7 of the Introduction, to take in the bird's eye view of the purpose, structure, and argument of TOB offered there.⁷

7. This Introduction is part of a larger argument presented in my forthcoming book: *John Paul II's Theology of the Body: Context and Argument*.

1. The Text

At the Wednesday General Audience on September 5, 1979, Pope John Paul II delivered the first of 129 catecheses on human love in the divine plan. Interrupted by the assassination attempt on May 13, 1981, and a long break for a Holy Year (from May 1983 to September 1984) as well as a number of catecheses on other topics, the cycle concluded a little more than five years later on November 28, 1984. The work as a whole is John Paul II's masterwork, in which the many strands of his philosophical and theological reflection come together in a rigorous and profound argument.⁸

Various titles have been given to this cycle of catecheses. The original title of the work is *Man and Woman He Created Them*. In the text itself, John Paul II describes the work as *reflections on the theology of the body*⁹ and gives it the title *Human Love in the Divine Plan*, with the subtitle *The Redemption of the Body and the Sacramentality of Marriage*.¹⁰ In the archival materials of the catecheses (see below), he uses the name *Teologia ciała, Theology of the Body*. This title has become customary in English.

Soon after being delivered, the catecheses were published one by one in *L'Osservatore Romano* (OR) and later in the complete series of the teachings of John Paul II published by the Holy See (*Insegnamenti*

8. As Carl Anderson points out, John Paul II set down seven major reference points for marriage and the family in the first five years of his pontificate. TOB is the first and most important of them. (1) Theology of the Body (1979–1984); (2) Synod on the Family (1980); (3) Pontifical Council for the Family (1981); (4) *Familiaris Consortio* (1981); (5) John Paul II Institute (1981); (6) Charter of the Rights of the Family (1983); (7) new ordering of marriage law in the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

9. “After a rather long pause, today we will resume the meditations that have been going on for some time, which we have defined as reflections on the theology of the body” (TOB 64:1; see also 11:2; 36:3; 63:7; 133:2). The reason why John Paul II uses the phrase “reflections on the theology of the body” rather than simply “theology of the body” may lie in their incompleteness. “These reflections do not include many problems that, with regard to their object, belong to the theology of the body (as, for example, the problem of suffering and death, so important in the biblical message)” (TOB 133:1).

10. “The whole of the catecheses that I began more than four years ago [in fact, more than five years ago] and that I conclude today can be grasped under the title, ‘Human Love in the Divine Plan,’ or with greater precision, ‘The Redemption of the Body and the Sacramentality of Marriage’” (TOB 133:1).

di Giovanni Paolo II). In 1985, a one-volume edition appeared in Italian with the title *Uomo e donna lo creò: Catechesi sull'amore umano* (*Man and Woman He Created Him: Catechesis on Human Love*), under the editorial direction of Carlo Caffarra, then president of the John Paul II Institute.¹¹ Since *Uomo e donna* (UD) is the most easily available Italian text and a common point of reference for those who study John Paul II, I will cite TOB by the number of the talk in UD, followed by the paragraph number (e.g., TOB 1:1).

UD contains five more catecheses than the *Insegnamenti*, a total of 134.¹² It has six instead of three meditations on the Song of Songs (TOB 108–13) and three instead of one on Tobit (TOB 114–16). In addition, the conclusion of the Ephesians cycle in UD (TOB 117) was not delivered and is not present in the *Insegnamenti*. The conclusion of the Ephesians cycle in the *Insegnamenti* (delivered on July 4, 1984) is omitted in UD, probably accidentally, because it begins with the same words as TOB 117.¹³ Taking UD and the *Insegnamenti* together, the total number of distinct catecheses thus comes to 135.¹⁴ More will be said below about this complicated textual situation and the policy of the present edition.

11. Giovanni Paolo II, *Uomo e donna lo creò: Catechesi sull'amore umano* (Rome: Città Nuova and Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1985). Apart from the additions and omissions discussed below, the text of this edition differs from the *Insegnamenti* text only in minor details. For example, it brings consistency to the somewhat inconsistent use of capitals in the *Insegnamenti*.

12. UD counts only 133 because it presents the meditation of September 29, 1982, in an appendix (pp. 494–96). I have inserted it in its proper place according to date, between TOB 95 and 96, and numbered it as TOB 95b.

13. I have inserted the conclusion of the Ephesians cycle in the *Insegnamenti* immediately after TOB 117 and numbered it as TOB 117b. For details, see the overview on pp. 731–2.

14. The calculation is the following. If one begins with UD, the calculation is simple because UD omits two catecheses delivered by John Paul II and published in the *Insegnamenti*: 133 (the catecheses numbered sequentially in UD) plus one (for TOB 95b, which is printed as an appendix to UD) plus one (for 117b, which is the conclusion to the Ephesians section delivered but omitted in UD) equals 135. If one begins with the *Insegnamenti* text, the calculation is a little more complex: 129 (in the *Insegnamenti*) minus four (the four shorter catecheses on the Song of Songs and Tobit) equals 125, plus nine (the nine longer catecheses on the Song of Songs and Tobit as found in UD) plus one (the conclusion of the Ephesians section in UD that was not delivered and not published in the *Insegnamenti*) equals 135.

a. Textual Basis

In response to a letter sent on February 2, 2005, to Pope John Paul II, I received the following reply.

Pope John Paul II has asked me to send you the following answer.

As a textual basis for the new translation you should use the text of the catecheses as printed in the series edited by the Holy See, *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* (II/2 p. 234 to VII/2 pp. 1316ff).

In addition, the following points may be useful for your work.

The original text of the catecheses is Italian.

The titles you mention were added by the editorial offices of *L'Osservatore Romano* and are not part of the genuine Papal text.

Emphasis by italics is original and should be preserved. This is a mark of the Holy Father's style.¹⁵

That the titles of individual catecheses are not part of the genuine papal text becomes further evident when one compares them in different language editions of *OR*.

TOB 1:

Italian: In Dialogue with Jesus about the Foundations of the Family

English: The Unity and Indissolubility of Marriage

German: God Saw That Everything Was Good (1)

French: Listening to Jesus on "The Origin" of the Family

TOB 2:

Italian: In the First Account of Creation, the Objective Definition of Man

English: Analysis of the Biblical Account of Creation

German: God Saw That Everything Was Good (2)

French: From the Beginning the Creator Made Them Male and Female

TOB 3:

Italian: In the Second Account of Creation, the Subjective Definition of Man

English: The Second Account of Creation: The Subjective Definition of Man

15. Letter from Archbishop Leonardo Sandri (Feb. 28, 2005).

German: Man Knows Good and Evil

French: “They Shall Be One Flesh”

These titles give readers some idea about a prominent topic in each catechesis, for the most part different topics in the different language editions. The *OR* editors did not have the complete work in front of them, and so they could not always pinpoint the focus of the argument, because focus depends in large part on context. The absence of context also explains why the titles do not supply what titles in modern books usually supply, namely, indications about the place of a particular section in the structure of the whole argument (Introduction, Chapter 1, Conclusion, etc.). I have omitted the *OR* headings and, instead, have inserted John Paul II’s own chapter and section headings (see below).

John Paul II’s statement, “The original text of the catecheses is Italian,” should be understood in the sense that the Italian text is the authentic or authoritative text. The archives of the John Paul II Foundation at Dom Polski on the Via Cassia in Rome preserve the typescript of a book written in Polish by Cardinal Wojtyła before his election, entitled *Man and Woman He Created Them*.¹⁶ The sister who typed the manuscript confirms that Pope John Paul II brought this text from Kraków to Rome after his election. The work seems to have been complete and ready for publication.

The archives also preserve materials that show how John Paul II used this manuscript as the basis of his Wednesday catecheses. A copy of the book typescript served as the basis. It contains Roman numerals in the margin that determine the beginning of the text to be used for each particular catechesis. It also contains Arabic numbers next to the paragraphs within each talk. Both sets of numbers seem to be in

16. Thanks are due to Fr. Wojtek Janusiewicz for accompanying me on a research trip to Dom Polski. Not only his knowledge of Polish, but also his sharp insights in the detective work of piecing together the evidence were essential to the success of the research. The director of the archive had been of the opinion that the Polish material was relevant only to the 1986 Polish edition, which he considered a translation from the original Italian into Polish. The paradigm shift from this hypothesis to the hypothesis that a pre-papal book manuscript in Polish served as the basis of the catecheses took place only gradually and with much uncertainty. It was fully confirmed only at the very end when we contacted the sister who actually typed the manuscript before John Paul II’s election.

John Paul II's own handwriting. The main method of dividing the text into catecheses seems to have been the time needed to deliver a catechesis of regular length.

On separate sheets of paper, written in John Paul II's own hand, one finds introductory and concluding passages in Polish that were to be added to the Polish text of the book. The two sheets for TOB 1 have been reproduced above (see pp. xvii–xxi). The paragraph numbered 1 is new text to be added. At number 2 John Paul II writes the first word of the text from the book typescript with the marginal number 2, and at number 4 the last three words from the typescript with the marginal number 4. Between this beginning and end, he adds the remark, “as in the text,” that is, the corresponding numbered paragraphs of the book manuscript were to be used unchanged, numbered according to the marginal numbers in the book.

Only the handwritten pages for the first chapter (TOB 1–23) are available in the archives at Dom Polski. Others are perhaps part of John Paul II's private papers, which are not publicly accessible. The continuation of the numbering system in the margins of the book manuscript at Dom Polski suggests that John Paul II continued working through the whole in the same way in which he had worked through Chapter 1.

The archives also contain the immediate product of these two elements, namely, clean typescripts of the catecheses in Polish that include both the text of the book (numbered according to John Paul II's instructions) and the passages added in the handwritten pages. Each Polish talk is followed by an Italian translation that served as the text read at the General Audience.

In substance, the catecheses follow the book typescript, but John Paul II added some large pieces of text (e.g., TOB 10, 23, and 133) and shortened others (e.g., the sections on the Song of Songs and Tobit). The 1986 Polish edition of TOB reproduces the original pre-papal book manuscript with some of the revisions introduced by John Paul II (e.g., the addition of TOB 10, 23, and 133). It does not contain any division into talks, nor does it contain the introductory and concluding paragraphs added by John Paul II in producing the catecheses. It also preserves the longer version of catecheses on the Song of Songs (six instead of three), and on Tobit (three instead of one). The archives contain an Italian version of these nine talks, but John Paul II short-

ened them before delivery, perhaps because of time considerations. The longer version is printed in the one-volume Italian edition (UD).

The 1986 Polish edition of TOB has an elaborate system of headings, four to five levels deep. The single most important result of examining the textual evidence at Dom Polski is the discovery that these headings were not added by the editors of the Polish edition, but are part of the original pre-papal work. They show how Wojtyła himself conceived the organic unity and order of his argument. There are altogether 219 headings with a total of about 1,600 words, a substantial amount of very precious text. Anyone who has attempted to understand the order of argument in TOB will realize how precious these headings really are. The headings are not reproduced in UD, nor in any translation (English, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.). Their use in the 1986 Polish edition, published with the approval of John Paul II by his closest collaborators, shows that they still expressed the author's intention in 1986, even though he had transformed his book into a series of catecheses.

The archives at Dom Polski also offer more direct evidence for the continuing importance of the headings. The set of instructions in John Paul II's own hand on the first leaf of his handwritten adaptations of the Polish text (reproduced above on pp. xvi–xvii) begins with the following two points:

1. The text, "Theology of the Body" (Part One, Christ Appeals to the Beginning) divided into 22 discourses (reflections) for the Wednesday audiences.
2. The small additions do not in any way extend (nor do they change) the original structure of the text. They are rather "interludes" that make it easier at the same time to keep the continuity of the topic. I have limited myself in them to the minimum necessary.

In the second point, John Paul II states explicitly that the structure of the original work as articulated by its headings remained the same when he used it for the Wednesday catecheses. In the first point, he explicitly mentions Part 1 and quotes the title of the first of the three chapters in Part 1, "Christ Appeals to the Beginning," which is the title found in the pre-papal book manuscript and the 1986 Polish edition.

One might argue that since the authoritative publication of the catecheses in the *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* does not include

these headings, they should not be considered part of the papal text. Yet, the absence of the headings in the *Insegnamenti* has a simple explanation. The *Insegnamenti* series reproduces the individual catecheses in the midst of other texts that happen to have been published on the same day. A system of headings five levels deep simply has no place in such a presentation of the text. As in many other cases, the *Insegnamenti* adopt the headings given by the editor of the Italian edition of *OR*. It is *these OR* headings that should be excluded as secondary and misleading. The relatively isolated life of the individual catecheses as well as the language barrier of the Polish original may be the reasons why the one-volume Italian edition does not include the original headings: it simply collects the isolated catecheses with their *OR* headings and divides them into cycles that do not entirely correspond to John Paul II's own organization of his work.¹⁷

To summarize, John Paul II used an apparently completed book manuscript as the basis for 129 catecheses. With two exceptions, he used the entire book.¹⁸ He also added some sections not found in the original book manuscript (e.g., TOB 10 and 23).¹⁹

Given this complex situation, editors of one-volume editions of TOB have various choices. On one extreme stands the 1986 Polish

17. The concept of "cycle" has some support in the text of TOB (see Index at CYCLE). Its use as the main structuring device, however, goes back to the editor of UD, Carlo Caffarra. There is no evidence for this use in the archival materials. There are six cycles in UD and six chapters in John Paul II's own division. UD's Cycle 3 (The Resurrection of the Flesh) and 4 (Christian Virginity) are subsections of Chapter 3 of Part 1 in John Paul II's own division. John Paul II's Chapter 1 (The Dimension of Covenant and of Grace) and Chapter 2 (The Dimension of Sign) in Part 2 are both part of UD's Cycle 5 (Christian Marriage). For a more detailed discussion, see below pp. 112–14.

18. *The first exception*: Following the original book manuscript, John Paul II had prepared nine Italian catecheses on the Song of Songs and Tobit, but for actual delivery cut the text to less than half to fit into four audience talks. In the John Paul II archives, there is a copy of the longer version with markings in John Paul II's hand indicating which paragraphs were to be included in the shorter version and which were to be omitted. *The second exception*: John Paul II did not deliver one of the two talks that conclude the discussion of Ephesians (TOB 117), even though he had planned to (the talk had already been translated into Italian). The reasons for these exceptions may be scheduling pressures.

19. A complete comparison between the original Polish work and TOB will be prepared by Prof. Jaroslaw Merecki of the John Paul II Institute in Rome for a new Italian edition of TOB.

edition of TOB prepared by John Paul II's secretary, Stanislaw Dziwisz. This edition goes back to the original book manuscript, though it includes the newly written sections. It reproduces all the original headings but omits the division into catecheses as well as the introductions and conclusions that frame many individual catecheses. On the other extreme stands the 1997 English edition, which contains only the 129 catecheses as delivered, though it adds the division into cycles taken from UD and the headings added by *OR*. Somewhere between these two extremes stands the Italian edition (UD), which reproduces 134 discourses with their *OR* headings.

The present translation follows the standards of a critical edition. It is based on the conviction that readers should be supplied with all the data (and only the data) that come directly from John Paul II (thus his own headings, but no *OR* headings). A critical edition must allow readers to distinguish clearly between the various components of the text. In particular, I have marked the 129 catecheses actually delivered by a heading consisting of the date and citation in the *Insegnamenti*, and I have marked the catecheses not delivered by a heading consisting of "Not delivered" and the citation in UD. The shorter and the longer version of the Song of Songs and Tobit catecheses are presented parallel on facing pages, so that the reader can read both versions in their proper context and immediately see the differences.

b. Translation

Translations of papal documents in *OR* are excellent and have quasi-official status. In the case of TOB, however, the *OR* staff was faced with a task quite beyond the ordinary. In difficulty, TOB by far exceeds the traditional Wednesday catecheses by Paul VI and John Paul I. Even among the catecheses of John Paul II, TOB stands out as lonely Mount Everest among the hills.

The circumstances under which the first English translation had to be produced were difficult. Soon after its delivery at the Wednesday audience, each catechesis was sent to the English editorial office of *OR* to be translated. Since the translator(s) did not have the whole work before them, there are many examples of inconsistent translation. For example, the key concept, "*significato sponsale del corpo*" is translated in eight different ways: "nuptial meaning of the

body” (in most catecheses up to TOB 101); “nuptial significance” (TOB 16, 39, and 69); “matrimonial significance” (TOB 40); “matrimonial meaning” (TOB 41); “conjugal meaning” (TOB 78); “conjugal significance” (TOB 96); and finally, in the last thirty catecheses, “spousal significance” as well as “spousal meaning” (TOB 102–32). A careful reader who works only from the English text would assume that John Paul II deliberately distinguishes between nuptial, matrimonial, conjugal, and spousal meanings as well as significances of the body and would wonder what the point of these subtle distinctions might be. Yet, the Italian is always “*significato sponsale del corpo*,” best translated as “spousal meaning of the body.”²⁰ Similar inconsistencies can be seen in many other cases.

The English translator(s) at *OR* used the *Revised Standard Version* of the Bible and at times the *New American Bible*, both of which differ at many points from the version used by John Paul II, namely, the official translation published by the Conference of Italian Bishops (CEI).²¹ For example, in the crucial verses about the reason for the creation of Eve (that is, Adam’s solitude and the consequent need for a “help,” Gen 2:18, 20), the CEI version follows the Vulgate and understands the Hebrew “*k³neḡdô*” as “*simile a lui*,” that is, “similar to him.” Eve is created as “a help similar to him.” In TOB 8:3, John Paul II uses this understanding of the Hebrew to argue that the likeness of nature between Adam and Eve is an important element for under-

20. The choice between “nuptial” and “spousal” is not an easy one. “Spousal meaning” is adopted in the official English translation of *Veritatis Splendor*, 15:2, and *Evangelium Vitae*, 97:2. “Nuptial” appears in the official English of *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 29:1 and 44:2–3, as well as *Familiaris Consortio*, 37:5. The relatively rare word “nuptial,” which is not part of the most widely shared vocabulary of English, has acquired a certain aura (aided by its lilting sound), partly through its connection with Hans Urs von Balthasar’s concept of “*hochzeitlich* (nuptial)” and “*Hochzeitlichkeit* (nuptiality),” a connection explored particularly by Angelo Scola, *The Nuptial Mystery* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005). Although “spousal” is not a perfect fit, it is closer to “*sponsale*.” TOB does contain several instances of “*nuziale* (nuptial)” (see Index at WEDDING). John Paul II could have written “*significato nuziale*” if this had been his intention. In instances of “*sponsale*” other than “meaning of the body,” the *L’Osservatore* translation consistently uses “spousal.” It would indeed be strange to translate “*amore sponsale*” as “nuptial love” rather than “spousal love” (see Index at SPOUSAL for other examples).

21. *Edizione Ufficiale della CEI (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana)*, published in 1971 by the Conference of Italian Bishops.

standing the manner in which Eve is a “help.” The *OR* translation has “a helper *fit for him*” (RSV), which is another acceptable way of understanding the Hebrew. Yet, it pulls the scriptural rug out from under John Paul II’s argument. Why does “a helper fit for him” suggest a likeness of nature between Adam and Eve? Some textual argument would seem to be needed, but none is given.

In the *OR* translation, Jesus says, “Everyone who looks at a woman *lustfully* has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Mt 5:28, RSV). The CEI translation, much closer here to the Greek original, has “*chiunque guarda una donna per desiderarla*: whoever looks at a woman *to desire her*.” The difference is important. Desire can be good or bad; lust is a vice. In the Italian text of TOB, the word “lust (*lussuria*)” occurs four times (see Index at LUST). To these four one can add six instances of lustful (*libidinoso*) and eleven of “*libido*” for a total of twenty-one defensible instances of “lust.” In the *OR* translation, by contrast, “lust” recurs 343 times. The main reason for this massive multiplication of “lust” seems to lie in the RSV translation of Matthew 5:28 (“looks lustfully”). When John Paul II discusses Jesus’ words in detail and repeatedly uses the word “desire” (“*desiderare*” or “*desiderio*”) in agreement with the CEI translation (“looks to desire”), the *OR* translation attempts to preserve the connection with the term “lustfully” in the RSV and often translates “desire” as “lust.” It multiplies “lust” further by frequently using it to translate “*concupiscenza*.” Yet, concupiscence is a wider concept than lust. Sexual concupiscence is only one of its species. The multiplication of “lust” introduces a note of pan-sexualism that is foreign to John Paul II. In order to avoid difficulties of this sort, the English Scripture quotes have been conformed to the CEI translation, always with an eye on the original Greek or Hebrew.²²

The *OR* translations were compiled by Pauline Books and Media in four volumes: *Original Unity of Man and Woman* (1981); *Blessed Are the Pure of Heart* (1983); *The Theology of Marriage and Celibacy* (1986);

22. In some instances, I have maintained the CEI translation even against the original text. For example, the original Hebrew of Gen 2:23 reads, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” The CEI translation for some reason inverts the order between bone and flesh. “This time she is flesh from my flesh and bone from my bones.” In TOB 8:4 and 19:1, John Paul II follows the original order.

and *Reflections on Humanae Vitae* (1984). In 1997, Pauline published the whole text in one volume as *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan*. The one-volume edition differs in a number of details from the earlier text. It omits the italicizing of phrases and sentences by which John Paul II regularly emphasizes particular points. It also omits many instances of quotation marks. John Paul II frequently uses quotation marks as a further means of emphasizing particular terms or signaling that they are the main topic of discussion. Finally, the 1997 edition recasts a number of difficult sentences to make them more readable.

The 1997 edition contains only the 129 catecheses translated by OR. The six additional catecheses contained in the Polish edition and UD are published here for the first time in English.

c. Literary Genre, Intended Audience, and Authority

“General Audience” is the genre by which the *Insegnamenti* series identifies the regular Wednesday discourses. Like Paul VI and John Paul I, John Paul II used the occasion of the Wednesday general audiences for catechesis. “Catechesis” is the more essential and interior category for defining TOB’s literary genre. The particular group of pilgrims present on a particular Wednesday seems to represent the universal Church. TOB is a catechesis by the Bishop of Rome for the universal Church.

According to the Vatican II document on the pastoral office of bishops, “preaching and catechetical instruction...always hold the first place” in a bishop’s teaching activity (*Christus Dominus*, 13). This is not to say that papal documents dedicated to particular issues, such as encyclicals and apostolic letters, are secondary and have less authority. It is to say, however, that the Wednesday catecheses have a certain primacy of place in the ordinary magisterium of the Bishop of Rome as pastor of the universal Church.

John Paul II explains his understanding of catechesis in *Catechesi Tradendae*, published on October 16, 1979, between the delivery of TOB 5 (October 10) and TOB 6 (October 24). One can assume that he had his catecheses on human love in mind when he wrote *Catechesi Tradendae* and, vice versa, that he had his account of catechesis in mind when he delivered TOB.

The primary and essential object of catechesis is, to use an expression dear to St. Paul and also to contemporary theology, “the mystery of Christ.” Catechizing is in a way to lead a person to study this mystery in all its dimensions: “to make all human beings see what is the plan of the mystery...comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth...know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge...(and be filled) with all the fullness of God” (Eph 3:9, 18–19). It is therefore to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God’s eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ’s actions and words and of the signs worked by Him, for they simultaneously hide and reveal His mystery. Accordingly, the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity. (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 5)

This teaching is not a body of abstract truths. It is the communication of the living mystery of God. The Person teaching it in the Gospel is altogether superior in excellence to the “masters” in Israel, and the nature of His doctrine surpasses theirs in every way because of the unique link between what He says, what He does and what He is. (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 7)

To a remarkable degree, this account of catechesis resembles the actual method and content of TOB. Part 1 (TOB 1–86) focuses on three words of Christ that play a key role in his teaching about God’s plan for the person and for human love. The focus lies on Christ as the Teacher. Part 2 (TOB 87–113) unfolds this teaching of Christ by turning to the Pauline teaching on “the mystery” of spousal love in Ephesians 5. The Final Part (TOB 114–33) applies the insights gained in Parts 1 and 2 to the concrete conjugal lives of men and women. No other catechetical cycle delivered by John Paul II after TOB has a similarly strict and close relationship with the very core and essence of catechesis as defined in *Catechesi Tradendae*. TOB seems to be John Paul II’s catechesis par excellence.²³

23. When one compares TOB with another major catechetical project realized in the pontificate of John Paul II, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, it quickly becomes apparent that the purpose of the two texts is quite different. The *Catechism* offers an overview of the Church’s faith as a whole, while TOB focuses only on the essential core of catechesis, “the mystery” of Ephesians 5. TOB can thus serve as a John-Pauline lens for reading the *Catechism*, in particular for relating its many assertions to the one essential core of catechesis.

One must measure the authority of TOB in accord with these findings about office, genre, and content: the authority of a text is high if the Pope speaks (1) as pastor of the universal Church, (2) in a form of teaching central to his office of bishop, and (3) on a topic central to the faith. All three of these indicators are high in TOB.

Contrary to this evidence, some authors have dismissed the authority of TOB. In the traditionalist publication *Christian Order*, for example, G. C. Dilsaver argues that TOB should be considered a private theological work by Karol Wojtyła, not part of the papal magisterium of John Paul II.

Pope John Paul II has used his Wednesday catechesis conference to read much of his private theological works. Among these is *The Theology of Marriage and Celibacy*. In this work, Karol Wojtyła (as a private theologian, since this work was completed prior to his ascending to the papacy) introduces the novel concept of “*mutual submission*” in his exegesis of Ephesians 5.²⁴

All the signs that surround the Wednesday catecheses and that express John Paul II’s intention make it quite clear that John Paul II intended the Wednesday catecheses to be precisely this: catecheses, not the recitation of private theological works. Dilsaver simply side-steps the plain intention of John Paul II. The only argument he offers is that “this work was completed prior to his ascending to the papacy.” This argument is irrelevant. The first publication of the text was its delivery by the Bishop of Rome as a cycle of catecheses. The original or authentic text of TOB is the Italian text as delivered by Pope John Paul II and published in the official *Insegnamenti* series.

A position similar to Dilsaver’s is proposed by Charles Curran, who likewise ignores the genre “catechesis” and limits himself to the more external genre “General Audience” used by the *Insegnamenti* series.

[*Man and Woman He Created Them* belongs to] a particular genre of teaching—the speeches given at the weekly audiences.... As such, talks to general audiences have little or no authoritative character. They are often just greetings to the various people in attendance and

24. G. C. Dilsaver, “Karol Wojtyła and the Patriarchal Hierarchy of the Family: His Exegetical Comment on Ephesians 5:21–33 and Genesis 3:16,” *Christian Order*, June/July 2002.

exhortations.... These talks...have little or no importance from the point of view of authoritative teaching.²⁵

Against both Dilsaver and Curran, one should insist that TOB is a catechesis proposed by the Bishop of Rome for the universal Church on the center of Christian faith, the “great mystery” of love (Eph 5).

John Paul II uses further concepts to describe the literary genre of TOB. He calls the catecheses “reflections” (146 times), which characterizes them in very general terms as a close and critically self-aware examination of their subject. He also calls them analyses (by far the most frequent term, 269 times) and meditations (twenty-one times). There is an apparent opposition between analysis and meditation: in a meditation, one assumes a receptive posture as one slowly ponders a whole in its meaning; in analysis, one takes a more active role to resolve the whole into its principles and elements. Yet the two movements of thought complement each other.

John Paul II also calls TOB a “study” (thirteen times), which seems to point to an academic setting. Wojtyła was trained as a philosopher and theologian and worked as a professor for a number of years. He kept contact with academic life even after his appointment as a bishop. TOB has many of the characteristics of an academic study, e.g., frequent technical expressions that recur in formulaic form (spousal meaning of the body, man of concupiscence, rereading the language of the body in the truth: many of these phrases are listed in the Index below), technical footnotes, etc.

Does this mean that TOB is an academic study presented as a catechesis? Would this not be an attempt to mix irreconcilable genres? The immediate audience assembled for the Wednesday audience consisted of people of all ages from all walks of life. Yet the text is at times so difficult that seasoned theologians and philosophers find themselves struggling with it. The scholarly footnotes, which are an integral part of the text (itself a curious fact in a catechesis), often quote sources in the original French, German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew without any translation. There seems to be a disproportion between the text and its intended audience. “Quite frankly, the talks do not seem appropriate

25. Charles Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 4–5.

for the occasion. They are somewhat theoretical and too detailed for a general audience.... I am sure that most of those in attendance at the audiences did not follow what the pope was saying.”²⁶

In answer to these queries, one can emphasize a point already made above: the group of pilgrims present at the Wednesday audiences stands for the universal Church. The true intended audience is the universal Church. In studying TOB, one has the impression that John Paul II is speaking with the full array of intellectual resources available to him, as if he were keeping a personal theological journal. At the same time, however, he is speaking consciously as the successor of Peter to the universal Church. To the objection that catechesis demands a lower level of intellectual sophistication, one can respond that catechesis is not only for the intellectually immature, but for all human beings of all degrees of sophistication, though academics may be less aware of their own need. In a similar way, the understanding of faith is unfolded in theology for the good of the whole Church with all intellectual resources available to theologians. Speaking to the whole Church on such a level can be fruitful, provided there are persons who help others to understand what is said. Besides, many passages in TOB are translucent in their simplicity and directness.

d. Reading of Scripture

John Paul II intends to present a theology of the body that is built on Scripture, above all on the words of Christ (see TOB 86:4). *What sort of reading of Scripture does he offer?* How is it related to historical-critical Scripture scholarship? John Paul II's view of historical-critical studies is quite positive.

Catholic exegetes [must] remain in full harmony with the mystery of the Incarnation, a mystery of the union of the divine and the human in a determinate historical life. The earthly life of Jesus is not defined only by the places and dates at the beginning of the first century in Judea and Galilee, but also by his deep roots in the long history of a small nation of the ancient Near East, with its weaknesses and its greatness, with its men of God and its sinners, with its slow cultural evolution and its political misadventures, with its defeats and its victories, with its longing for peace and the kingdom of God. The

26. Curran, *Moral Theology of John Paul II*, 5.

Church of Christ takes the realism of the incarnation seriously, and this is why she attaches great importance to the “historical-critical” study of the Bible...

[Exegetes must strive] to understand the meaning of the texts with all the accuracy and precision possible and, thus, in their historical, cultural context. A false idea of God and the incarnation presses a certain number of Christians to take the opposite approach. They tend to believe that, since God is the absolute Being, each of his words has an absolute value, independent of all the conditions of human language. Thus, according to them, there is no room for studying these conditions in order to make distinctions that would relativize the significance of the words. However, that is where the illusion occurs and the mysteries of scriptural inspiration and the incarnation are really rejected, by clinging to a false notion of the Absolute. The God of the Bible is not an absolute Being who, crushing everything he touches, would suppress all differences and all nuances. On the contrary, he is God the Creator, who created the astonishing variety of beings “each according to its kind,” as the Genesis account says repeatedly (Gen 1). Far from destroying differences, God respects them and makes use of them (cf. 1 Cor 12:18, 24, 28). Although he expresses himself in human language, he does not give each expression a uniform value, but uses its possible nuances with extreme flexibility and likewise accepts its limitations. That is what makes the task of exegetes so complex, so necessary, and so fascinating!²⁷

Although John Paul II has such a positive view of historical-critical scholarship, his temperament as a thinker does not tend toward assembling the many minute details by which such scholarship constructs its arguments. That he is capable of such arguments becomes apparent in his reconstruction of the cultural situation of Jesus’ listeners in the Sermon on the Mount (see TOB 33–39). Still, he is more drawn to the question: What is the truth of things? His primary perspective, even as a reader of Scripture, is that of a philosopher and a systematic theologian.

At times, historical-critical scholars focus on the question of historical truth (What was intended by these words in this or that historical context?) in such an exclusive manner that they tend to lose

27. John Paul II, discourse on April 23, 1993, for the presentation of the document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church,” on the 100th anniversary of Leo XIII’s encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* and the 50th anniversary of Pius XII’s encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, 7–8.

sight of the question of the truth of things (What do these words show about God, about human life, etc.?). They tend to measure statements about the truth of things by the historical truth of the meaning of texts. John Paul II argues, for example, that we can “deduce” from the Yahwist creation narrative that “man became the image of God not only through his own humanity, but also through the communion of persons, which man and woman form from the very beginning” (TOB 9:3). One could object from a historical-critical point of view that the Yahwist narrative (Gen 2) does not contain the word “image” at all. “Image” is only found in the Priestly narrative (Gen 1). It is unlikely on historical grounds that the Priestly narrative understood man and woman in their distinction and communion as an image of God. Such a view is not attested elsewhere in Priestly texts. The image according to Genesis 1 lies more probably in dominion over the earth, which is explicitly mentioned.

Assuming for the sake of argument that this historical-critical observation is correct, the question of the truth of things remains open. Is the communion of persons *in actual fact* an image of God? Does what Genesis 2 says have any bearing on this question? The core of John Paul II’s argument is very simple. According to Genesis 2, the creation of human beings reaches its perfection in the communion of persons between man and woman. According to Genesis 1, the image of God belongs to human beings precisely in their perfection. It is the point of arrival of the creation of the human being. It follows that the communion between man and woman is part of the divine image. It does not follow on historical-critical grounds, but on those of the truth of things.

A similar line of argument applies to John Paul II’s reading of Ephesians 5:21 as implying the *mutual* submission of husband and wife (see TOB 89). It is easy to point out that the imperative “submit to one another” functions as a section heading in the letter and thus includes the one-sided subordination of children to their parents and of slaves to their masters (see Eph 6:1, 5). Hence Curran accuses John Paul II of being a liberal who goes against the patriarchal meaning of the text. “Here a liberal interpretation distorts the scriptural meaning.”²⁸ Yet, it seems reasonable to assume that John Paul II considered

28. Curran, *Moral Theology of John Paul II*, 56.

this side of the matter (that is, a non-mutual kind of submission) but chose not to focus on it. He certainly does not contradict it. What he does focus on instead is a fascinating argument developed on the basis of “the fear of Christ” that gathers up the theological depth of Ephesians. One should consider John Paul II’s account of the mutual submission of husband and wife on its own terms as revealing a profound truth of things.

The truth of things is, in the end, much more interesting than historical truths about texts, although historical truth must not be neglected. “Interpreters are thus not content with the question, What does what is said (as something merely said) mean in its historical place and in its historical context? Rather, they ask in the end, What things does the text speak of? To what realities does what is said lead?”²⁹

John Paul II pays due attention not only to the human meaning (both in its original historical context “as something said” and as revealing the truth of things) but also to the divine meaning. The divine meaning constitutes the other side of the analogy between the Incarnation and Scripture. It is the meaning intended by God in the larger whole of his revelation.

Studying the human circumstances of the word of God should be pursued with ever renewed interest.

Nevertheless, this study is not enough. In order to respect the coherence of the Church’s faith and of scriptural inspiration, Catholic exegesis must be careful not to limit itself to the human aspects of the biblical texts. First and foremost, it must help the Christian people more clearly perceive the word of God in these texts so that they can better accept them in order to live in full communion with God. To this end, it is obviously necessary that the exegete himself perceive the divine word in the texts. He can do this only if his intellectual work is sustained by a vigorous spiritual life.

Without this support, exegetical research remains incomplete; it loses sight of its main purpose and is confined to secondary tasks. It can even become a sort of escape. Scientific study of the merely human aspects of the texts can make the exegete forget that the word of God invites each person to come out of himself to live in faith and love....

29. Rudolf Bultmann, “Das Problem einer theologischen Exegese des Neuen Testaments,” *Zwischen den Zeiten* 3 (1925): 334–57, here 338.

Indeed, to arrive at a completely valid interpretation of words inspired by the Holy Spirit, one must first be guided by the Holy Spirit and it is necessary to pray for that, to pray much, to ask in prayer for the interior light of the Spirit and docilely accept that light, to ask for the love that alone enables one to understand the language of God, who “is love.” (1 Jn 4:8, 16)³⁰

The “language of God” that resounds in the whole of Scripture is, according to this text, closely connected with the truth that “God is love.” TOB is at its core an attempt to read precisely this language in the spousal mystery (Eph 5).

“This mystery is great; I say this with reference to Christ and the Church” (Eph 5:32). In the overall context of Ephesians and further in the wider context of the words of Sacred Scripture, which reveal God’s salvific plan “from the beginning,” one can see that here the term “*mystērion*” signifies the mystery first hidden in God’s mind and later revealed in man’s history. Given its importance, the mystery is “great” indeed: as God’s salvific plan for humanity, that mystery is in some sense the central theme of the whole of revelation, its central reality. It is what God as Creator and Father wishes above all to transmit to mankind in his Word. (TOB 93:2)

Of all the works of John Paul II, TOB is the most direct, profound, and extensive analysis of “what God...wishes above all to transmit to human beings in his Word.” Just as TOB is *the* catechesis among John Paul II’s catecheses, so it is *the* reading of the divine meaning of Scripture among all his readings. The encyclical *Dominum et Vivificantem* on the Holy Spirit comes perhaps closest to TOB since it contains an extensive meditation on the Gospel of John, particularly on the mystery that “God is love.”

In his intimate life, God “is love,” the essential love shared by the three divine Persons: personal love is the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Therefore he “searches even the depths of God,” as uncreated Love-Gift. It can be said that in the Holy Spirit the intimate life of the Triune God becomes totally gift, an exchange of mutual love between the divine Persons and that through the Holy Spirit, God exists in the mode of gift. It is the Holy Spirit who is the personal expression of this self-giving, of this being-love. He is Person-Love. He is Person-Gift. Here we have an inexhaustible treas-

30. John Paul II, discourse on April 23, 1993, no. 9.

ure of the reality and an inexpressible deepening of the concept of person in God, which only divine revelation makes known to us. (*Dominum et Vivificantem*, 10)

This trinitarian core of John Paul II's vision can be traced back to Karol Wojtyła's encounter as a young man with the poetry and theology of St. John of the Cross.

2. Wojtyła's Carmelite Personalism

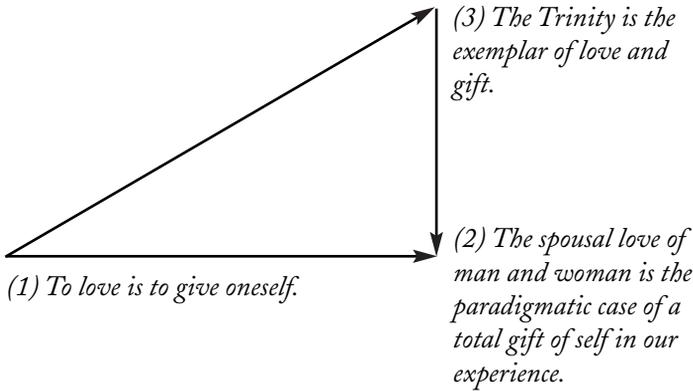
a. *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3, and the Sanjuanist Triangle

Pascal Ide has traced *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3, through John Paul II's vast literary output and shown that it plays a key role in the comprehensive theology of gift developed by John Paul II, particularly in *Man and Woman He Created Them*.³¹ This passage from *Gaudium et Spes* reads: "Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when he prays to the Father, 'that all may be one...as we are one' (Jn 17:21–22) and thus offers vistas closed to human reason, indicates a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons and the union of God's sons in truth and love. This likeness shows that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self; cf. Lk 17:33" (24:3). Two fundamental principles are contained in the last sentence of this text. First, God wills human beings for their own sake, for their good. Persons should thus not be used as mere means. Wojtyła calls this principle "the personalistic norm."³² Second, persons can only find themselves in a sincere gift of self.

A triangle of theses connected with the second of these two principles runs like a deeply embedded watermark through the works of Wojtyła/John Paul II, from his doctoral dissertation, *Faith according to St. John of the Cross* (1948), to his last encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003).

31. See Pascal Ide, "Une théologie du don: Les occurrences de *Gaudium et spes*, n. 24, §3 chez Jean-Paul II," *Anthropotes* 17 (2001), 149–78; 313–44. See also Ide's unpublished commentary on TOB, Pascal Ide, "Le don du corps: Une lecture des catéchèses de Jean-Paul II sur le corps humain" (manuscript, 1992).

32. See Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 40–44.



The first point on this triangle is a general account of love as a gift of self. From this point, one line extends horizontally to the thesis that the gift of self is present with particular completeness in the spousal love between man and woman. Another line extends upward diagonally, to the analogous application of the same account of love to the Trinity. Love and Gift take place in complete fullness in the begetting of the Son and the procession of the Spirit (see *Dominum et Vivificantem*, 10, just quoted above). The descending line from point three to point two represents the thesis that communion between created persons, particularly the communion of spousal love between man and woman, flows as an image from God's own trinitarian communion.

Gaudium et Spes, 24:3, expanded in this way by a characteristic triangle, constitutes the very core of Wojtyła/John Paul II's philosophical and theological personalism. Wojtyła first encountered this personalism in the works of St. John of the Cross. The later encounter with the personalism of Kant and the very different personalism of Scheler enriched this Carmelite point of departure, but left its fundamental structure intact. The fundamental structure of Kant's personalism, and of Scheler's as well, is different. Wojtyła adopted neither the one nor the other (see below).

b. Wojtyła's Encounter with St. John of the Cross

In 1941, one year before he entered the underground seminary of Kraków, Karol Wojtyła, twenty-one years old, and a student of Polish

literature, had a profound encounter with St. John of the Cross. The Gestapo played an instrumental and, in retrospect, historic role in bringing about this encounter. Hitler stripped Polish parishes of most of their priests in order to break the backbone of Polish religious and intellectual resistance. Consequently, Wojtyła came under the spiritual guidance of a layman, Jan Tyranowski, who introduced him to St. John of the Cross.³³ The young student was so struck by St. John of the Cross that he immediately learned Spanish to read the *Mystical Doctor* in the original. "Before entering the seminary, I met a layman named Jan Tyranowski, who was a true mystic. This man, whom I consider a saint, introduced me to the great Spanish mystics and in particular to St. John of the Cross. Even before entering the underground seminary, I read the works of that mystic, especially his poetry. In order to read it in the original, I studied Spanish. That was a very important stage in my life."³⁴

Seven years after this first encounter with St. John of the Cross, now twenty-eight years old and a priest, Wojtyła defended his dissertation on the understanding of faith in St. John of the Cross, directed by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, then professor of spiritual theology at the *Angelicum*.³⁵ The dissertation, written in Latin, quotes the original text of St. John of the Cross in Spanish.³⁶ Looking back in 1982

33. He also introduced him to St. Louis de Montfort; see George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), 58–62; George Huntston Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II: Origins of His Thought and Action* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 77–81.

34. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, 142. See also John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery: On the Fiftieth Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 23–25.

35. Karol Wojtyła, *La dottrina della fede in S. Giovanni della Croce* [*Dottrina de fide apud S. Joannem a Cruce*], ed. Massimo Bettetini, *Original Latin text with facing Italian translation* (Milan: Bompiani, 2003). English translation: Karol Wojtyła, *Faith according to St. John of the Cross* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981). See Jesús Castellano Cervera, "La rilettura della fede in Giovanni delle Croce (1948) e il magistero odierno di Giovanni Paolo II: Continuità e novità," in *Fede di studioso e obbedienza di pastore: Atti del Convegno sul 50o del dottorato di K. Wojtyła e del 20o del Pontificato di Giovanni Paolo II*, ed. Edward Kaczynski (Rome: Millennium Romae, 1999). Alvaro Huerga, "Karol Wojtyła, comentador de San Juan de la Cruz," *Angelicum* 56 (1979): 348–66; Raimondo Sorgia, "Approccio con l'«opera prima» di K. Wojtyła," *Angelicum* 57 (1980): 401–23; and Williams, *Mind of John Paul II*, 103–9.

36. According to Huerga, Wojtyła's understanding of the nuances of the Spanish original is excellent: Huerga, "Wojtyła, comentador de San Juan," 252.

at more than forty years of familiarity with St. John of the Cross, John Paul II says the following about his spiritual master in a homily delivered on November 4, 1982 (thus between TOB 99, October 27, 1982, and TOB 100, November 24, 1982). “To him I owe so much in my spiritual formation. I came to know him in my youth and I entered into an intimate dialogue with this master of faith, with his language and his thought, culminating in the writing of my doctoral dissertation on ‘Faith in John of the Cross.’ Ever since then I have found in him a friend and master who has shown me the light that shines in the darkness for walking always toward God.”³⁷

The main topic of Wojtyła’s doctoral thesis is faith as a means of union between God and the human person. Faith as a means of union is also the point John Paul II emphasizes in his apostolic letter *Maestro en la fe* (1990) dedicated to St. John of the Cross.

I myself have been especially attracted by the experience and teachings of the Saint of Fontiveros. From the first years of my priestly formation, I found in him a sure guide in the ways of faith. This aspect of his doctrine seemed to me to be of vital importance to every Christian, especially in a trail-blazing age like our own which is also filled with risks and temptations in the sphere of faith.... I wrote my doctoral thesis in theology on the subject of “Faith according to John of the Cross.” In it, I devoted special attention to an analytical discussion of the central affirmation of the Mystical Doctor: Faith is the only proximate and proportionate means for communion with God. Even then I felt that John had not only marshaled solid theological doctrine, but that, above all, he had set forth Christian life in terms of such basic aspects as communion with God, the contemplative dimension of prayer, the strength that apostolic mission derives from life in God, and the creative tension of the Christian life lived in hope.³⁸

Had Wojtyła chosen the topic of love rather than faith for his dissertation, the evidence of the strong impact of St. John of the Cross on his understanding of spousal love would be more direct and clear.

37. John Paul II, homily at Segovia (Nov. 4, 1982), *Insegnamenti* 5, no. 3 (1982): 1137–44, par. 2.

38. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter “*Maestro en la fe*” to Felipe Sáinz de Baranda, Superior General of the Discalced Carmelites on the Occasion of the Fourth Centenary of the Death of John of the Cross (Dec. 14, 1990), 2.

Still, in his dissertation he does quote and analyze a text that seems to be an important seed of much of his later thinking about love and personal subjectivity.

O lamps of fire!
in whose splendors
the deep caverns of feeling,
once obscure and blind,
now give forth, so rarely, so exquisitely,
both warmth and light to their Beloved.

The sense of personal subjectivity, which is so important to Wojtyła, is powerfully expressed in this stanza: caverns of feeling with fiery lamps that spread warmth and light across the whole distance to the beloved. In his commentary on the last two lines, St. John of the Cross writes:

Since God *gives himself* with a free and gracious will, so too the soul (possessing a will more generous and free the more it is united with God) gives to God, God himself in God; and this is a true and complete gift of the soul to God.

It is conscious there that God is indeed its own and that it possesses him by inheritance, with the right of ownership, as his adopted child through the grace of his *gift of himself*. Having him for its own, it can give him and communicate him to whomever it wishes. Thus it gives him to its Beloved, who is the very God who *gave himself* to it. By this donation it repays God for all it owes him, since it willingly gives as much as it receives from him.

Because the soul in this gift to God offers him the Holy Spirit, with voluntary surrender, as something of its own (so that God loves himself in the Holy Spirit as he deserves), it enjoys inestimable delight and fruition, seeing that it gives God something of its own that is suited to him according to his infinite being. It is true that the soul cannot give God again to himself, since in himself he is ever himself. Nevertheless it does this truly and perfectly, giving all that was given it by him in order to *repay love, which is to give as much as is given*. And God, who could not be considered paid with anything less, is considered paid with that gift of the soul; and he accepts it gratefully as something it *gives him of its own*. In this very gift he loves it anew; and in this resurrender of God to the soul, the soul also loves as though again.

A reciprocal love is thus actually formed between God and the soul, *like the marriage union and surrender*, in which the goods of both

(the divine essence that each possesses freely by reason of the voluntary surrender between them) are possessed by both together. *They say to each other what the Son of God spoke to the Father through John: All that is mine is yours and yours is mine, and I am glorified in them [Jn 17:10].*³⁹

Wojtyła quotes key sections of this text and discusses them in some detail.⁴⁰ The most important passage highlights the trinitarian aspect of the transforming union between the soul and God.

This concept of the relationship between God and the soul, at once filial *and conjugal*, is based on two constant elements: [1] the adoptive communication of grace and [2] the power of love.

[Ad 1:] The soul becomes “God by participation” and therefore by participation it possesses divinity itself;

[Ad 2:] and the will gives to the Beloved through love nothing less than that which it had received from him: the gift of participated divinity. Hence the soul gives God to himself and through himself because the motion of the Holy Spirit is continuously transformed.⁴¹

Nevertheless, the one who gives is in fact the soul, which loves God in return to a supreme degree. Since its will is perfectly united with the divine will, it cannot carry out any other works than those that adhere to the divine will. Consequently, due to the perfection of the transforming union, the soul’s will is entirely occupied in the same objectives of the divine will, namely, loving God and giving to him in love that which it has from him by participation—divinity itself, not only through the lover’s will, but *as God loves, by the movement of the Holy Spirit*.

With this, we reach the “Trinitarian” mystical teaching that was already mentioned in the *Spiritual Canticle*.⁴²

39. St. John of the Cross, *The Living Flame of Love*, commentary on st. B 3, par. 78–80, in *The Collected Works*, ed. Kieran Kavanaugh, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1991), 705–6; emphasis added.

40. See Wojtyła, *Apud Joannem a Cruce*, 421–30; Wojtyła, *St. John of the Cross*, 227–33, see also 89.

41. The Latin “*motio*” is in the nominative. Perhaps the ablative “*motione*” is to be read, in which case the text is to be translated, “because by the motion of the Holy Spirit, it [that is, the soul] is continually transformed.”

42. Wojtyła, *St. John of the Cross*, 230; emphasis added, translation modified. Cf. Wojtyła, *Apud Joannem a Cruce*, 424 and 426.

c. The Sanjuanist Triangle in Detail

Three points of contact between the key text in *Living Flame of Love* (stanza 3, with commentary) and Wojtyła/John Paul II's vision are particularly clear and important. They correspond to the characteristic triangle of theses mentioned above: (1) Love implies a cycle of mutual giving, supremely the gift of self. (2) The paradigmatic instance of such self-gift in human experience is the spousal relation between man and woman. (3) The Trinity is the archetype of such love and gift from which the love between God and human persons as well as love between human beings derives as an imitation and participation. Let us look at each of these points in more detail.

(1) *Love and the Gift of Self*: St. John of the Cross describes the soul's relation to God as a cycle of mutual giving. The deep satisfaction and happiness of love is found in this cycle *as a cycle of giving*, not only of receiving (see TOB 68:2–3). In *Living Flame*, 3, what the bride gives is God, who has given himself to her. *Self-gift* is not explicit, but certainly implicit. In other texts, St. John of the Cross speaks more directly of the bride giving *herself*.

There he gave me his breast;
there he taught me a sweet and living knowledge;
and I gave myself to him,
keeping nothing back;
there I promised to be his bride.⁴³

In this stanza, the promise “to be his bride” seems to express in alternate words what immediately precedes it, “I gave myself to him, keeping nothing back.” St. John of the Cross comments:

In this stanza the bride tells of the *mutual surrender* made in this spiritual espousal between the soul and God, saying that in the interior wine cellar of love they were joined by the communication he made of himself to her....

In that sweet drink of God, in which the soul is imbibed in him, she most willingly and with intense delight *surrenders herself wholly to him in the desire to be totally his and never to possess in herself anything other than him*....

43. St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle*, st. B 27.

Hence, not only in her will but also in her works she is *really and totally given to God without keeping anything back, just as God has freely given himself entirely to her*. This union is so effected that the two wills are mutually paid, surrendered, and satisfied (so that neither fails the other in anything) with the fidelity and stability of an espousal. She therefore adds: there I promised to be his bride.

Just as one who is espoused does not love, care, or work for any other than her bridegroom, so the soul in this state has no affections of the will or knowledge in the intellect or care or work or appetite that is not entirely inclined toward God. She is as it were divine and deified, in such a way that in regard to all she can understand she does not even suffer the first movements contrary to God's will.⁴⁴

The characteristic feature of the spousal love between human beings and God, according to this text, is the totality of the gift of self, which is reflected in the totality of the orientation of affections toward the spouse. "I gave myself to him, keeping nothing back; there I promised to be his bride."

When there is union of love, the image of the Beloved is so sketched in the will, and drawn so intimately and vividly, that it is true to say that the Beloved lives in the lover and the lover in the Beloved. Love produces such likeness in this transformation of lovers that one can say each is the other and both are one. The reason is that in the union and transformation of love each gives possession of self to the other and each leaves and exchanges self for the other. Thus each one lives in the other and is the other, and both are one in the transformation of love.⁴⁵

In this text, St. John of the Cross uses the concept of the gift of self to unfold the more traditional language of the "transformation" and "union" of love.

(2) *The Paradigmatic Role of Love between Man and Woman*: St. John of the Cross's comparison, "Just as one who is espoused," that is, one who is an earthly bride in relation to her human bridegroom, touches on the second important point of contact with *Wojtyła*. According to St. John of the Cross, the marriage analogy is appropriate across the whole breadth of Christian experience, even in its less perfect forms. It is most applicable, however, to what St. John of the

44. *Ibid.*, commentary on st. B 27, par. 5–7.

45. *Ibid.*, commentary on st. B 12, par. 7.

Cross calls “spiritual marriage,” which follows “spiritual betrothal.” In his commentary on stanza 22 (par. 3) of the *Spiritual Canticle*, he writes.

This spiritual marriage is incomparably greater than the spiritual betrothal, for it is a total transformation in the Beloved, in which each surrenders the entire possession of self to the other with a certain consummation of the union of love. The soul thereby becomes divine, God through participation, insofar as is possible in this life.... Just as in the consummation of carnal marriage there are two in one flesh, as Sacred Scripture points out (Gen 2:24), so also when the spiritual marriage between God and the soul is consummated, there are two natures in one spirit and love, as St. Paul says in making this same comparison: Whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. (1 Cor 6:17)

The defining element of “spiritual marriage,” according to this text, is the total surrendering of the self-possession of each to the other, analogous to the consummation of love by sexual union in marriage. St. John of the Cross uses this analogy to understand spiritual marriage by comparison with carnal marriage, but one can turn the comparison around to see what St. John of the Cross says about spousal love between man and woman. The conclusion one reaches in such an inversion is precisely Wojtyła’s vision of spousal love: the gift of self is the defining mark of spousal love between man and woman in contrast with other forms of love. “Betrothed [=spousal] love differs from all the aspects or forms of love analyzed hitherto. Its decisive character is the giving of one’s own person (to another). This is something different from and more than attraction, desire or even good will. These are all ways by which one person goes out toward another, but none of them can take him as far.... The fullest, the most uncompromising form of love consists precisely in self-giving, in making one’s inalienable and non-transferable ‘I’ someone else’s property.”⁴⁶

This important text from *Love and Responsibility* can be set next to some of St. John of the Cross’s formulations and John Paul II’s mature statement in *Familiaris Consortio*.

46. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 96 and 97; emphasis added.

St. John of the Cross

I gave myself to him, keeping nothing back; there I promised to be his bride.⁴⁷ ...[T]he bride tells of the mutual surrender made in this spiritual espousal between the soul and God....⁴⁸ [S]he most willingly and with intense delight surrenders herself wholly to him in the desire to be totally his....⁴⁹ Each surrenders the entire possession of self to the other with a certain consummation of the union of love.⁵⁰

Wojtyła

The essence of spousal love is self-giving, the surrender of one's "I"... The fullest, the most uncompromising form of love consists precisely in self-giving, in making one's inalienable and nontransferable "I" someone else's property.⁵¹

John Paul II

The total physical self-giving would be a lie if it were not the sign and fruit of a total personal self-giving, in which the whole person, including the temporal dimension, is present: if the person were to withhold something or reserve the possibility of deciding otherwise in the future, by this very fact he or she would not be giving totally.⁵²

The striking similarity between these formulations suggests that Wojtyła's way of thinking about love was deeply formed by the language of "gift of self" found in St. John of the Cross.

(3) *The Trinitarian Root of the Gift*: The third decisive point of contact between Wojtyła/John Paul II and St. John of the Cross lies in the thesis that love as a gift of self is rooted in the relation between the Father and the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit. Here is the key text again: "A reciprocal love is thus actually formed between God and the soul, *like the marriage union and surrender*, in which the goods of

47. St. John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle*, st. B 27.

48. *Ibid.*, commentary on st. B 27, par. 3.

49. *Ibid.*, commentary on st. B 27, par. 6.

50. *Ibid.*, commentary on st. B 22, par. 3.

51. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 96 and 97.

52. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 11.

both (the divine essence that each possesses freely by reason of the voluntary surrender between them) are possessed by both together. *They say to each other what the Son of God spoke to the Father through John: All that is mine is yours and yours is mine, and I am glorified in them [Jn 17:10].*⁵³ The Son of God is the first to say to the Father, "All that is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine." Both the soul's filial/spousal relation to God and the marriage union and surrender between man and woman are derived as images from this first cycle of giving within the Trinity. Neither St. John of the Cross nor Wojtyła/John Paul II apply spousal language directly to the Trinity. It is the father-son relation, not the bride-bridegroom relation, that is the normative image for the Trinity, in agreement with the teaching of Jesus. Yet, it is clear to both that the archetype and source of spousal love lies in the Trinity: "All that is mine is yours, and yours is mine."

In his writings and sermons, John Paul II returns frequently to St. John of the Cross.⁵⁴ The following two texts are good examples.

Truly, the Father has sent his Son into the world that we, united to him and transformed by him, might be able to restore to God the same gift of love that he gave to us. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). Starting from this gift of love we can better understand and realize in us the eternal life of God, which consists in participating in the total and complete gift of the Son to the Father in the love of the Holy Spirit. A sublime reality, which St. John of the Cross expressed with the words, "Give to God, God himself in God" (*The Living Flame of Love*, stanza 3). I wanted to remind you of these Christian ideals in order to set before you in your mind and heart the final and grandiose goal of all evangelization.⁵⁵

This text documents that the main passage expressing St. John of the Cross's trinitarian personalism, *Living Flame of Love*, 3, with commentary, was present to John Paul II in writing this sermon about a theme so dear to him, evangelization. In agreement with St. John of

53. St. John of the Cross, *Living Flame of Love*, B 80.

54. The *Insegnamenti* of John Paul II contain more than sixty documents mentioning St. John of the Cross.

55. John Paul II, homily at Buenos Aires (Mar. 10, 1987), *Insegnamenti* 10, no. 1 (1987): 1202–11, §2.

the Cross, he glosses the phrase “Give to God, God himself in God,” by the language of the gift of self, “the total and complete gift of the Son to the Father in the love of the Holy Spirit.” This is the eternal life of God in which human beings are called to participate. *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3, is not far from these formulations: by showing us the union of the divine Persons, Jesus shows us that we can “find ourselves only through a sincere gift of self.”

Another important text deals with human dignity, which is implicit in the first of the two principles in *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3, (a creature “willed for itself”): “For St. John of the Cross, God is in all, and all is in God. All is presence and gift, all things carry us to God, and he offers us all as a gift to show how precious man is in his eyes as the crown of creation.”⁵⁶ In this text, John Paul II sees human dignity in the framework of St. John of the Cross’s theology of “presence and gift.” Again *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3, is not far away: God wills man for his own sake inasmuch as he creates man for a life of communion in receiving and giving the gift of self.

To conclude, it was in St. John of the Cross that Wojtyła first saw the triangle of theses that came to define the depth-structure of his vision of the person. The spiritual and intellectual roots of his personalism are Carmelite.

3. Wojtyła and Kant

In his penetrating study of Wojtyła, Kenneth Schmitz argues that the most significant challenge to which Wojtyła’s personalism responds is a certain understanding of personal subjectivity and interiority that gained wide currency in the modern age.⁵⁷ A particular emphasis on subjectivity, Schmitz shows, emerged from the sixteenth century onward together with the rise of a mechanistic account of nature. Medieval accounts of nature had shared a sense of the interiority and depth of all natural beings. Natural beings were seen as constituted by their own interior principles and causes that involve a rela-

56. John Paul II, discourse to Congress on St. John of the Cross, Rome (Mar. 25, 1991), *Insegnamenti* 14, no. 1 (1991): 869–72, §2.

57. See Kenneth L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 121–45, esp. 131–37.

tion both to their creative origin and to their end and good. Nature comes from the wisdom of God and acts for an end. The good is the cause of causes. Human beings are not alone as beings of longing, as beings ordered to the good, but in their rational nature they experience a deep kinship with other natural beings and with their own sentient and bodily nature.

The mechanistic account of nature in the wake of Bacon and Descartes denied the interiority of material beings and consequently the kinship of the human person with the subrational natural cosmos. Alone in an inhospitable world that had been deprived of inner meaning, the freedom of the conscious subject becomes “absolute,” detached from sources of meaning: “This, then, is the genesis of the modern sense of subject as subjectivity. We might say that subjectivity is the self-defense by which consciousness fends off a world either hostile to its inhabitation or at least without companionate room for it, even while consciousness subverts the integrity of that world by its imperious demands. The modern shift gave to the human subject an absolute status precisely in its character *qua* consciousness; for human consciousness not only sets its own terms but the terms for reality itself.”⁵⁸

Some have suggested that the particular context in which Wojtyła encountered this modern sense of subjectivity was the French personalist movement around Emmanuel Mounier and the journal *Esprit*.⁵⁹ There is indeed clear evidence that Wojtyła took part in the activities of a group of Polish personalists influenced by *Esprit* who founded the journal *Znak* or wrote regularly for it.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it is German

58. *Ibid.*, 135–36.

59. See John Hellman, “John Paul II and the Personalist Movement,” *Cross Currents* 30 (1980–81): 415. See also Emmanuel Mounier, *Personalism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1952). An account of the relation between Mounier and Maritain is offered by Joseph A. Amato, *Mounier & Maritain: A French Catholic Understanding of the Modern World* (Ypsilanti, MI: Sapientia, 2002). See also Kenneth L. Schmitz, “Jacques Maritain and Karol Wojtyła: Approaches to Modernity,” in *The Bases of Ethics*, ed. William Sweet (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2000).

60. This connection is documented in detail by Hellman, “Personalist Movement,” 413–8. A detailed survey of French personalism, highlighting particularly its socialist and communist sympathies, is offered by John Hellman, *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left 1930–1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); see also Rufus William Rauch, *Politics and Belief in Contemporary France: Emmanuel Mounier and Christian Democracy, 1932–1950* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972).

personalism, particularly Max Scheler and, behind Scheler, the towering figure of Immanuel Kant, that provides the true background.⁶¹ Wojtyła writes about this background in *The Acting Person*:

The author has given much thought to the work of M. Scheler, in particular his *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*.... The critique of Kant contained in that work is of crucial significance for the present considerations and was for this author the occasion for reflection and the cause of a partial acceptance of some of Kantian Personalism. This refers specifically to the “ethical” Personalism expounded in *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*.... The discussion between Scheler (*Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*) and Kant was in a way the “starting ground” for the reflection underlying the analyses of the “acting person” contained in this study.⁶²

This statement is important as a guide for the study of Wojtyła. If indeed the discussion between Scheler and Kant is the “starting ground” of Wojtyła’s main philosophical work, close attention to the relevant aspects of both Kant and Scheler will be helpful for understanding it. Wojtyła’s students testify that their teacher’s most continuous and serious partner in philosophic dialogue, evident throughout his lectures and seminars, was indeed Kant.⁶³ “Kant, *Mein Gott!* Kant!”⁶⁴

a. Bacon, Descartes, and a New Subjectivity

The ambition of power over nature played a pivotal role in the beginnings of modernity in Bacon and especially Descartes.⁶⁵ In his *Great Instauration* (1620), Francis Bacon (1561–1626) articulates the

61. The alternative between French or German personalism is, in the end, not absolute. Hellman shows that German personalism, particularly Scheler, stands at the origin of French personalism; see Hellman, “Personalist Movement,” 410. Still, Wojtyła read the German personalists Kant and Scheler directly, not mediated by French personalists.

62. Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person* (Dordrecht, Boston, and London: D. Reidel, 1979), 22, no. 8 on 302.

63. According to the testimony of Stanislaw Grygiel, now occupant of the Wojtyła Chair at the Lateran University.

64. “Kant, *My God!* Kant!” Exclamation of John Paul II in the presence of guests when Kant was mentioned. Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 128.

65. See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theodrama: IV: The Action* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 156–60.

fundamental philosophical principles that came to inform the overall shape of scientific reason. The title *Great Instauration* alludes, perhaps with some irony, to Ephesians, which speaks of God's action in the fullness of time "to gather everything under Christ as head, Vulgate: *instaurare omnia in Christo* (Eph 1:10)." Bacon states his purpose clearly in the preface: "The state of knowledge is not prosperous nor greatly advancing; and...a way must be opened for the human understanding entirely different from any hitherto known, and other helps provided, in order that the mind may exercise over the nature of things the authority which properly belongs to it."⁶⁶

Authority over nature belonged to the human race before the fall, and it is to this primeval condition that Bacon intends to return, undoing the consequences of the fall as far as possible. The Scholastic "wisdom" of his own time, Bacon asserts, is immature: "For its value and utility it must be plainly avowed that that wisdom which we have derived principally from the Greeks is but like the boyhood of knowledge, and has the characteristic property of boys: it can talk, but it cannot generate, for it is fruitful of controversies but barren of works."⁶⁷ Human knowledge becomes mature and manly, able to beget children, only when it is directed to its true end, namely, power over nature in order to minister to the needs of life.⁶⁸

The goal of power deeply determines what is, and what is not, a proper subject of knowledge and therefore what belongs, and what does not belong, into a true account of nature. Of the four causes investigated by the Aristotelian philosophy of nature, the two considered most important by Aristotle, namely, final and formal cause, should be dismissed. "The final cause rather corrupts than advances the sciences."⁶⁹ This is quite reasonable. Giving attention to the final cause hinders the concerns of power since power is concerned with subjecting something as material to a new superimposed purpose. A similar point applies for the same reason to the formal cause, understood as the nature of a thing: "Matter rather than forms should be

66. Francis Bacon, *The New Organon and Related Writings* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), 3–4.

67. *Ibid.*, 7–8.

68. *Ibid.*, 267–68.

69. *Ibid.*, 121.

the object of our attention, its configurations and changes of configuration, and simple action, and laws of action or motion, for forms are figments of the human mind, unless you call those laws of action forms.”⁷⁰ The only remnant of form in Bacon’s vision is mathematical law. “And inquiries into nature have the best result when they begin with physics and end in mathematics.”⁷¹ The strong orientation toward mathematics that came to dominate natural science may have other causes as well, e.g., Galileo’s return against Aristotelian Scholasticism to a Pythagorean-Platonic vision, but the principal driving force seems to have been the goal of power.

Bacon’s project of reconstructing the entire order of knowledge in light of the ambition of power over nature is connected with a premise developed earlier in the philosophical and theological current that stands behind the Reformation, namely, Nominalism: “Late medieval nominalism defended the sovereignty of God as incompatible with there being an order in nature which by itself defined good and bad. For that would be to tie God’s hands, to infringe on his sovereign right of decision about what was good. This line of thought even contributed in the end to the rise of mechanism: the ideal universe from this point of view is a mechanical one.”⁷² Nominalism, however, did not yet formulate the goal of power as the measure of knowledge. Still, it eliminated from nature precisely those features that resist its subjection to power, namely, a strong teleology and formal causality. The universe most suited to the goal of power is a mechanical universe, grasped and made ready for use by the mathematical science of mechanics.

Bacon gives some thought to the question of the morality of the power he proposes. He is aware of the possible problem of an abuse of power, but dismisses it. “If the debasement of arts and sciences to purposes of wickedness, luxury and the like, be made a ground of objection, let no one be moved thereby. For the same may be said of all earthly goods: of wit, courage, strength, beauty, wealth, light and the rest. Only let the human race recover that right over nature which

70. *Ibid.*, 53.

71. *Ibid.*, 129.

72. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 82.

belongs to it by divine bequest, and let power be given it: the exercise thereof will be governed by sound reason and true religion.”⁷³ It is chilling to read this statement about the automatically self-governing goodness of human power next to a statement about human ambition found only a few sentences earlier.

It will not be amiss to distinguish the three kinds and, as it were, grades of ambition in mankind. The first is of those who desire to extend their own power in their native country, a vulgar and degenerate kind. The second is of those who labor to extend the power of their country and its dominion among men. This certainly has more dignity, though not less covetousness. But if a man endeavor to establish and extend the power and dominion of the human race itself over the universe, his ambition (if ambition it can be called) is without doubt both a more wholesome and a more noble thing than the other two. Now the empire of man over things depends wholly on the arts and sciences. For we cannot command nature except by obeying her.⁷⁴

Bacon’s leap in the third grade of ambition is extraordinary. The human heart is wayward in the first two grades of ambition for power. In the third grade, in “the empire of man over things,” which simply consists in a greater universality of power by extension to the human race as a whole and to the whole “universe,” the human heart is suddenly full of light and nobility.

At the height of its triumph in the twentieth century, as Hans Jonas argues, “the Baconian program” has revealed its insufficiency in the lack of control over itself. Both humanity and the earth now need protection because of the very magnitude of the power that has been achieved (e.g., nuclear weapons). Yet we do not seem able to offer such protection. Scientific and technological progress has its own dynamics in which power that *can* be used *will* be used. Bacon did not anticipate this deep paradox of the power derived from knowledge: that it leads indeed to some sort of domination over nature, but at the same time to a helpless subjugation under itself.⁷⁵

Bacon’s impact might have been small if the project of power had not been embraced by a mathematician and philosopher who can be

73. Bacon, *New Organon*, 119.

74. *Ibid.*, 118.

75. See Hans Jonas, *The Imperative of Responsibility: In Search of an Ethics for the Technological Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 141.

considered the true father of the distinctively modern scientific-technological project, Descartes. According to Descartes, “it is possible to reach knowledge that will be of much utility in this life; and...instead of the speculative philosophy which is now taught in the schools [that is, Scholastic philosophy] we can find a practical one, by which, knowing the nature and behavior of fire, water, air, stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies which surround us...we can employ these entities for all the purposes for which they are suited, and so make ourselves masters and possessors of nature.”⁷⁶ Descartes is very explicit. The speculative philosophy of the Scholastics must be replaced by a practical, that is, technological philosophy. Doing and especially making must determine what is, and what is not, a relevant pursuit of philosophy and its eventual offshoot, natural science. Leon Kass points out the deep impact this view has on how nature is viewed: “The new science sought *first* power over nature, and *derivatively*, found a way to reconceive nature that yielded the empowering kind of knowledge: Seek power, and you will devise a way of knowing that gives it to you. The result can be simply put: knowledge permitting prediction and (some) control over biological events has been purchased at the cost of deep ignorance, not to say misunderstanding, of *living beings*, ourselves included.”⁷⁷ The single most important exclusion from “objective” being that Descartes insists upon is the exclusion of the final cause: “The entire class of causes which people customarily derive from a thing’s ‘end,’ I judge to be utterly useless in Physics.”⁷⁸ One can see immediately that a way of thinking formed in this Cartesian manner will have fundamental difficulties with an account of sex and marriage in terms of “ends.”

It fits with Descartes’ program of ordering knowledge in radical fashion to power over nature that he holds up free will as the greatest

76. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 6, in *Discourse on Method and Meditations*, 3rd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), Adam and Tannery 61–62. Cf. also René Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, 13, in *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1961), Adam and Tannery, 434.

77. Leon Kass, “The Permanent Limitations of Biology,” in *The Ambiguous Legacy of the Enlightenment*, ed. William A. Rusher (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995), 125.

78. Descartes, *Meditations*, 4, in *Discourse on Method and Meditations*, 83, Adam and Tannery, 55.

human good. “Now freewill is in itself the noblest thing we can have because it makes us in a certain manner equal to God and exempts us from being his subjects; and so its rightful use is the greatest of all the goods we possess, and further there is nothing that is more our own or that matters more to us. From all this it follows that nothing but freewill can produce our greatest contentments.”⁷⁹ This apotheosis of the freedom of choice as the greatest human good seems to anticipate already the core of Kant’s philosophy of freedom and autonomy. There seems to be a mutual harmonic reinforcement between this Cartesian view of freedom and the Baconian project. What distinguishes the master of nature above all is that he can decide freely what to do with nature. He is not bound by any preexisting purposes in nature, but sets his own purposes. Of course, the Christian tradition considers free choice a power of great dignity. Yet, it is a power subordinate to love. On this point Wojtyła maintains a view that is the direct opposite of Descartes’ radical metaphysical liberalism: “Love consists of a commitment which limits one’s freedom—it is a giving of the self, and to give oneself means just that: to limit one’s freedom on behalf of another. Limitation of one’s freedom might seem to be something negative and unpleasant, but love makes it a positive, joyful and creative thing. *Freedom exists for the sake of love....* Man longs for love more than for freedom—freedom is the means and love the end.”⁸⁰

The development of a mechanistic science of nature and the exaltation of the freedom of choice as an ultimate value in the wake of Descartes’ choice of seeking “knowledge that will be of much utility in this life” had profound effects on the understanding of the place of the human person in the cosmos. Descartes took the path of a rigorous dualism. On the one side stands the mechanical cosmos of extended things (*res extensae*), whose only attributes are extension and movement, constituting an objective world of pure externality without any interiority. On the other side stands the human soul, the “thinking

79. Descartes, “Letter to Christina of Sweden,” in Adam and Tannery, 5, 85; cf. *Meditations*, IV.8. Translation following Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 147. One can perhaps temper the astonishing statement that freedom “exempts us from being his [that is, God’s] subjects” by adding the word “seems.” In fact, Descartes writes, “*semble nous exempter de luy estre suiets...*”; emphasis added.

80. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 135–36.

thing” (*res cogitans*), whose only attribute is rational consciousness, that is, knowledge and free will, a world of pure interiority.⁸¹

Others followed more narrowly reductionist paths. For Bishop George Berkeley (1685–1753), a vigorous defender of the spiritual values of the Christian tradition, there is no independently existing material world, but every “material” thing is a mere perception of the soul (*esse est percipi*). All is personal consciousness.⁸² According to Julien de La Mettrie (1709–1751), there is no thinking thing, but man is simply “machine man,” a material mechanism.⁸³ In each case, the tension between the person and the material world of nature is the crucial issue, even in proposals that apparently abolish the person altogether in favor of mere mechanism. In de La Mettrie’s “machine man,” the fact remains that someone is thinking about the machine and freely harnessing it to his own ends.

John Paul II points out a close relation between the predominant scientific picture of the world and a particular form of ethics, namely utilitarianism: “The development of contemporary civilization is linked to a scientific and technological progress which is often achieved in a one-sided way and thus appears purely positivistic. Positivism, as we know results in agnosticism in theory and utilitarianism in practice and in ethics. In our own day, history is in a way repeating itself. Utilitarianism is a civilization of production and of

81. A more Christian reading of Descartes, relativizing the ambition for power and the primacy of free choice, is proposed by Gary Steiner, *Descartes as a Moral Thinker: Christianity, Technology, Nihilism* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2004), esp. chap. 4. At the very least, even if Descartes’ own position is more complex, the effect of his writings in the growth of the modern project corresponds to the less Christian reading proposed above.

82. See George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, ed. Colin Murray Turbayne (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1970).

83. See Julien Offray de La Mettrie, *Machine Man and Other Writings*, ed. Ann Thomson (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). The second English edition of this work (1750) has an extended subtitle: “Man a Machine: Wherein the several systems of philosophers, in respect to the soul of man, are examined, the different states of the soul are shewn to be co-relative to those of the body, the diversity between men and other animals, is proved to arise from the different quantity and quality of brains, the law of nature is explained, as relative to the whole animal creation, the immateriality of an inward principle is by experiments and observations exploded, and a full detail is given of the several springs which move the human machine.”

use, a civilization of things and not of persons, a civilization in which persons are used in the same way as things are used.”⁸⁴

The tension between nature and person runs as the central current through the various choices pursued by the seminal thinkers of modernity. What Jonas says about the existentialism of Bultmann and the early Heidegger applies in some way to the whole era. A change in the vision of nature, he argues, is at the bottom of the metaphysical situation that has given rise to existentialism and to its nihilistic implications. The essence of existentialism is a certain estrangement between man and the world, with the loss of the idea of a kindred cosmos—in short, an anthropological a-cosmism. Jonas compares this a-cosmism with the Gnostic religion, but finds it still more radical.

There is no overlooking one cardinal difference between the gnostic and the existentialist dualism: Gnostic man is thrown into an antagonistic, anti-divine, and therefore anti-human nature, modern man into an indifferent one. Only the latter case represents the absolute vacuum, the really bottomless pit. In the gnostic conception the hostile, the demonic, is still anthropomorphic, familiar even in its foreignness, and the contrast itself gives direction to existence.... Not even this antagonistic quality is granted to the indifferent nature of modern science, and from that nature no direction at all can be elicited. This makes modern nihilism infinitely more radical and more desperate than gnostic nihilism could ever be for all its panic terror of the world.⁸⁵

John Paul II develops a strikingly similar line of thought.

The human family is facing the challenge of a new Manichaeism, in which body and spirit are put in radical opposition; the body does not receive life from the spirit, and the spirit does not give life to the body. Man thus ceases to live as a person and a subject. Regardless of all intentions and declarations to the contrary, he becomes merely an object. This neo-Manichaean culture has led, for example, to human sexuality being regarded more as an area for manipulation and exploitation than as the basis of that primordial wonder which led Adam on the morning of creation to exclaim before Eve: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” (Gen 2:23). This same

84. John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 13.

85. Hans Jonas, “Gnosticism, Existentialism and Nihilism,” in *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (Boston: Beacon, 1963), 338–39.

wonder is echoed in the words of the Song of Solomon: “You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride, you have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes” (Song 4:9).⁸⁶

This text contains in miniature much of the program of TOB. John Paul II’s main concern in TOB is to help overcome the body-spirit dualism that emerged from placing nature in the position of an “object” for human power. His argument in TOB is similar to that of the text just quoted, namely, reflection on the primal wonder of man and woman, whose bodies are not meaningless mechanisms, but means of expression in the language of love: you have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes (Song 4:9).

b. Kant’s Anti-Trinitarian Personalism

Kant built on Bacon and Descartes. He was convinced that, with Bacon, Descartes, and Newton, natural science had found the road of definitive progress that established mathematical-materialist determinism beyond any shadow of doubt as the valid way of understanding nature. The motto of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* is, in fact, a passage from the preface to Bacon’s *Instauratio Magna* in which Bacon formulates the project for the new kind of knowledge. Kant defends the progress achieved in this direction against the sensualist irrationalism of Hume.⁸⁷

Yet, the success of a mechanist natural science has disturbing consequences, in Kant’s judgment, especially for morality and religion. If the universe is a self-contained material mechanism explained entirely by deterministic mathematical laws of nature, excluding recourse to a Divine Being, the three main pillars of morality and religion (as Kant sees them) are called into question: the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God.⁸⁸ While Kant is deeply committed to defending natural science, he is even more deeply committed to the preservation of morality and religion on these three pillars. He is particularly concerned about the defects of the ethical system that arose as the congenial counterpart of the Baconian and

86. John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 19.

87. See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [*Critique of Pure Reason*], *Gesammelte Schriften*, vols. 3–4 (Berlin: Königlich-Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1902–), B VII–XIV.

88. See *ibid.*, B XXIX–XXXI.

Cartesian project, namely, utilitarianism, which considers all things as mere means to human happiness, that is, pleasure. Utilitarianism, he argues, abandons the holiness of the law in favor of mere calculation of an outcome that serves irrational inclinations, namely, the inclinations toward pleasure and the sum of pleasures, happiness.

Kant attempts to solve these tensions of modernity in two interrelated steps. The first step is to limit reason in its theoretical capacity, that is, in its statements about what *is or is not the case*, to the realm of appearances based upon received sense-data. The second is to limit freedom, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God (all of which lie outside the scope of sense-data) to reason in its practical capacity, that is, in its precepts what *is or is not to be done*. One key step in this solution lies in the denial that theoretical reason has any competence regarding morality and religion. “I had to do away with *knowledge* to make room for *faith*.”⁸⁹

Kant’s way of doing away with knowledge to make room for faith is the “critical turn” in his account of knowledge spelled out in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. At its core, the turn consists in a reduction of “being” to “being an object for consciousness,” that is, in its reduction to an appearance, a “phenomenon” in the strict sense of a *given for consciousness*.⁹⁰ “Things in themselves” are an exception, but Kant insists that we cannot know them.

Reason inescapably produces the ideas of the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God, but it goes wrong when it puts these ideas to theoretical use.⁹¹ The problem with their theoretical use is not that the questions of freedom, immortality, and God are too difficult for theoretical reason. The problem is that the very asking of the question with the supposition that an answer is possible is an abuse of reason that necessarily ends in illusion.

Kant drives this point home most forcefully in his famous antinomies, each of which contains two proofs.⁹² The first antinomy proves both that the world has a beginning in time and that it has no beginning in time. The second proves both that every composite substance in the world consists of simple substances and that no composite con-

89. Ibid., B XXX .

90. See the discussion of phenomena and noumena in *ibid.*, B 294–315.

91. See *ibid.*, B 394–95.

92. See *ibid.*, B 454–89.

sists of simple substances. The third proves both that free will is one of the causes in this world and that there is no freedom, but all events in this world are determined. The fourth proves both that there must be a necessary Being that is the first cause of all events and that no necessary Being exists. Kant understands these four double-proofs as proofs in the strictest possible sense. He does not argue that one or the other side must be incorrect since they contradict each other. No, both sides are strictly demonstrated. Kant concludes that theoretical reason necessarily runs into illusion and self-contradictions when it attempts to expand knowledge beyond appearances based on received sense-data. Speculative or theoretical reason must not even *ask* the questions of the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and the existence of God.⁹³

In this light, it becomes clearer what Kant means by saying, “I had to do away with *knowledge* to make room for *faith*.”⁹⁴ Kant does away with knowledge by excluding theoretical reason from any competence in the question of freedom, immortality, and God. Practical reason with its practical faith has room to settle in the protected vacuum. A mechanistic and deterministic natural science has complete sway in the world of external nature, but as a theoretical science, it is completely limited to the realm of appearances based on received sense-data. Practical reason can unfold in the sphere of pure thought, the sphere of the *person* as such.

It is difficult to conceive Kant’s view in all its radicalism. That the will is free, that the soul is destined for a future life, and that a God exists and will reward those who do good—these three statements cannot be considered true or false on a theoretical level, that is, in the sense of corresponding (or of not corresponding) to what is actually the case. It is only “as if” God existed. “To believe in him [God] morally and practically means...acting in a manner *as if* such a rule of the world *were* real.”⁹⁵ Likewise he maintains that the proof of the three practical postulates “is not a proof of the truth of these statements seen as theoretical statements, and thus not a proof of the

93. See *ibid.*, B 490–504.

94. *Ibid.*, B XXX

95. Immanuel Kant, *Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie* [*On a Recently Assumed Noble Tone in Philosophy*], *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, 396; emphasis added.

objective existence of the objects corresponding to them...but one that has only subjective and practical validity, one whose instruction is sufficient to produce the effect of our acting *as if* we knew that these objects *were* real."⁹⁶ Kant's faith only comes into play when morally good persons regulate their own conduct. Freedom, immortality, and God are matters of moral decency, not of being and of truth.

I shall inevitably have faith in the existence of God and in a future life. And I am sure that nothing can shake this faith; for that would overturn my moral principles themselves, which I cannot renounce without being detestable in my own eyes.... The conviction is not a logical but a *moral* certainty; and because it rests on subjective bases (of the moral attitude), I must not even say, *It is* morally certain that there is a God, etc., but I must say, *I am* morally certain, etc. In other words, the faith in a God and in another world is so interwoven with my moral attitude that, as little as I am in danger of losing my moral attitude, so little am I worried that my faith could ever be torn from me.⁹⁷

Kant's unshakable faith in God can preserve its certainty without fear, because it is perfectly insulated against any assault from theoretical reason. Kant's God is *a God without being*, a God who is an object of human consciousness alone, and of human consciousness only in its practical form. Schmitz's characterization of the form of personal subjectivity to which Wojtyła responds is fully and radically justified at this key point of Kant's system. "The modern shift gave to the human subject an absolute status precisely in its character *qua* consciousness; for human consciousness not only sets its own terms but the terms for reality itself."⁹⁸ It sets the terms for God.

Philosophy, Kant claims, aspires to being a doctrine of wisdom, but, contrary to Aristotle, who argues that wisdom is primarily theoretical,⁹⁹ Kant proposes an absolute priority of practical over theoret-

96. Immanuel Kant, *Welches sind die wirklichen Fortschritte, die die Metaphysik seit Leibnizens und Wolff's Zeiten in Deutschland gemacht hat?* [*What Are the Real Advances Made by Metaphysics in Germany since the Time of Leibniz and Wolff?*], *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 20, 298; emphasis added.

97. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 856–87.

98. Schmitz, *Center of the Drama*, 136.

99. "It is right also that philosophy [that is, love of wisdom] should be called knowledge of the truth. For the end of theoretical knowledge is truth, while that of practical knowledge is action, for even if they consider how things are, practical men do not study what is eternal but what stands in some relation at some time." Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 2.1 993b20; see also 1.2 982b11–28.

ical wisdom. It is in practical wisdom that the highest aspirations of the human mind are fulfilled.¹⁰⁰ The final purpose of the three problems of pure reason lies in the question of practical reason, “*What is to be done, if the will is free, if there is a God, and if there is a future world?*”¹⁰¹

Kant’s starting point in his moral philosophy consists in the thesis, “Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will.”¹⁰² What is a good will? A good will is a will that follows duty rather than the inclination toward pleasure or happiness. In fact, “inclination” and “happiness” are the main competitors of a good will. A morally good will is clearest and most certain when there is a clash between duty and inclination, when devotion to duty overcomes a contrary inclination to pleasure.¹⁰³ Inclination does not belong to the order of reason, but to that of sense-data. As such, however, sense-data are without order. They are radically individual and accidental. Kant’s agreement with Hume’s view of experience plays a key role in his argument.

A will is good when it springs from respect or reverence for duty. “I understand at least this much about it [that is, about reverence]: that it is an act of valuing the value that by far exceeds everything recommended by inclination; and that the necessity of my acts out of *pure* reverence for the practical law is what constitutes duty. Every other motive must give way to duty, because it is the condition of a will that is good *in itself*, the value of which surpasses everything.”¹⁰⁴

When the moral law confronts us in particular situations as the voice of duty, it has the form of a categorical imperative (from Greek *katēgoreō*, “speak directly, accuse”), “Do this!” rather than the form of a merely conditional imperative, “*If you wish to be happy, do this!*”¹⁰⁵ The moral law does not suggest or propose a good; it demands obedience.

100. See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* [*Critique of Practical Reason*], *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, 108.

101. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 828.

102. Immanuel Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* [*Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*], *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 4, 393.

103. See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 87.

104. Kant, *Groundwork of Morals*, 403.

105. See *ibid.*, 414.

How does the moral law arise? Why does it bind us? Kant sees the answer to these questions in the character of the human will. The human will, he holds,¹⁰⁶ has two essential features. It is, first, a power of *self-caused movement* without any external ground or cause, and it is, second, a *rational* power that works according to *universal* concepts. Both of these aspects are important for understanding what is required for a good will. First, since the will is an ultimately *self-moving* power, its goodness must lie in the absoluteness with which it moves *itself* apart from anything other than itself, and in particular, apart from any good and any end encountered in experience that might move it from the outside. Second, since the will is a *rational* power, its goodness must lie in the *universality* of the imperatives by which it directs itself. These two aspects are connected. It is by legislating to itself and all rational beings in the most universal form that the will achieves self-caused movement in the fullest sense: it itself posits for itself and all rational selves a universal law according to which it must act.

Kant accordingly arrives at what he calls “the categorical imperative” par excellence, which must inform any act if it is to be a morally good act: “Act only according to the maxim by which you can will at the same time that it becomes a universal law.”¹⁰⁷ He also states it thus: “Act in such a way that at any time the maxim of your will can at the same time be valid as a principle of a universal legislation.”¹⁰⁸

This imperative fulfills the two requirements for the first principle of willing. It is an imperative of *self-determination* (“act!”) according to the most *universal* form of any imperative, namely, universal law. It has no “material” content, that is, no motivation by any good such as the good expressed in the maxim, “Do good and avoid evil!” It prescribes only the *form* of willing. Good and evil, the *matter* of willing, belong to the unintelligible flux of Hume’s world of sensation as opposed to reason. Only moral goodness belongs to the order of reason.

When it acts in accord with the categorical imperative, the human will does not subject itself to a law outside itself, but it legislates for

106. See Immanuel Kant, *Die Metaphysik der Sitten* [*The Metaphysics of Morals*], *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6, 213.

107. Kant, *Groundwork of Morals*, 421.

108. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 30.

itself. "The will is not simply subject to the law, but subject in such a way that it must also be considered *as self-legislative* and for this reason, as the very first, subject to the law whose author it can consider itself to be."¹⁰⁹

Kant's understanding of autonomy and heteronomy is rooted in this self-legislating character of the will. Autonomy can be defined *negatively* as the complete independence of the will from any motive of good or evil, that is, from any *matter* of desire. It can be defined *positively* as the absolute self-determination of the will according to the *form* of universal law. Heteronomy, by contrast, is the condition of the will when it is motivated by some good or evil encountered in experience.¹¹⁰

It is important to be clear on these definitions. They are so radical that one is tempted to dilute them by common sense, contrary to Kant's intentions. In classical Greek, a city is called heteronomous when it lives under the law (*nomos*) of *another* (*heteros*) city; it is autonomous when it is independent and can live under a law (*nomos*) that it makes for *itself* (*autos*). For Kant, the distinction between autonomy and heteronomy does not hinge on a distinction of persons or political bodies. It hinges, instead, on something more fundamental, on the two spheres found within each human person: the ultimately unintelligible sphere of sensory and emotional experience, which confronts us with various goods and evils, and the sphere of *pure reason* prior to all experience, prior to all good and evil. I am autonomous when I will what I will without being motivated by any good or evil, that is, when I move myself according to the categorical imperative. I fall into heteronomy when I will something *because* it is good. In heteronomy, I degrade my will and make it a servant of my irrational desires. I reach autonomy and freedom only when my will is completely independent from the whole sphere of appearances based on received sense-data, "for, independence of the determining causes of the world of sense (an independence which reason must always claim for itself) is freedom."¹¹¹

109. Kant, *Groundwork of Morals*, 431.

110. See Theorem IV in Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 33–34.

111. Kant, *Groundwork of Morals*, 452.

Kant's understanding of the dignity of human beings derives from his understanding of autonomy and freedom. He defends "the idea of the dignity of a rational being, which obeys no law except the law which it simultaneously gives to itself."¹¹² The goodness and value of a will that obeys the law does not derive from its obedience to a law that is wise and good, but from the power of the will as a true and universal legislator. To be an absolute causative beginning in the form of universal self-legislation—this is the heart of human dignity.

Inasmuch as persons have the dignity of autonomy, they are ends in themselves: "The only condition under which something can be an end in itself is when it has a value that is not merely relative, that is, a price, but an inner value, that is dignity."¹¹³ Every good in the sphere of appearances based on received sense-data has a merely relative value, a price, because good and evil in the world of sense-data depend on what happens to be the inclination of the subject. There is no "true" good and evil. The one truly precious thing to which everything else must be ordered and which alone has the character of an end, is the autonomy of the person.

Concerning man (and thus every rational being in the world) as a moral being one cannot ask further, For what end (*quem in finem*) does he exist? His existence has the highest purpose in itself. He can, as far as possible, subject the whole of nature to this purpose. At the least, he must not submit himself to any influence of nature contrary to this purpose.—Now if the beings of the world as beings that are contingent in their existence are in need of a highest cause that acts according to purpose, then man is the final purpose of creation. For, without man the chain of purposes subordinate to each other would not be explained in its entirety. It is only in man, and in man only as the subject of morality, that an unconditioned legislation concerning purposes can be found, which thus enables him alone to be a final purpose to which the whole of nature is teleologically subordinated.¹¹⁴

The cosmic grandeur of Kant's personalism in this text should not obscure a simple arithmetic fact. *Each and every person* is the final end

112. *Ibid.*, 434.

113. *Ibid.*, 435.

114. Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* [*Critique of Judgment*], *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 5, 435–36.

of the whole of nature. There are as many final ends as there are persons.

Since each person is the final end of the universe, it is contrary to the dignity of persons if one uses them as mere means.

While man is unholy enough, the *humanity* in his person must be holy to him. In all of creation, everything one might want and over which one has power can be used *as a mere means*. Only man himself and with him every rational creature is *end in itself*. For, in virtue of the autonomy of his freedom, he is the subject of the moral law, which is holy.¹¹⁵

The practical imperative is thus the following. *Act in such a way that at all times you treat human nature in your own person as well as in the person of every other human being simultaneously as a purpose, never as a mere means.*¹¹⁶

The rule that we must not use human beings as mere means is closely related to the categorical imperative. In fact, it is simply another way of formulating the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative commands that I act as the universal lawgiver in absolutely self-impelled fashion. In acting according to this imperative, I grasp my own dignity as a person, that is, my dignity as the final end of the entire cosmos. I can only be consistent with myself in affirming my own dignity and autonomy if I grant the same dignity to other persons.

The contours of Kant's understanding of autonomy become clearer when one turns to his political philosophy. He insists emphatically that the purpose of government is not the happiness of its citizens, but only the protection of their rights.

If a government is built on the principle of benevolence similar to that of a *father* towards his children, that is, a *paternal government* (*imperium paternale*), in which subjects are treated like children who have not yet come of age and who cannot distinguish what is truly beneficial from what is harmful for them, [a government] furthermore, in which subjects are forced to be passive, in order to await the judgment of the head of state, how they *should* be happy, and his sheer benevolence, whether he actually wills them to be so: this is the greatest *despotism* imaginable (that is, a constitution that annuls the entire freedom of

115. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 87, cf. 131. See also Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 434.

116. Kant, *Groundwork of Morals*, 429.

subjects and leaves them without any rights.) Not a *paternal*, but a *patriotic* government (*imperium non paternale, sed patrioticum*) is the only government conceivable for human beings who are capable of rights.¹¹⁷

The superlative in this text is astounding: *the greatest* despotism *imaginable*. What is the greatest despotism imaginable? A slave state in which the head of state *does not intend* the good of citizens, but rules them *for his own* ends? No, a state under the benevolence of a father who *does* intend the good of the citizens—this is superlative despotism.

This astounding superlative can be understood in light of Kant's concept of autonomy. If the state were ordered to the happiness of its citizens, it would cast its citizens in a role of dependence, that is, of sonship, under a benevolent father. Dependence, however, is incompatible with human dignity as a dignity that resides in autonomy. Filial submission to a benevolent father destroys autonomy even more radically than slavish submission to a violent master, because it implies an interior and spiritual submission, not only an external conformity in actions. A slave's heart can be his own; a true son's heart belongs to his father. The direct clash between Kant's teaching on autonomy and the Lord's Prayer is remarkable. If the "Our Father" is indeed the paradigmatic prayer of Christians, then the destruction of human dignity, that is, the heteronomy of sonship, lies at the very heart of Christianity.

On this basis, one can grasp Kant's understanding of rational religion. A virtuous will, he argues, must be oriented not only toward duty, but also toward happiness. Moral virtue, that is, complete and utter autonomy of the will, is the "supreme" value to which everything else, including happiness, must be subordinated, but it is not by itself the "complete" human good, unless happiness is added. By being virtuous one becomes worthy of happiness.¹¹⁸

The pursuit of the complete good (virtue and happiness together) is (1) a free self-determination of the autonomous will that gives rise

117. Immanuel Kant, *Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nichts für die Praxis* [On the Common Saying: This May Be Right in Theory, but It Is No Good in Practice], *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, 290–91.

118. See Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 11.

to the postulates of (2) immortality and (3) the existence of God. The postulate of *immortality* derives from the first part of the complete good, namely, virtue. Since we cannot realize complete virtue in a finite life, we can only express our absolute commitment to virtue through faith in an eternal life of continuous moral progress.¹¹⁹ The postulate of *the existence of God* derives from the second part of the complete good, namely, happiness. If we dutifully pursue the complete good, we necessarily postulate a cause of nature that distributes happiness to those who have made themselves worthy of it by their virtue.¹²⁰

Kant strictly circumscribes the role of God in his rational religion: God gives happiness in proportion to deserving virtue. He is not free to issue any positive commands or enter into any relations, such as a covenant; nor is he free to offer his grace; nor is he the Supreme Good that moves human love as the final end. For, as a mere product of human practical reason, the idea of God does not have any theoretical bearing on the question whether there actually is a God.¹²¹ In the same way, one cannot hold that there will actually be a real eternity of life in a real heaven in which a real God will give a real happiness. *The kingdom of God is wholly and exclusively moral and practical.*

Kant uses trinitarian language to express the central place of the human person in the religion he proposes.

That which alone can make a world the object of divine decree and the end of creation is *Humanity* (rational being in general in the world) *in its full moral perfection*, from which happiness [that is, humanity's happiness] follows in the will of the Highest Being directly as from its supreme condition.—This man, who is alone pleasing to God ["This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3:17)], "is in him from all eternity" ["The Word was with God" (Jn 1:1)]; the idea of man proceeds from God's being; man is not, therefore, a created thing but God's only-begotten Son [Jn 1:18; 3:16–18], "the Word (the Fiat!) through which all other things are, and without whom nothing that is made would exist" [Jn 1:1–3] (since for him, that is, for a rational being in the world, as it can be thought according to its moral determination, everything was made ["All things were

119. See *ibid.*, 122–23.

120. See *ibid.*, 124–32.

121. See *ibid.*, 132–41.

created through him and for him” (Col 1:16)].—“He is the reflection of his glory” [Heb 1:3].—“In him God loved the world” [Jn 3:16], and only in him and through the adoption of his dispositions can we hope “to become children of God” [Jn 1:12]; etc.¹²²

Kant’s remarkable dexterity in quoting Scripture should not obscure the central point of his rational faith: the human person is not a creature, but the absolute locus of all true meaning *a se, from itself*. The Son, that is, man, is equal to the Father, but not born from the Father.

It is with good justification that Wojtyła speaks of “Kantian Personalism.”¹²³ Kant focuses all light in the person’s moral dignity, that is, autonomy. He thus undercuts the relational character of trinitarian language (Father-Son, glory-reflection, etc.) in favor of an autonomous self, more precisely, in favor of each autonomous self, a series of juxtaposed and unrelated selves.

We can return with a fuller understanding to Schmitz’s account of the dominant type of modern subjectivity to which Wojtyła’s personalism responds. “This, then, is the genesis of the modern sense of subject as subjectivity. We might say that subjectivity is the self-defense by which consciousness fends off a world either hostile to its inhabitation or at least without companionate room for it, even while consciousness subverts the integrity of that world by its imperious demands. The modern shift gave to the human subject an absolute status precisely in its character *qua* consciousness; for human consciousness not only sets its own terms but the terms for reality itself.”¹²⁴

c. Kant and John Paul II on Sex and Marriage

Kant’s anti-trinitarian personalism comes into clear focus in his account of sex and marriage. Wojtyła seems to have learned much from Kant in this area. Two points of contact are particularly striking.

The *first* principle of Kant’s sexual ethics is what Wojtyła calls “the personalistic norm” according to which one must not “enjoy” a

122. Immanuel Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* [*Religion within the Bounds of Reason Alone*], *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 6, 60–61.

123. Wojtyła, *Acting Person*, 22, no. 8 on 302.

124. Schmitz, *Center of the Drama*, 135–36.

person as a mere means for pleasure.¹²⁵ Mere enjoyment reduces a person to a thing or object, and this is contrary to the dignity of the person. The *second* principle of Kant's sexual ethics is that sexual union involves giving oneself to another person. These two principles are also the pillars of Wojtyła's sexual ethics.¹²⁶ They correspond to the two principles of the life of persons affirmed in *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3.

Despite these points of close contact—or rather, precisely *in* these points of contact—Kant's view of sex and marriage could hardly be more opposed to Wojtyła's, not even if Kant were an advocate of promiscuous recreational sex, which he is definitely not. For Kant, sexual intercourse is a gift of self contrary to the dignity of the person. In all sexual relations, whether in marriage or outside it, both persons turn themselves into things by giving their sexual organs, and thus their own persons, to each other for the sake of being possessed and “enjoyed,” that is, used for pleasure. This is contrary to the dignity and autonomy of the person, contrary to the right every person has to himself or herself.

The only remedy for this loss of autonomy in sex, according to Kant, is marriage. By marriage, I permanently acquire the user of my sexual organs as a thing. I thereby offset the loss of my self to her when she “enjoys” me in sexual intercourse. By a permanent contract, I own the one who episodically owns me. In this way, I regain myself and my autonomy. It seems to be like the case of a man who is afraid of losing a large sum of money in a casino, and so he buys the casino.

Sexual intercourse (commercium sexuelle) is the mutual use which one human being makes of the sexual organs and faculty of another (*usus membrorum et facultatum sexualium alterius*). It is either a *natural* use, by which a being of the same nature can be conceived, or an *unnatural* use either with a person of the same sex or with an animal that does not belong to the human species. These transgressions of the law, called unnatural vices (*crimina carnis contra naturam*) and unmentionable vices, must be rejected entirely, without any qualifications or exceptions, because they do injury to human nature in our own person.

Now, the natural union of the sexes occurs either only according to animal *nature* (*vaga libido, venus volgi vava, fornicatio*) or according to *law*.—The latter is *marriage (matrimonium)*, that is, the union of two

125. See Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 40–44.

126. See *ibid.*, 28–44, 95–100.

persons for the lifelong mutual possession of their sexual characteristics.—The purpose of begetting and educating children may be a reason for which nature implanted a mutual inclination toward each other in the sexes, but for the legality of this bond it is not required that the one who marries *must* intend this goal for himself, for otherwise marriage would dissolve of itself when the begetting of children ends.

For, although it is based on pleasure for the mutual use of their sexual characteristics, the marriage contract is not accidental, but it is necessary in accord with legal principles of pure reason. That is, when man and woman want to enjoy (*genießen*) each other in their sexual characteristics, they *must* necessarily marry. This necessity follows from legal principles of pure reason.

For, the natural use that one sex makes of the sexual organs of the other is an *enjoyment* (*Genuß*) for which one partner gives himself (*sich hingiebt*) to the other. In this act, a human being makes himself into a thing, which is contrary to the right of human nature to one's own person. This is possible only under one single condition: when a person is acquired by another *in a manner equal to a thing*, correspondingly the former acquires the latter, for in this way the person gains itself back again and reconstitutes its personhood. Now, the acquisition of one bodily member of a human being is at the same time an acquisition of the whole person, because the person is an absolute unity. For this reason, the gift (*Hingebung*) and the acceptance of one sex for enjoyment by the other is not merely permissible *only* on the single condition of marriage, but it is *only* possible on this same condition. That this *personal right* is nevertheless at the same time also a *right in the manner of a right to a thing*, is clear, for when one part of the couple has run away or has given itself into the possession of another, the other spouse has the right at any time and without any condition to take it back into his or her power like a thing.

For the same reason, the relation of the married persons is a relation of *equality* of possession, equality both in their possession of each other (hence only in *monogamy*, for in polygamy the person who gives herself away gains back only part of the man whose possession she has become in her entirety and therefore reduces herself to a mere thing) and of external goods.¹²⁷

Spousal love seems to be absent in Kant's account. John Paul II sees the sexual act as a "natural word" (*naturale verbum*)¹²⁸ connected

127. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 277–78.

128. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 32, Latin text. The official English text has "innate language."

with “the spousal meaning of the body.”¹²⁹ By its very nature as created by God, independently from any choice or determination made by human beings, the human body has the power to express love, to speak love in its own “natural word.” In accord with this *nature*, sexual intercourse is not depersonalizing, but a deep fulfillment of the person through the gift of self. Wojtyła finds sharply anti-Kantian formulations in describing this gift of self: “The person no longer wishes to be its own exclusive property, but instead to become the property of that other. This means the renunciation of its autonomy and its inalienability. Love proceeds by way of this renunciation, guided by the profound conviction that it does not diminish and impoverish, but quite the contrary, enlarges and enriches the existence of the person.”¹³⁰ One can see again the importance of the principle expressed some five years later in *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3: “Man cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self.” Carmelite and Kantian personalism are most directly opposed to each other at this point.

One can also see why the issue of person and nature turns out to be so important in understanding human sexuality. The natural character of sexual language is one of its most important features, according to John Paul II. What we speak through the body in sexual union, whether we want it or not, is the gift of self in love. We cannot take away the spousal meaning of the body, though we can speak that meaning in a manner contrary to itself, that is, we can speak it in the form of a sexual lie.¹³¹

According to John Paul II, there *is indeed* a way of treating other persons in sexual intercourse that corresponds to Kant’s way of understanding it: a “persistent mentality which considers the human being not as a person but as a thing, as an object of trade, at the service of selfish interest and mere pleasure: the first victims of this mentality are women.”¹³²

When Wojtyła describes this depersonalizing sexual use of one person by another, he chooses the term that is the key term of Kant’s understanding of sex in general: to enjoy (*genießen*). In a course of

129. See Index at BODY 2.

130. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 125–26.

131. See John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 11.

132. *Ibid.*, 24.

action directed to mere enjoyment, the natural language of sex is distorted.

Man, precisely because he has the power to reason, can, in his actions, not only clearly distinguish pleasure from its opposite, but can also isolate it, so to speak, and treat it as a distinct aim of his activity. His actions are then shaped only with a view to the pleasure he wishes to obtain, or the pain he wishes to avoid. If actions involving a person of the opposite sex are shaped exclusively or primarily with this in view, then that person will become only the means to an end—and “use” in its second meaning (=to enjoy) represents, as we see, a particular variant of “use” in its first meaning.¹³³

The difference between Kant and John Paul II is particularly clear in their arguments against polygamy. According to Kant, polygamy is immoral because my second wife cannot retrieve the whole of her person, which she loses to me when I take depersonalizing sexual possession of her. The reason why she cannot retrieve the whole of her person is that I do not belong to her alone through a marriage contract, but also to my first wife. I divide myself by being permanently possessed by both my wives.

John Paul II’s argument against polygamy is also a personalist argument. It is very close to Kant’s, but at the same time quite the opposite. Polygamy is wrong because it is contrary to the logic of the communion that arises in the gift of love. “Such a communion is radically contradicted by polygamy: this, in fact, directly negates the plan of God which was revealed from the beginning, because it is contrary to the equal personal dignity of men and women who in matrimony give themselves with a love that is total and therefore unique and exclusive. As the Second Vatican Council writes: ‘Firmly established by the Lord, the unity of marriage will radiate from the equal personal dignity of husband and wife, a dignity acknowledged by mutual and total love.’”¹³⁴

To sum up, one fundamental reason for the divergence between Kant and John Paul II is the absence of truly personal conjugal love in Kant. Kant’s personalism is at this point *not sufficiently personalistic*.

133. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 33.

134. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 19, citing *Gaudium et Spes*, 49.

Human sexuality, as he sees it, is not formed and penetrated by personal love, but is cut loose as a natural process foreign to the person.

Kant's sexual ethics may seem to be in many ways the opposite of the sexual revolution. Kant is no friend of sex. Nevertheless, he has a point of deep agreement with the sexual revolution: in both, sex is cut loose from the person. The difference is that the sexual revolution embraces this detached pleasure while Kant despises it. The dualism between person and nature, however, is similar and has the same roots.

This point leads to a second reason for the divergence between Kant and John Paul II, an equally fundamental reason. Kant's view of sex is an expression of his deeply disturbed relation to subrational nature. Subrational nature is a meaningless mechanism. The person is not at home in that nature, but stands outside it, carrying a rational order within itself a priori that it must impose on nature from the outside. The external natural world is ruled entirely by mechanistic laws grasped mathematically. Nature in its second aspect, namely, experience and inclinations, is subjective and irrational. Person and subrational nature are thus pitted against each other in a strict dualism. As mentioned above (see p. 43), Hans Jonas shows the reason why this dualism is even more desperate than the Gnostic dualism between spirit and matter. "Gnostic man is thrown into an antagonistic, anti-divine, and therefore anti-human nature, modern man into an indifferent one. Only the latter case represents the absolute vacuum, the really bottomless pit."¹³⁵

Human sexuality is a point at which person and subrational nature intersect with particular intensity. Different ways of understanding and living the relation between person and nature show up particularly clearly in different ways of understanding and living sex. In John Paul II, there is a clear and strong sense of a kindred natural cosmos, gift of the Creator. The human body with the sexual language created by God has a deep kinship with the person. The sentient body is created *for the person* as an expression of personal love. In fact, the body is immediately and directly personal, because the person "is a body" (see Index at BODY 1).

135. Jonas, "Gnosticism, Existentialism and Nihilism," 338–39.

Kant's account of the role of children in marriage is helpful, because it shows his understanding of the relation between person and nature in the procreative meaning of sex: "The purpose of begetting and educating children may be a reason for which nature implanted in the sexes a mutual inclination toward each other, but for the legality of this bond it is not required that the one who marries *must* intend this goal for himself. Otherwise matrimony would end of itself when the begetting of children ends."¹³⁶

Nature may have purposes of her own in linking sexual pleasure with procreation, but these purposes do not touch the order of the person, which derives a priori from reason, not from nature. Just as the person is violated in the sexual act, precisely inasmuch as that act involves a gift of self, so the person stands outside the procreative purpose of nature. One gets the sense that Kant would much rather do without sexual passion altogether. In fact, he explicitly says that he would much rather do without any inclinations at all: "Inclinations are so far from having an absolute value making them desirable in themselves that it must rather be the universal wish of every rational being to be completely free from them."¹³⁷

What stands behind this negative view of inclinations in general and of sexual passion in particular is Kant's dualistic separation of the human person into animal nature, which, as he puts it, is worth less than money, and personhood, which is of a value beyond any commercial price.

In the system of nature, man (*homo phaenomenon*, *animal rationale*) is a being of little importance and has a common value (*pretium vulgare*) together with other animals as products of the soil. Even the fact that he exceeds them by having reason and by being able to set goals for himself, even this gives him only an external value of usefulness (*pretium usus*). It gives one human being more [value] than another, that is, a price as a commodity in the commercial exchange of these animals as things, in which he has a lower value than money, the universal means of exchange. This is why the value of money is called eminent (*pretium eminentis*). But man regarded as a person, that is, as the subject of moral-practical reason, is exalted above all price. For as such (*homo noumenon*) he is to be regarded as a purpose in himself,

136. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 277.

137. Kant, *Groundwork of Morals*, 428.

that is, he possesses dignity (an absolute inner value). By this dignity, he can compel all other rational beings to have respect for him, can measure himself against all other rational beings of the world and evaluate himself as standing on a footing of equality with every other being of this kind.¹³⁸

Leon Kass, in agreement with Schmitz, points out that the image of the world created by natural science in the Baconian and Cartesian project conditions Kant's personalism at this point. "At the bottom of the trouble...is the hegemony of modern natural science, to whose view of nature even the partisans of personhood and subjectivity adhere, given that their attempt to locate human dignity in consciousness and mind presupposes that the subconscious living body, not to speak of nature in general, is utterly without meaning and dignity of its own."¹³⁹

John Paul II is convinced, on the contrary, of the unity of nature and person. One can see this conviction in his account of procreation as the natural end of marriage. In *Familiaris Consortio*, 14, he repeats the traditional Catholic view in a formulation close to *Gaudium et Spes*, 50: "According to the plan of God, marriage is the foundation of the wider community of the family, since the very institution of marriage and conjugal love are ordained to the procreation and education of children, in whom they find their crowning."

Immediately after this traditional paragraph, one finds a truly remarkable paragraph in which John Paul II extends this understanding of nature in a personalist direction.

In its most profound reality, love is essentially a gift; and conjugal love, while leading the spouses to the reciprocal "knowledge" which makes them "one flesh," does not end with the couple, because it makes them capable of the greatest possible gift, the gift by which they become cooperators with God for giving life to a new human person. Thus the couple, while giving themselves to one another, give not just themselves but also the reality of children, who are a living reflection of their love, a permanent sign of conjugal unity and a living and inseparable synthesis of their being a father and a mother.¹⁴⁰

138. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 434–35.

139. Leon Kass, *Toward a More Natural Science: Biology of Human Affairs* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), 277.

140. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 14.

John Paul II does not locate procreation outside the personal love between husband and wife, but most immediately and directly in it. The defense of nature's procreative purpose in marriage is at the same time a personalist defense of interpersonal love. John Paul II unfolds this line of thought in great detail in TOB.

To conclude, Kant's anti-trinitarian personalism, which considers sonship the worst slavery and autonomy the only human dignity, exalts the unrelated self. Sex occurs beneath the level of personhood and threatens personal autonomy. Marriage does the best it can to restore the right one has to oneself. John Paul II's trinitarian personalism exalts the related self that finds itself in the gift of self. Sex does not occur beneath the level of personhood, but is itself an event of personal love, even when it is distorted by being pursued for the sake of mere enjoyment. The natural purpose of sex, children, does not lie outside that love, but qualifies it essentially.

There is much that Wojtyła considers positive in Kant, particularly Kant's critique of utilitarianism and the consistent application of this critique to the understanding of sexuality. It is clear that Wojtyła let himself be guided by Kant's account of sex and marriage. In the end, however, he stands Kant on his head, based on his Carmelite personalism and his richer understanding of nature.

4. Wojtyła and Scheler

a. Scheler's Essentialist Personalism

In a text quoted above (see p. 36), Wojtyła explains that his main philosophical work, *The Acting Person*, grew out of his study of Scheler's major work, *Formalism in Ethics and a Material Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*. He points in particular to Scheler's critique of Kant. "The critique of Kant contained in that work is of crucial significance for the present considerations and was for this author the occasion for reflection and the cause of a partial acceptance of some of Kantian Personalism."¹⁴¹ Scheler's critique of Kant should thus be considered, at least briefly.

141. Wojtyła, *Acting Person*, 22, no. 8 on 302.

The very heart of Kant's system, according to Scheler, lies in the self-initiated activity or spontaneity of the subject, which imposes its own form both in the theoretical and practical sphere.¹⁴² This spontaneity of the subject, Scheler argues, is purely "constructed." Kant has no evidence for it in anything truly apparent or given to him, that is, in any true "phenomena." He does not offer an account of the given, but imposes a construct.

The reasons that moved Kant to impose this construct, Scheler continues, are closely bound up with his uncritical acceptance of British empiricism, particularly Hume and Hobbes. Once the world is pulverized into a chaos of sensations and the human heart into an irrational flux of inclinations, there is need for a synthesizing power that produces the more unified world of experience as we know it.

"In short, *Hume's notion of nature required a Kantian understanding*, and *Hobbes's notion of man required a Kantian practical reason*, insofar as these theories were to be brought back to the facts of natural experience. But *without* this erroneous presupposition of a Humean nature and a Hobbesian man there is *no* need for such a hypothesis and *therefore* no need for an interpretation of the a priori as a 'law of functions' of such organizing activities."¹⁴³

The roots of these views among the British empiricists, according to Scheler, lie in "an attitude of Puritan Protestantism,"¹⁴⁴ an attitude of distrust in principle for all that is "natural," all that has not passed through systematic-rational self-control, an attitude of distrust in principle for all relations between persons that have not been secured

142. In this context, "spontaneous" does not mean "impulsive, uncalculated, unplanned." The Latin "*spons*" can mean "free will" and the adjective "*spontaneus*" can mean "of one's own will." "Spontaneous" in this sense is the opposite of "receptive." It means that the subject is the *source or origin* of an action. See Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, 5th ed. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 65–68. German edition: *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik: Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus*, Gesammelte Werke, vol. 2 (7th ed.; Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 2000), 84–86. The German edition will be cited immediately after the English, identified by "German."

143. *Ibid.*, 66, German 85.

144. *Ibid.*, 67, no. 23, German 86, no. 1. For Kant, of course, Lutheranism is more immediately formative than Puritanism. Puritanism, in turn, depends in many of its doctrines on Luther.

in contractual form. These historical roots, Scheler argues, grow into a fundamental “attitude” that is responsible for the overall form of Kant’s system.

This “attitude” I can only describe as a basic “hostility” toward or distrust of the given *as* such, a fear of the given as “chaos,” an anxiety—an attitude that can be expressed as “that world there outside me, that nature there within me.” “Nature” is what is to be formed, to be organized, to be “controlled”; it is the “hostile,” the “chaos,” etc. Hence this attitude is the opposite of *love* of the world, of trust in and loving *devotion* to the world. Strictly speaking, this attitude belongs only to modern times, which are permeated by *hatred for the world*, hostility toward the world, and a distrust of it, and by the *consequence* of this hatred: namely, the limitless need for activity to “organize” and “control” the world.... And all this has culminated in the mind of a philosophical genius.¹⁴⁵

The opposition between Kant and Scheler goes to the very roots of philosophy. For Scheler the central animating principle of philosophy is the desire to dwell with love and devotion in a receptive, contemplative vision in order to grasp what is truly evident. Against the “constructions” of Kantian Idealism, he insists that philosophy must have a supple and obedient regard for what is given in experience. Philosophy must be an account (*logos*) of what is truly evident (*phainomenon*). In short, it must be phenomenology. In agreement with Scheler, John Paul II emphasizes love as the animating principle of phenomenology. “Phenomenology is primarily a style of thought, a relationship of the mind with reality, whose essential and constitutive features it aims to grasp, avoiding prejudice and schematisms. I mean that it is, as it were, an attitude of intellectual charity to the human being and the world, and for the believer, to God, the beginning and end of all things.”¹⁴⁶ At the core of Scheler’s critique of Kant, Wojtyła thus found a vigorous attack on the anthropological dualism of Kant and an attitude of love and devotion to the world, to what is truly given. This critique of Kant is Scheler’s starting point for a more particular critique of Kant’s ethical formalism and for his own argu-

145. *Ibid.*, 67, German 86; translation modified.

146. John Paul II, address to a delegation of the World Institute of Phenomenology (Mar. 22, 2003).

ment that ethics must be based on what Kant calls the “matter” rather than the “form” of willing. It must be based on objective values.

Yet, Scheler’s relation to Kant is more complex than his critique would suggest. He seems at times to be swept along by the genius of his favorite enemy, both in the form of exaggerated opposition and of uncritical acceptance. In particular, Scheler does not seem to escape from the loss of access to real being in Kant. One can see this loss of real being in Scheler’s account of value and the person.

VALUE, according to Scheler, is manifest or given in a certain kind of feeling.¹⁴⁷ The German word Scheler uses for “feeling” is *Fühlen* rather than *Gefühl* or *Empfindung*. *Fühlen*, understood in the transitive sense of “to feel some object,” refers to an intentional act, that is, an act that “tends” “into” something in the sense of being *about* something (see Index at INTENTIONAL). When I feel the roughness of a surface with my hand, the feeling I experience is *about* the roughness—it is intentionally related to the roughness. A toothache, by contrast, is not “about” some object. The feelings Scheler has in mind in his account of value are emotions, a specific kind of emotions, namely, those that have an “intentional” character in the sense that they are *about* a value.

Feelings—and here one can perhaps see an example of Scheler’s exaggerated opposition to Kant—are the primary acts of the human person, more fundamental than willing and knowing. For Kant, all feelings (with the single exception of the reverence for duty) belong to the empirical and irrational realm of sense-desire, far from the rational core of the person. For Scheler, love as a feeling constitutes the innermost core of the person: the human person can be defined as *ens amans*.¹⁴⁸

He [Scheler] claims there is a primacy of the givenness of contents of values over any other acts of consciousness. Feeling values is basic to the mind’s acts; emotive experiences are not internal chaos (Kant) but are suffused with an order of contents of values very different from the laws of logic pertaining to reasoning and thinking. Scheler’s argument

147. See Scheler, *Formalism*, 35, German 56; 253-64, German 259-70.

148. Manfred Frings, *The Mind of Max Scheler: The First Comprehensive Guide Based on the Complete Works*, 2nd ed. (Marquette: Marquette University Press, 2001), 68.

is like this: just as colors can only be given to us “in” seeing them, so also values are given to us only “in” the feeling of them. Without “seeing” there are no colors. Without “feeling” there are no values.¹⁴⁹

Scheler gives the example of different fruits that have different *kinds* of pleasant tastes to illustrate the interdependence between value and feeling. Each of these pleasant tastes as an object of enjoyment is a value, and each is *qualitatively* distinct from the others. What determines this qualitative difference is not a particular configuration of objective properties of the fruit’s *being* that become apparent in sensation; nor is it simply a particular configuration of *states of feeling* in the one who eats the fruits. The objective value qualities that we feel in our delight are “authentic qualities of a value itself” *as distinct from being*.¹⁵⁰ In fact, we can experience values at times in their specific quality before we experience the being of their bearer, such as when we find a person repulsive without being able to name anything in the person’s being that would account for this perception. In this case, we experience the value first and attach it secondarily to a being.¹⁵¹

Value qualities constitute a special essence-domain of objects with its own inherent intelligibility *distinct from being*. “Values are as a matter of principle given as indifferent with respect to being and non-being.”¹⁵² They do not themselves exist, but are given only as essences and only in acts of feeling. “As to the question: ‘What is a value?’ I submit the following answer: Insofar as in the question the word ‘is’ refers to existence (and not only to being as mere copula), a value ‘is’ not at all.”¹⁵³

Scheler does speak at times of the “being of values,” but this being does not belong to them as values.¹⁵⁴ When we say, “This is good,” existence does not properly belong to the value, but only, in a techni-

149. *Ibid.*, 25. Frings’ pithy summary is based on Scheler, *Formalism*, 9–23, German 32–45.

150. Scheler, *Formalism*, 13, German 35.

151. See *ibid.*, 17, German 40.

152. *Ibid.*, 206, German 214, translation modified.

153. Max Scheler, “Beiträge zur Feststellung der Beziehungen zwischen den logischen und ethischen Prinzipien [Doctoral Thesis],” in *Frühe Schriften: Gesammelte Werke 1* (Bern: Francke, 1971), 98. See Frings, *Scheler*, 23.

154. See Scheler, *Formalism*, 206–8, German 214–15.

cal term of phenomenology, to the “state of affairs” that carries the value, that is, to the fact that this is good. “The statement ‘It is so’ refers not to the value of the being in question, but only to the state of affairs that carries this value.”¹⁵⁵ Value is an essence in consciousness distinct and independent from being.

One can observe a similar eclipse of being in Scheler’s understanding of the PERSON. Scheler denies that a person is a being in its own right, a substance. Instead, the person is a certain co-experienced unity of conscious life, an essence given in consciousness.

The person must *never* be considered a *thing* or a *substance* with faculties and powers, among which the “faculty” or “power” of reason, etc., is one. The person is, rather, the immediately co-experienced *unity* of *experiencing*; the person is not a merely thought thing behind and outside what is immediately experienced.¹⁵⁶

The person is not a “thing” or a “substance” which executes acts in the sense of a substance-causality. For such “things” could in fact be randomly obliterated or exchanged, if there is a multiplicity (one thinks of Kant’s picture of electric spheres, which are dynamically unified), with no change at all in immediate experience. In addition, everyone would carry the same “substance” with him, which—since *every* kind of manifold, e.g., time, space, number, plurality, would be missing—could not yield differences between one and the other.¹⁵⁷

The second text shows one of the reasons why Scheler rejects the Aristotelian-Scholastic term “substance” as part of the definition of “person.” He believes that this notion implies a naively spatial picture of an object *under* or *behind* attributes, as spheres of metal are located behind a surrounding magnetic field or a wall lies under a coat of paint.¹⁵⁸ His own position seems to be that the person’s being is reducible to an experienced essence in consciousness.

155. *Ibid.*, 208, German 215.

156. *Ibid.*, 371, German 371.

157. *Ibid.*, 384, German 384. Four years earlier, in his *Nature of Sympathy* (1912), Scheler seems to say the opposite. He speaks of “person-substances (*Personsubstanzen*) or act-substances (*Akt-substanzen*).” Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 123. Max Scheler, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie: Gesammelte Werke 7* (Bern and München: Francke, 1973), 131. See Jonathan J. Sanford, “Scheler versus Scheler: The Case for a Better Ontology of the Person,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 79 (2005), 145–61.

158. Scheler, *Formalism*, 384–85, German 384–85.

b. Wojtyła's Critique of Scheler

At the beginning of his book on Scheler, Wojtyła explains why Scheler attracted the attention of Catholic thinkers. There were two main reasons. First, Catholic ethics had always focused on the *objects* of human acts, that is, the good or value. Scheler criticizes Kant for his failure to do justice to these objects of acts, and proposes an ethics based on such objects. This is what Scheler means when he calls his own ethics a “material ethics of values” in contrast to Kant’s “formalism” in which moral goodness is a matter of the universal form of the categorical imperative (see above p. 49).

The second point of contact between Catholic ethics and Scheler is more specific. “There were also more particular theses that caused immediate associations with Christian ethics, especially with the ethical teaching of the Gospels. In his system Scheler underlines that love for the person and imitating an exemplary person have great importance and play a central role in ethical life as a whole.”¹⁵⁹ Scheler and the Gospel’s teaching on following and imitating Christ, Wojtyła says, meet in their “personalism.”¹⁶⁰ “The personalist principle has a similar structure in Scheler and the Gospel: the principle of imitation is based on the expressly established ideal of the perfection of the person and it is supposed to help in reaching this ideal.”¹⁶¹ What Wojtyła calls “personalism” in these texts is a particular emphasis on the person in ethical life: the moral perfection of the person is proposed as a goal, love for the person and the imitation of Jesus are central.

The question Wojtyła attempts to answer in his book on Scheler is expressed in the title, *Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing a Christian Ethics on the Assumptions of Max Scheler’s System of Philosophy*. Wojtyła focuses the argument on the second and more specific reason that attracted him to Scheler, the imitation of Jesus.¹⁶²

159. Karol Wojtyła, [*Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing a Christian Ethics on the Assumptions of Max Scheler’s System of Philosophy*] *Über die Möglichkeit eine christliche Ethik in Anlehnung an Max Scheler zu schaffen*, ed. Juliusz Stroynowski, *Primat des Geistes: Philosophische Schriften* (Stuttgart-Degerloch: Seewald, 1980), 38.

160. *Ibid.*, 68.

161. *Ibid.*, 75–76.

162. See *Ibid.*, 70–74.

The Gospel's ideal of the moral perfection that is to be reached by following Jesus, Wojtyła argues, has three main characteristics.¹⁶³ (1) It is a *real* ideal, because it aims at a real perfection of the person in imitation of a real perfection already found in Jesus. (2) It is a *practical* ideal, because it is realized by acts of which the person is the responsible cause, acts by which the person therefore becomes really good or bad. (3) It is a *religious* ideal, both because the perfection to be imitated is that of the Father and the Son and because imitation establishes the right personal relation with God as the final end. These three points seem to be divided in accord with Aristotle's four causes minus matter: formal cause, efficient cause, and final cause. Wojtyła devotes a chapter to each.

(1) *The formal cause of the imitation of Jesus, moral goodness itself:* Scheler considers moral goodness only as an object of feeling. The disciples feel the individual ideal value-essence of Jesus and appropriate it as their own ethos. In his critique, Wojtyła argues that Jesus is not only a person to be imitated, but a true lawgiver who speaks about moral goodness as an objective and real property of certain acts. This aspect of Jesus' teaching places certain demands on a philosophy that claims to interpret the Gospel. In order to grasp ethical value in its real and objective position, one must pass beyond Scheler's phenomenology to metaphysics. "It is, therefore, due to its phenomenological principles that Scheler's system is unsuitable for the interpretation of Christian Ethics."¹⁶⁴

Despite its objectivist tendencies, Scheler's ethical system is not suitable for interpreting an ethics that has an objective character as Christian Ethics does. There is no doubt that Scheler's insufficient objectivism springs from his phenomenological principles. Because of these principles the ethical value always remains in an intentional and—despite everything—subjective position. In order to grasp ethical value in its real and objective position, one would have to proceed from different epistemological premises, namely, meta-phenomenological and even meta-physical premises.¹⁶⁵

(2) *The efficient cause of the imitation of Jesus, the person as responsible origin:* Since Scheler considers moral goodness only as he considers all

163. See *Ibid.*, 74–75.

164. *Ibid.*, 97.

165. *Ibid.*, 109.

value, namely, as an object of feeling, he does not focus on the person as the efficient cause responsible for moral goodness. In fact, just as value belongs to an order of essences quite independent from being, so also the person is not a being with a certain nature, from which acts of a certain nature can proceed as effects from inner principles. The person is “the immediately co-experienced *unity of experiencing*.”¹⁶⁶ “Due to its phenomenological principles, Scheler’s system cannot directly grasp and express that the human person in its acts is the origin of moral good and evil. The whole difficulty is the result of the phenomenological premises of the system and we must assign the blame to these principles.”¹⁶⁷

Scheler rejects all duties and norms because they allegedly contain the negative spirit that dominates Kant’s philosophy: hostility toward nature, distrust, fear of the given as chaos. Yet, Wojtyła responds, norms and duties are an integral part of human action in accord with the first principle of the practical order by which persons move themselves to act: *bonum est faciendum*, the good is *to be done*. Scheler’s understanding of value does not allow him to grasp this principle.

According to the premises of Scheler’s system, value is by its nature indifferent with respect to existence. This means that it is a value regardless of whether it exists or not. ([Footnote:] It is quite different, for example, in the system of St. Thomas Aquinas, where the good is the true object of will, of striving (*appetitus*). When we will the good, when we strive for it, our concern is that it exists. The issue is the being of the good; cf. *Summa*, I.5....) This indifference in relation to existence is explained quite simply, because values are given as the proper objects of emotional perception. *Precisely because they are indifferent with respect to existence they do not give rise to an “ought.”*¹⁶⁸

In the commandment of love, Wojtyła argues, the experience of the good as good and of the commandment as norm work together and display the person as a truly responsible agent.

(3) *The final cause of the imitation of Jesus, blessedness*: Scheler’s phenomenological essentialism has its most disastrous effect in his understanding of the final end, blessedness. Although Scheler says

166. Scheler, *Formalism*, 371, German 371.

167. Wojtyła, *Scheler*, 115.

168. *Ibid.*, 139, with no. 29; emphasis added.

that personal life is “theomorphic,” that is, intelligible only in a divine light, which is ultimately the divine *agape*, he understands this light as a detached essence quite apart from the living God. “In trying to intuit the *essence* of man, it is not the idea of God in the sense of an extant and positively determined reality that is presupposed; rather, it is only the *quality* of the divine, or the *quality* of the holy, that is given in an infinite fullness of being. On the other hand, whatever takes the place of this essence (in the historical time of earthly man and in the changing beliefs of positive religions) cannot be presupposed in any sense.”¹⁶⁹ Wojtyła concludes from this and similar texts, “For the phenomenologist, man is a theomorphic being only and exclusively by virtue of experiencing the idea of God. Scheler is not concerned with the real relation to God as an existing, positive and defined reality. He is concerned with experiencing the idea of God.”¹⁷⁰ It seems clear that human blessedness cannot lie in contemplating such a detached essence. Scheler finds blessedness, rather, in the depths of each person, a depth in which there is a quasi-identity between God and created persons. It is thus ultimately out of themselves that created persons draw their blessedness.

Deepest happiness and complete bliss are dependent in their being on a consciousness of one’s own moral goodness. *Only the good person is blissful*. This does *not* preclude the possibility that this very blissfulness is the *root* and *source* of all willing and acting. But happiness can *never* be a goal or even a “purpose” of willing and acting. *Only the happy person acts in a morally good way*. Happiness is therefore in no way a “reward for virtue,”¹⁷¹ nor is virtue the *means* to reach bliss. Rather, happiness is the root and source of virtue, a fountainhead, although it is only a *consequence* of the inner *goodness* of the person.¹⁷²

In his existence and his acts the “good” person directly takes part in the nature of God, in the sense of *velle in deo* [to will in God] or *amare in deo* [to love in God], and he is blissful in this participation. A “reward” from God could only put a smaller and lower good in place of a higher one, and a superficial feeling in the place of a deeper pleasure.¹⁷³

169. Scheler, *Formalism*, 292, German 296–97.

170. Wojtyła, *Scheler*, 161.

171. “[Happiness is]...the reward and end of virtue.” Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1.9; 1099b.16–17.

172. Scheler, *Formalism*, 359, German 359–60.

173. *Ibid.*, 368, German 368, translation modified.

Scheler's opposition to Kant is clear in these texts. According to Kant, happiness is the main competitor against duty in the moral life. The influence of the desire for happiness must be eliminated as far as possible. Duty must become the only motive. The poet Friedrich Schiller's ironic re-statement of Kant's ethics attacks this very point.

Gladly would I serve my friends, but unfortunately I do it with
inclination,
and so I am much distressed that I am not virtuous.
There is no other way: you must seek to despise them,
and then do with disgust what duty commands.¹⁷⁴

According to Scheler, happiness is the essential pre-condition of the moral life without which a morally good act is impossible. Happiness and moral goodness are inseparable.

Scheler draws the inevitable conclusion from this view. Essential happiness lies already in the human person prior to any divine reward. No reward given by God can constitute happiness. Such a reward would only add a lesser good to this essential happiness. Wojtyła comments:

We see that in the teaching of revelation, all emphasis in the doctrine of eternal blessedness falls on the object of blessedness, namely, the divine nature, which is this object. In Scheler's phenomenological system, of course, this doctrine cannot be grasped and expressed.... No good that comes from outside the person can be a greater good than the good which the person finds in himself when he experiences himself as the source of a morally good act.... The greatest happiness and the greatest suffering—man draws these from within himself, he himself is its source for himself. This point of view seems to separate us completely from the Christian teaching. Given such a point of view, can we establish any point of contact with the revealed truth according to which the object of man's final blessedness is the divine nature?¹⁷⁵

Wojtyła does look for a bridge between Scheler and Christianity. According to Scheler, he points out, there is a core of the person in which all social relations are left behind.¹⁷⁶ Yet, this "intimate person"

174. Friedrich Schiller and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Xenien*, 387–88.

175. Wojtyła, *Scheler*, 183–84.

176. See Scheler, *Formalism*, 561–72, German 548–58.

and, more deeply, this “absolutely intimate person,” is not utterly alone. It still allows for one relationship, the relationship with God. This relationship includes, in turn, a relationship with the community of the Church.

However, solitude does *not* exclude one communal relation, namely, the relation to *God*, who by definition is neither an individual nor a comprehensive person, but one in whom both individual and comprehensive person are solidary. Thus it is in God alone that the intimate person may know himself to be condemned or saved. But he cannot do even this without his becoming indirectly aware of his solidarity (at least “in God”) with the comprehensive person in *general* and, in the first place, with the Church. And without this certitude there would be no God, but merely a deceptive object of the highest nature, that is, an illusory God.¹⁷⁷

Wojtyła remarks on this text that there is “a profound connection between these ideas of Scheler and the teaching of revelation.”¹⁷⁸ The specter of the solitary human person drawing bliss out of himself alone in needless fullness of life seems to be definitively banished. “If in this most profound experience of oneself, which Scheler calls absolutely intimate person, the person does not cease to be in relation to God, then it experiences its happiness in the good and its despair in the evil of its own essence in relation to God. Does such a formulation help us to grasp and express eternal happiness in God and eternal rejection by God? Most certainly, Yes!”¹⁷⁹

Yet, Wojtyła does not stop with this positive conclusion, but probes further. Scheler speaks about this relation to God only on the level of experience lived by the person in his or her subjectivity without any truly transcendent object. The really existing living God is bracketed in the phenomenological contemplation of essences. The person experiences a detached divine value-essence as an object of feeling. In the sources of revelation, he adds, the emphasis lies on the object of happiness. The real infinite goodness of God is the reason why he is the beatific end. When the person shares in the divine being, Scheler’s phenomenological premises reduce this participation to an intentional feeling of the self-value of the person who experi-

177. *Ibid.*, 563, German 550, translation modified.

178. Wojtyła, *Scheler*, 184.

179. *Ibid.*, 185.

ences the value-essence of the holy, not the living God.¹⁸⁰ Wojtyła concludes:

A participation in God understood in this way *has nothing in common* with the real, essentially supernatural participation in God's nature and God's inner life. Only participation in God understood in this latter way constitutes the basis of final blessedness in God according to the teaching of revelation. The withdrawal of this participation is the basis of the definitive unhappiness of the human person as a consequence of its rejection by God. In Scheler's conception, by contrast, what the person feels as the real object of emotional bliss and despair—despite “participation in God”—is “good” or “evil” as self-values of the person that become perceptible at the source of the acts experienced by the person.¹⁸¹

At the end of his book on Scheler, Wojtyła raises once again the question whether one can build Christian ethics on the foundations of Scheler's phenomenology. He concludes that phenomenology can play a secondary and assisting role, but a Christian thinker cannot be a phenomenologist. The theologian, he writes,

should not forego the great advantages which the phenomenological method offers his work. It impresses the stamp of experience on works of ethics and nourishes them with the life-knowledge of concrete man by allowing an investigation of moral life from the side of its appearance. Yet, in all this, the phenomenological method plays only a secondary assisting role.... At the same time, these investigations convince us that the Christian thinker, especially the theologian, who makes use of phenomenological experience in his work, cannot be a Phenomenologist.¹⁸²

What Schmitz identifies as Wojtyła's overarching concern is clearly visible in this critique of Scheler. Despite his profound critique of Kant, Scheler remains caught in the same subjectivist shift. “The modern shift gave to the human subject an absolute status precisely in its character *qua* consciousness; for human consciousness not only sets its own terms but the terms for reality itself.”¹⁸³ By giving such an absolute status to human consciousness, Scheler's philosophy loses the

180. See *ibid.*, 184–85.

181. *Ibid.*, 185–86; emphasis added.

182. *Ibid.*, 196.

183. Schmitz, *Center of the Drama*, 135–36.

personal subject; it loses real being; and it loses the final end of created persons.

The philosophy of consciousness would have us believe that it first discovered the human subject. The philosophy of being is prepared to demonstrate that quite the opposite is true, that in fact an analysis of pure consciousness leads inevitably to an annihilation of the subject.¹⁸⁴

The analysis of the systems of Kant and Scheler shows the conclusion that a consistent teleology and perfectionism has no room in the philosophy of consciousness. Of course, the end is something contained in consciousness, and the end is always some good or value, but as a [mere] content of consciousness, the end loses its perfective character. It possesses such a character only in connection with being, on the premises of a philosophy of the real. Only on this basis can one speak of a consistent teleology.¹⁸⁵

Let us return from these key texts to the title of Wojtyła's habilitation thesis: *Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing a Christian Ethics on the Assumptions of Max Scheler's System of Philosophy*. George Weigel writes in his biography of John Paul II (*Witness to Hope*, p. 128),

That [Wojtyła] looked to Scheler as a possible guide, and that he put himself through the backbreaking work of translation so that he could analyze Scheler in his own language, suggests that Wojtyła had become convinced that the answers [to the question "Why ought I be good?"] were not to be found in the neo-scholasticism of Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange.

Weigel does not supply direct evidence that Wojtyła hoped to find a new foundation of ethics in Scheler. If one assumes that Wojtyła set out to study Scheler in this hope, one must conclude that he was disappointed. A Christian ethics cannot be built on Scheler. The reason

184. Karol Wojtyła, "The Person: Subject and Community," in *Person and Community: Selected Essays* (New York: P. Lang, 1993), 219–20. The paragraph containing this sentence was omitted in the first English publication of this essay in *Review of Metaphysics* 33 (1979/80): 273–308, perhaps because the judgment expressed in it is so categorically negative.

185. Karol Wojtyła, "Das Gute und der Wert [The Good and Value]," in *Lubliner Vorlesungen*, ed. Juliusz Stroynowski (Stuttgart-Degerloch: Seewald, 1981), 244. Wojtyła uses the concept "perfectionism" derived from the Latin comparative *perfectior*, "more perfect"; an account based on a *greater* degree of perfection.

for the failure of Scheler's system is not due to particular errors here or there; it is systemic. As Wojtyła puts it (see above p. 71), "The whole difficulty is the result of the phenomenological premises of the system and we must assign the blame to these principles."

5. An Overview of Wojtyła's Concerns

a. Wojtyła's Seven Major Works

Before his election as Pope in 1978, Wojtyła wrote seven major works.¹⁸⁶ The following list arranges them in the chronological order of their composition or first publication.

1. 1948: *Faith according to St. John of the Cross*. Doctoral thesis in theology.
2. 1953: *Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing a Christian Ethics on the Assumptions of Max Scheler's System of Philosophy*. Habilitation thesis in moral theology.
3. 1954–57: *Lublin Lectures*. Philosophical lectures on the foundations of ethics in dialogue with Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Kant, and Scheler.
4. 1957–59: *Love and Responsibility*. An integrated philosophical and theological account of love between man and woman, including a discussion of marriage and its ends.
5. 1969: *The Acting Person*. A philosophical account of the person.
6. 1972: *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council*.

186. Two further works come close to the category "major works": *Primer of Ethics* (1957), a collection of twenty popular articles on important topics in ethics, and *Man on the Field of Responsibility* (1972) intended as a sequel to *The Acting Person*, but left incomplete at seventy-four manuscript pages. TOB itself, though written before John Paul II's election, must be considered a papal document. In the fifties, Wojtyła wrote a two-volume work entitled *Catholic Social Ethics*, which was printed as a clandestine edition to escape government censure. It has not yet been republished in Polish and there seems to be no public access to it.

7. 1976: *Sign of Contradiction*. Retreat preached to Paul VI and the papal household.

Four of these seven works are theological (1, 2, 6, and 7), two are mainly philosophical (3 and 5), and one (4) is philosophical with important theological aspects.

It is important to see the order in which the issues arise in Wojtyła's first two books, the book on St. John of the Cross and the book on Scheler. Wojtyła's point of departure as a philosopher and theologian is St. John of the Cross's personalism. It is a personalism shaped by the characteristic triangle of theses: love is a gift of self; spousal love between man and woman is the paradigmatic case of the gift of self; the origin and exemplar of the gift of self lies in the Trinity. It is also shaped by St. John of the Cross's keen attention to the lived experience of personal subjectivity. The book on Scheler shows that Wojtyła finds points of contact between this Carmelite personalism and Scheler in both of these characteristics of St. John of the Cross's teaching, the triangle of theses (especially the imitation of Christ, in which the trinitarian paradigm of personhood is realized; and self-giving *agape*) and its reflection in lived experience.

Yet he also finds an understanding of personal subjectivity that radically undermines the Christian understanding. As Wojtyła reads him, Scheler denies three core theses of the personalism implicit in the imitation of Christ. (1) Moral goodness is a real perfection of the person achieved in following Jesus. (2) The person is a really existing subject and the responsible causal origin of moral acts. (3) The goal of the imitation of Jesus is the infinite good, which consists in God's nature. Inasmuch as Scheler denies these three theses, his philosophy is *not personalistic enough*. Christian personalism is more deeply personalistic. Wojtyła's book on Scheler is thus an argument that affirms the deeper personalism of the theological tradition against the essentialist personalism of Scheler. Certainly, Wojtyła learned much from Scheler that is positive and one can trace many influences (they can be identified in part by following the references to Scheler in the indices of Wojtyła's works, in part by pointing out the many similarities), but his overall judgment is negative.

One can situate Wojtyła's main philosophical work, *The Acting Person* (1969), in relation to the three main points of his Scheler book.

The Acting Person focuses primarily on the second of the three points. It attempts to supply precisely what Scheler fails to supply, namely, an account of the person as a really existing subject and as the responsible origin of moral acts. It does so through a partial use of the phenomenological method and in light of many particular insights of Scheler. The main agenda of *The Acting Person*, however, is not dictated by Scheler, but by Wojtyła's roots in the spousal theology of St. John of the Cross, specifically by the key notion, "gift of self." In order to give oneself, one must be in responsible possession of oneself. *The Acting Person* supplies the account of the person that is presupposed by St. John of the Cross's spousal theology of self-gift.

Love and Responsibility (1957–59) attaches itself more immediately to the beginning of Wojtyła's formation, the spousal personalism of St. John of the Cross. St. John of the Cross does not thematically discuss love between man and woman. Yet, his frequent use of bride-bridegroom imagery contains a rich implicit theology of marriage inspired above all by the Song of Songs. In *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła makes this implicit theology of marriage explicit, enriching it by further insight. His pastoral experience with young couples enters into it, as does his study of Kant's account of sex and the Kantian critique of utilitarianism. The influence of Scheler can be seen particularly in the chapter on shame and in the disciplined attention to lived experience throughout.¹⁸⁷ Yet the core of Wojtyła's philosophical concern in *Love and Responsibility* is the understanding of the gift of self as the key element of spousal love. Kant touches on this theme, though in a sense opposite to Wojtyła. It is thus clear that the spousal theology of St. John of the Cross ultimately shapes the agenda of *Love and Responsibility*.

Like *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła's reading of Vatican II in *Sources of Renewal* (1972) and his retreat preached to the papal household (1976) stand in continuity with the book on St. John of the Cross, though the understanding of the person developed in *The Acting Person* plays an important role as well. A study of the theological background of TOB must be, in large measure, a study of *Sources of Renewal*. Let us therefore take a brief look at this book and its relationship with *Faith in St. John of the Cross*.

187. See Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 174–93.

b. Faith, Experience, and Personal Subjectivity

In *Sources of Renewal*, Wojtyła sets himself the task of outlining the implementation of Vatican II in a manner that corresponds to the actual intentions of the Council. The original guiding question of Vatican II, he argues, was “*Ecclesia, quid dicis de te ipsa?* Church, what do you say about yourself?”¹⁸⁸ “The People of God”—this is the Council’s answer, Wojtyła claims.¹⁸⁹ The way both the question and the answer, “People of God,” must be understood, he adds, is pastoral. How can the Church *grow in her awareness and life* as the People of God? Although the question is in the first place a question about the Church as a *social* organism, the growth of the Church’s awareness must take place in the life of the individual *persons* that constitute it. It must take place in their lived experience of personal subjectivity. For this reason, the key question, “Church, what do you say about yourself?” is closely linked to the question, “What does it *mean* to be a believer, a Catholic, and a member of the Church?” in the context of today’s world.¹⁹⁰

Being a member of the Church means having faith, Wojtyła answers. For this reason, “the implementation of the Council consists first and foremost in enriching that faith,” enrichment being understood as the reception and realization of faith in personal subjectivity, in conscious experience.¹⁹¹ The overall goal of *Sources of Renewal* is to outline this enrichment of faith intended by the Council.

The emphasis on consciousness is a hallmark of the “philosophers of consciousness” from Descartes via Kant to Scheler. Wojtyła learned much from these philosophers, no doubt. Yet, St. John of the Cross seems to be the more important part of the picture. In some respects, the philosophers of consciousness resemble St. John of the Cross. As von Balthasar points out, St. John of the Cross’s theology can be understood as a response to Luther, a specifically modern response in which personal subjectivity plays a pronounced role, yet without any

188. Karol Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 420.

189. This thesis is unfolded in the lengthy chapter on “The Consciousness of the Church as the People of God,” see *ibid.*, 112–54.

190. *Ibid.*, 17 and 420.

191. *Ibid.*, 420.

polemical edge against the objective content of faith and its elaboration in monastic and scholastic theology. "What was challenging and scandalous in the Carmelite response to Luther was the manner in which it integrated the entire monastic tradition from the Greeks through the middle ages into the new Christian radicalism and gave to that tradition a hitherto unknown radicality by the modern turn toward the personal, the experiential and the psychological."¹⁹²

Buttiglione makes a similar point when he says that Wojtyła "read in St. John of the Cross a kind of phenomenology of mystical experience."¹⁹³ Since Wojtyła's encounter with St. John of the Cross came before his encounter with phenomenology, the point is better put the other way around. Wojtyła read in phenomenology a Carmelite sensitivity to the lived experience of personal subjectivity. This chronological order holds not only for Wojtyła's biography, but also for the history of modernity. St. John of the Cross was born in 1544, Descartes half a century later, in 1596.

Wojtyła's dissertation strongly underlines the role of conscious experience in St. John of the Cross's account of faith as a means of union with God. "Speculative theology provided the principles, the spiritual authors gave the terminology and a vast area of comparative study, but the writings of St. John of the Cross are the fruit of experience. It was a vital experience of the supernatural reality that is communicated to the soul, a dynamic experience of participation in the intimate life of the Blessed Trinity, and, finally, an experience of the unifying power of that which serves as a 'means of union' with God."¹⁹⁴

The experience of faith is, accordingly, the main thematic focus of Wojtyła's dissertation. What interests him, above all, is how faith, according to St. John of the Cross, becomes experience.

We have already seen that the doctrine we shall study is a testimony of experience. It is expressed in scholastico-mystical language, using words and concepts well known in Scholastic theology, but its primary

192. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics: Vol. III: Lay Styles* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 106; trans. altered.

193. Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 45.

194. Wojtyła, *St. John of the Cross*, 22.

value and significance is as a witness of personal experience. It is there, in fact, that we can discover the living and dynamic reality of the virtue of faith, its activity in the human intellect, its corollaries and the effects on the movement of the soul toward union with God. For that reason, we take the experiential witness of St. John of the Cross as the material for our investigation. It will be our task to discover the concept of faith that can be gleaned from that witness and the theological precisions that are latent in it.¹⁹⁵

Many theologians in modernity have given a prominent place to personal experience in their theology, often combined with an exaltation of feeling and a polemical edge against the objective content of faith. Schleiermacher is a particularly radical example of this tendency. Roman Catholic school catechesis in the post-Vatican II era has at times followed a similar direction. It is thus important to define Wojtyła/John Paul II's specific understanding of experience.

In his philosophical work (especially *The Acting Person* and its intended sequel, *Man on the Field of Responsibility*), Wojtyła focuses on the experience of *the person in action*, on the person in the ordinary and natural experience connected with living a human life both as an individual person and in community. A similar point holds for Wojtyła's theological work. Here, too, Wojtyła focuses on the experience of *the person in action*.

The starting point of Christian experience is faith. Faith is not replaced by experience, but it remains the comprehensive form of Christian experience. This is the first point to be made about Christian experience, as Wojtyła understands it: its origin and measure lies in faith, not the other way around. Faith must be "enriched," that is, it must become more mature and conscious, able to form the whole of experience. "Faith and the enrichment of faith is a supernatural gift of God and is not subject to human planning or causation; but man, and the Church as a human community, can and must cooperate with the grace of faith and contribute to its enrichment. The Council itself acted in this way, and its action, considering the level on which it took place, may be considered a plan of action for the whole Church."¹⁹⁶

195. *Ibid.*, 23.

196. Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 203–4.

The primacy of faith in Christian experience, even in the most exalted forms of experience characteristic of mysticism—this is the main point Wojtyła brings out in his dissertation when he situates St. John of the Cross historically.

Against false interpretations of communion with God, the Mystical Doctor calmly taught that *faith* is the proper means of union—*faith in accord with all its implications: in complete nakedness, austerity, and obedience of the intellect....* And now the issue becomes immediately clear. Against long-standing inclinations, the root of which is perhaps still present in the teaching of Averroes and in Arabian mysticism, inclinations that had recently been revived also by a false interpretation of Flemish authors and the Rhineland mystics, whose works were widely read in the Iberian peninsula, against these [inclinations] *the most interior manifestation of the Spirit in the life of the Church proposed faith, whose saving power and ability to unite the soul with God is glorified in Sacred Scripture.*¹⁹⁷

The primacy in Christian experience belongs to faith “*in complete nakedness, austerity, and obedience of the intellect.*” Wojtyła sees St. John of the Cross as rejecting the opposite approach in which experience becomes the measure of faith.

St. John of the Cross is consistent in his teaching: all these things [visions, locutions, and spiritual feelings] must be rejected in favor of the virtue of faith, which operates in the dark night and, by reason of its intimate proportion to divinity, surpasses any experience in which the natural faculties, however much purified, can find fruition and satisfaction. Faith, as we have seen, is the means of true and proper union with God, who by his essence incomparably transcends every created nature; for that reason faith surpasses even the most lofty mystical experience.¹⁹⁸

The superiority of faith over all experience does not imply that the whole order of experience is irrelevant. On the contrary, it is relevant inasmuch as a living faith deeply transforms human experience by introducing the person to a path of union with God. “The virtue of faith is subordinated to union as means to the end.”¹⁹⁹ St. John of the

197. Wojtyła, *St. John of the Cross*, 16–17, emphasis added, translation modified; Wojtyła, *Apud Joannem a Cruce*, 46.

198. *Ibid.*, 123.

199. *Ibid.*, 48.

Cross teaches “*the definitive power and essential characteristic of love—and therefore of the will—in union.... The power and characteristic of love flows from its very nature insofar as it causes likeness and subjects the lover to the beloved. Hence if it is a question of union of likeness, love must necessarily be the unifying factor. This explains what the Mystical Doctor explains time and time again: union consists of the total conformation of the human will with the divine will.*”²⁰⁰ St. John of the Cross, as Wojtyła understands him, sees faith as a means within human life as a whole. Human life as a whole is directed toward the end of a union of the human person with God through love. Human experience is not excluded from this process. On the contrary, it is to be formed by love. In this process, faith remains the proximate means of union that cannot be supplanted by feeling or some other surrogate.

In his apostolic letter on St. John of the Cross, John Paul II again emphasizes the fundamental and unsurpassable role of faith in the growth of a genuine Christian experience. He also identifies St. John of the Cross’s understanding of Christian experience with the central concern of Vatican II.²⁰¹

In it [that is, the dissertation on St. John of the Cross], I devoted special attention to an analytical discussion of the central affirmation of the Mystical Doctor: Faith is *the only proximate and proportionate means* for communion with God.²⁰²

The Mystical Doctor..., through his example and doctrine, helps Christians to make their faith strong with the very basic qualities of an adult faith which the Second Vatican Council asks of us. This faith is to be personal, free and convinced, embraced with one’s entire being, an ecclesial faith, confessed and celebrated in communion with the Church, a praying and adoring faith, *matured through the experience of communion with God.*²⁰³

The presence of God and of Christ, a renewing purification under the guidance of the Spirit, and the living of an informed and adult faith—is this not in reality the heart of the teaching of St. John of the Cross and his message for the Church and for men and women of today? ...Only faith enables us to *experience the salvific presence of God*

200. Ibid., 100.

201. See Angelo Scola, *L’esperienza elementare: La vena profonda del magistero di Giovanni Paolo II* (Genoa: Marietti, 2003), 47.

202. John Paul II, *Maestro en la fe*, 2; emphasis added.

203. Ibid., 7; emphasis added.

in Christ in the very center of life and of history. Faith alone reveals to us the meaning of the human condition and our supreme dignity as sons and daughters of God who are *called to communion with Him.*²⁰⁴

According to John Paul II's reading of St. John of the Cross, what is it that a living faith becomes increasingly conscious of? The decisive thing for the nature of an experience is its content or object. What is the object of Christian experience? The answer in the text just quoted is very clear: "the salvific presence of God in Christ in the very center of life and of history."

These words, in which John Paul II summarizes the doctrine of St. John of the Cross, resemble the opening words of his inaugural encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (1979): "The Redeemer of Man, Jesus Christ, is the center of the universe and of history." Later in the same encyclical, John Paul II formulates the program of his pontificate in a similar way.

While the ways on which the Council of this Century has set the Church going, ways indicated by the late Pope Paul VI in his first encyclical, will continue to be for a long time the ways that all of us must follow, we can at the same time rightly ask at this new stage: How, in what manner should we continue?... To this question, dear brothers, sons and daughters, a fundamental and essential response must be given. Our response must be: Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is—towards Christ our Redeemer, towards Christ, the Redeemer of man. We wish to look towards Him—because there is salvation in no one else but Him, the Son of God—repeating what Peter said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."²⁰⁵

In his dissertation, Wojtyła devotes an entire chapter to the personalist understanding of faith in St. John of the Cross. "Revealed truths are given to the intellect, but Christ himself is given as the life of Christians. In him is found the revelation of God to human beings, both in himself and as the exemplar that all should imitate and, through love, reproduce in themselves. In this way, and not in eager scrutiny of revealed truths, the manifestation of God is attained and shared by each one. For St. John of the Cross the revelation of God

204. *Ibid.*, 3; emphasis added.

205. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 7.

consists much more in personal witness than in the purely intellectual knowledge of revealed truths.”²⁰⁶ This summary of St. John of the Cross’s teaching is akin to John Paul II’s words of profound experience, “Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is—towards Christ our Redeemer.” *Redemptor Hominis*, 10, unfolds what this “turning” involves.

Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not *revealed to him*, if he does not *encounter* love, if he does not *experience* it and *make it his own*, if he does not *participate intimately* in it. This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer “fully reveals man to himself.”... The man who wishes to understand himself thoroughly—and not just in accordance with immediate, partial, often superficial, and even illusory standards and measures of his being—he must with his unrest, uncertainty and even his weakness and sinfulness, with his life and death, *draw near* to Christ. He must, so to speak, *enter into Him with all his own self*; he must “*appropriate*” and *assimilate* the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and redemption in order to *find himself*.²⁰⁷

In this text, there is a remarkable density of words that express the assimilation of faith in the lived experience of personal subjectivity. Persons receive the revelation of God’s love; they encounter it, experience it, make it their own, participate intimately in it, enter into it with all of their own self; they appropriate and assimilate it by bringing their unrest, uncertainty, weakness, and sinfulness to Christ in order to enter into Christ, and only in this way—find themselves. This emphasis on personal subjectivity coincides with what Wojtyła sees in the core teaching of St. John of the Cross. Wojtyła’s understanding of St. John of the Cross, his understanding of Vatican II, and the program of his own pontificate as set forth in *Redemptor Hominis*—all three of these visions are expressions of one and the same vision, a Carmelite vision that was first formed in Wojtyła by St. John of the Cross.

In this reception of St. John of the Cross, Wojtyła resolutely takes the side of his thesis advisor Garrigou-Lagrange in the debate about

206. Wojtyła, *St. John of the Cross*, 174; see the whole chapter: 172–82.

207. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 10; emphasis added.

the Mystical Doctor's relevance for the life of ordinary Christians. Against those who dismiss St. John of the Cross as preoccupied with extraordinary and miraculous mystical phenomena that are irrelevant for ordinary believers, Garrigou-Lagrange argues, in part by a careful comparison between St. John of the Cross and St. Thomas Aquinas, that St. John of the Cross's teachings concern the normal development of the supernatural life of faith and love.²⁰⁸ Wojtyła may have come to the same conclusions on his own by his reading of St. John of the Cross, but it is likely that Garrigou-Lagrange helped significantly to shape the core of John Paul II's vision.²⁰⁹

To summarize, there is a strong continuity in Wojtyła's personalist vision that spans the period from his dissertation on St. John of the Cross (1948), through his interpretation of Vatican II (1972), to the pastoral program set forth in *Redemptor Hominis* (1979). Faith must penetrate and transform human experience. It must be received and enriched in the lived experience of personal subjectivity. Of course, the encounter with the philosophy of consciousness, particularly Kant and phenomenology, in the period of Wojtyła's habilitation thesis on Scheler (1953) as well as his own philosophical synthesis in *The Acting Person* (1969) were tributaries to this stream of tradition and sharpened Wojtyła's understanding of personal subjectivity.

c. The Trinitarian Nucleus of the Council

The nucleus of Wojtyła's theological personalism becomes clearer when one focuses on its trinitarian form as explained in *Sources of*

208. One focus of this debate was the gift of infused contemplation. See Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christian Perfection and Contemplation according to St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross* (St. Louis: Herder, 1949), and *The Three Ages of the Interior Life: Prelude of Eternal Life*, 2 vols. (Rockford, IL: Tan, 1989).

209. Wojtyła is not the only one who was formed by Garrigou-Lagrange's understanding of the spiritual life. "If his [that is, Garrigou-Lagrange's] form of dogmatic theology failed to win the day at the Second Vatican Council, we will see that his most passionately held spiritual propositions were incorporated into official Catholic teaching by the Council Fathers." Richard Peddicord, O.P., *The Sacred Monster of Thomism: An Introduction to the Life and Legacy of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine, 2005), 179. See also the chapter on Garrigou-Lagrange and Wojtyła, pp. 214–20. Unfortunately, Peddicord focuses only on the philosophical points of contact between Wojtyła and Garrigou-Lagrange. A systematic comparison of their doctrines in spiritual theology must still be carried out.

Renewal. Sources of Renewal is divided into three parts. Part 1 explains the concept of “enrichment of faith” with the help of two further concepts, formation of the believer’s *consciousness*, the cognitive aspect of a mature faith, and formation of the believer’s *attitude*, the existential and ethical aspect of a life of faith, that is, the believer’s active relationship with God.²¹⁰ “Attitude” is a concept close to Scheler’s “ethos” that plays such a significant role in TOB. It is clear that Wojtyła learned much from Scheler in thinking through the concept of ethos. In Parts 2 and 3, *Sources of Renewal* takes up consciousness and attitude one by one: formation of the believer’s *consciousness* in Part 2 and formation of the believer’s *attitude* in Part 3.

PART TWO: Wojtyła unfolds the formation of the believer’s *consciousness* in five steps. They correspond to the five chapters of Part 2:

1. the consciousness of creation;
2. the revelation of the Trinity and the consciousness of salvation;
3. Christ and the consciousness of redemption;
4. the consciousness of the Church as the People of God;
5. the historical and eschatological consciousness of the Church.

One can see a clear order of argument in these five chapters. Chapter 1 attends to the order of creation, of nature; the other chapters turn to the supernatural order of grace. Chapter 2, the first step in the order of grace, lays down the theological principle, namely, God’s own trinitarian life made accessible to human beings. Chapter 3 discusses the manner in which God shares this life with us, namely, through Christ, the Redeemer. Chapters 4 and 5 draw the consequences for the Church’s self-understanding, first in her essential nature (Chapter 4) and then in her life in history (Chapter 5). Chapter 2 is thus the crucial theological chapter in terms of which the others must be understood, including the more philosophical Chapter 1. Let us take a closer look at Chapters 2 and 4.

In Chapter 2, Wojtyła presents some of the most important Council texts on the Trinity and argues from them that the Trinity is the principal content of faith to which all other truths of faith must be related. He then asks a fundamental question: “Why are the missions

210. See Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 205.

of the divine persons addressed to him [man], and why do these in particular constitute the profoundest divine mystery of the Church?"²¹¹ The question goes to the very heart, the nucleus, of the Council's teaching.

Wojtyła answers that the Church compares the revealed truth concerning God and the revealed truth concerning the human being and finds in this comparison her own mission and consciousness. The comparison brings to light a link between the exemplar in which the fullness of life is found and our imitation or participation in this exemplar. To unfold this answer, Wojtyła quotes *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3: "Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when he prays to the Father, 'that all may be one...as we are one' (Jn 17:21–22) and thus offers vistas closed to human reason, indicates a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons and the union of God's sons in truth and love. This likeness shows that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self (cf. Lk 17:33)." Wojtyła comments:

Man's resemblance to God finds its basis, as it were, in the mystery of the most holy Trinity. Man resembles God not only because of the spiritual nature of his immortal soul but also by reason of his social nature, if by this we understand the fact that he "cannot fully realize himself except in an act of pure self-giving" [*Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3]. In this way, "union in truth and charity" is the ultimate expression of the community of individuals. This union merits the name of communion (*communio*), which signifies more than community (*communitas*). The Latin word *communio* denotes a relationship between persons that is proper to them alone; and it indicates the good that they do to one another, giving and receiving within that mutual relationship.²¹²

Many themes sounded in this text have a prominent place in TOB. The essential point to note is that Wojtyła sees the heart of the Council in the call to deeper personal awareness of love as self-gift rooted in the Trinity. In TOB he understands married life in the same terms. He had first seen this trinitarian vision of the life of the person in St. John of the Cross.

211. *Ibid.*, 60.

212. *Ibid.*, 61.

Wojtyła returns to the communion of persons in Chapter 4, when he discusses the Church’s consciousness of herself in her essential nature as the “People of God.” The concept of “*communio*,” he argues, is the key defining concept in light of which one can understand what it means that the Church is the “People of God”:

If we want to follow the main thread of the Council’s thought, all that it says concerning the hierarchy, the laity and the religious orders in the Church should be re-read in the light of the reality of *communio* for the community of the People of God. “For the members of the People of God are called upon to share their goods, and the words of the apostle apply also to each of the Churches, ‘according to the gift that each has received, administer it to one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God’ (1 Pet 5:10).”

Thus we have the *communio ecclesiarum* [communion of churches] and the *communio munerum* [the communion of gifts, tasks, or offices] and, through these, the *communio personarum* [communion of persons]. Such is the image of the Church presented by the Council. The type of union and unity that is proper to the community of the Church as People of God essentially determines the nature of that community. The Church as People of God, by reason of its most basic premises and its communal nature, is oriented towards the resemblance there ought to be between “the union of the sons of God in truth and love” [*Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3] and the essentially divine unity of the divine persons, in *communione Sanctissimae Trinitatis*.²¹³

The point could not be clearer or more lapidary. *Ecclesia, quid dicis de te ipsa?* Church, what do you say about yourself? Increased awareness of the mystery of trinitarian communion—this is what allows a correct growth of the believer’s *consciousness* of the nature of the Church as the People of God. “The Council devotes much attention to *making the faithful conscious of communio* as the link binding together the community of the People of God. Thus it appears that the internal development and renewal of the Church in the spirit of Vatican II depends to a very great extent on the authentic deepening of faith in the Church as a community whose essential bond is that of *communio*.”²¹⁴

This emphasis on the trinitarian understanding of Vatican II’s teaching on the “People of God” is confirmed by *Sign of Contradiction*,

213. *Ibid.*, 137–38. See Scola, *L’esperienza elementare*, 51 with footnotes.

214. *Ibid.*, 144; emphasis added.

the retreat Cardinal Wojtyła preached for Paul VI in 1976, two years before his own election as Pope. At a highpoint of the retreat, the beginning of the seventh talk, he says,

Let us turn our thoughts to God who is gift and the source of all giving. The Fathers of the second Vatican Council were convinced that the complex reality of the Church cannot be adequately expressed in societal terms alone, even when the society constituted by the Church is called the "People of God." In order properly to describe this reality and appreciate its underlying significance it is necessary to return to the dimension of mystery, that is to the dimension of the most Holy Trinity. That is why the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* starts with an introductory account of the divine economy of salvation, which ultimately is a Trinitarian economy (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 2-4)... Love, an uncreated gift, is part of the inner mystery of God and is the very nucleus of theology.²¹⁵

Pascal Ide's argument that *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3, plays a key role in John Paul II is confirmed by these passages.²¹⁶ *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3, plays a key role already in Wojtyła's reading of Vatican II.

PART THREE: Wojtyła offers the following account of the believer's "attitude," which is the main subject of Part 3 of *Sources of Renewal*.

The word ["attitude"] is usually applied analogically and denotes various relationships which are endorsed as a whole by the individual consciousness. In simple terms we may say that an attitude is an active relationship but is not yet action. It follows upon cognition and increased awareness, but is something new and different from these. It involves "taking up a position" and being ready to act in accordance with it. In a sense it represents what Thomist psychology would call *habitus* and even *habitus operativus*, but the two are not identical.²¹⁷

As mentioned above, Scheler's concept of "ethos" seems to stand behind this definition of "attitude," but St. John of the Cross's understanding of a living faith that provides the source of Christian experience is present as well.

215. Karol Wojtyła, *Sign of Contradiction* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 53 and 55.

216. See above p. 23.

217. Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 205. The remaining difference seems to be that Wojtyła's "attitude" emphasizes the aspect of *consciousness* while "*habitus*" does not.

Wojtyła's point of departure in Part 3 is *Dei Verbum*, 5. "To God who reveals himself one must give the obedience of faith by which man freely commits himself as a whole to God."²¹⁸ Wojtyła comments that faith "cannot consist merely of knowledge or the content of consciousness. Essential to faith is an attitude of self-commitment to God—a continual readiness to perform the fundamental 'action' which corresponds to the reality of revelation, and all other acts which spring from it and to which it gives their proper character. In speaking of the attitude of *self-gift*²¹⁹ to God, Vatican II touches on the most vital and vivifying point relating to the whole process of the enrichment of faith."²²⁰

It is not difficult to see in this reading of *Dei Verbum*, 5, Wojtyła's familiar emphasis on faith as a means of union with God and on love as a total gift of self, *totus tuus* (*Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3). Twenty-eight years later, in the year 2000, Pope John Paul II expressed the same understanding of the Council: "With the Council, *the Church first had an experience of faith*, as she abandoned herself to God without reserve, as one who trusts and is certain of being loved. It is precisely this act of abandonment to God which stands out from an objective examination of the Acts [of the Council]. Anyone who wished to approach the Council without considering this interpretive key *would be unable to penetrate its depths*. Only from the perspective of faith can we see the Council event as a gift whose still hidden wealth we must know how to mine."²²¹ What Wojtyła calls the fundamental "attitude" of the believer lies precisely in this self-gift to God. Part 3 unfolds this attitude in six chapters:

1. the attitude of mission and testimony;
2. the attitude of participation in the threefold saving power of Christ;

218. Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, 5.

219. The German translation has "*Selbsthingabe*" (self-gift): see Karol Wojtyła, *Quellen der Erneuerung: Studie zur Verwirklichung des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils* (Freiburg: Herder, 1981), 180, cf. also 182. The English translation has "self-commitment" and in other contexts "self-abandonment."

220. Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 206.

221. John Paul II, address to the conference studying the implementation of Vatican II (Feb. 27, 2000).

3. the attitude of human identity and Christian responsibility;
4. the ecumenical attitude;
5. the attitude of the apostolate; and
6. the attitude required for building up the Church as *communio*.

Let us take a closer look at Chapter 1, in which Wojtyła lays down the theological foundation. The argument begins with the mission of the divine Persons. God reveals himself, saves the world, and constitutes his people by sending his Son and Spirit. "Thus in the Council's teaching, awareness of salvation is closely linked with the revelation of the Most Holy Trinity."²²² Since the missions of the Son and the Spirit are the origin of the Church as the People of God, they impart to that people a trinitarian form in the specific manner of mission. "The Church originated and continues to originate from that divine mission: this gives a 'missionary' character to its whole existence, and at the same time basically determines the attitude of every Christian."²²³

In reading Wojtyła's account of the believer's attitude we thus find ourselves right away in the depth of the trinitarian teaching on which Wojtyła reflected already in his doctoral dissertation on St. John of the Cross. By giving himself as a whole to the self-revealing God in the obedience of faith (*Dei Verbum*, 5), the believer grasps his own identity as a person who has come to share in the Person of the Son in relation to the Father by the gift of the Spirit. Mission is thus not in the first place an attitude of moral commitment in response to a moral duty, but a way of *being* that is rooted in the person of Jesus as the Son of God. "This [mission] does not initially imply a function or institution, but defines the nature of the Church and indicates its close link with the mystery of the divine Trinity through the mission of the Persons: the Son who comes to us from the Father in the Holy Spirit and the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son. In this sense and on the basis of this reality, we can and should define the attitude of every human being in the Church."²²⁴ To commit oneself

222. Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal*, 206.

223. *Ibid.*

224. *Ibid.*, 207.

to God's saving self-revelation thus means to follow and imitate Jesus. The imitation of Jesus was the point of departure of Wojtyła's Scheler book, in continuity with his book on St. John of the Cross. It appears once again at a key point of his book on Vatican II.

These samples from Wojtyła's book on Vatican II indicate the theological background of TOB. Not surprisingly, one finds *Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3, at the center of the argument, and at least two of the points on the Sanjuanist triangle, the first and the third: (1) love is a gift of self; (3) the primal reality of gift and pattern for all gift lies in the eternal love between the divine Persons.

6. The Purpose of the Theology of the Body

a. Why Theology "of the Body" in Particular?

The theology of the body gathers up the dominant concerns of Wojtyła's earlier philosophical and theological work. One can arrange these concerns schematically in three phases: the beginning, the challenge, and the response.

(1) *The Beginning*: The beginnings of Wojtyła's theological formation lie in the personalism of St. John of the Cross, a specifically modern personalism (as von Balthasar shows, see above p. 81). From this point onward, he focuses on the lived experience of personal subjectivity and develops the Sanjuanist triangle: love is a gift of self; spousal love is the paradigmatic gift of self; the Trinity is the archetype of such gift. These concerns are still the dominant concerns of TOB. There is a clear and strong continuity of concerns from Wojtyła's first book (1948) through his reading of Vatican II (1972) to TOB (originally written in the seventies, delivered 1979–84).

(2) *The Challenge*: Wojtyła's Carmelite point of departure was challenged by another modern sense of personal subjectivity, developed among others by Descartes, Kant, and Scheler. Schmitz's penetrating study of Wojtyła offers the key to understanding this challenge and Wojtyła's response to it (see above pp. 34–6).²²⁵ The new sense of

225. See Schmitz, *Center of the Drama*, 135–36.

personal subjectivity is closely connected with the mechanization of the natural world. The ancient Gnostics found themselves in a demonic, anti-divine universe. Matter was evil. Yet, the truly bottomless pit is opened only by the Cartesian universe with its complete indifference to meaning. Matter is “mere matter,” sheer externality. It is value-free. The reason for this indifference of matter to meaning lies in the rigorous reconstruction of knowledge under the guidance of the ambition for power over nature.

Desperately alone in an inhospitable world, orphaned by its own ambition for power, the Cartesian conscious subject is thrown back on itself; it must find all meaning in itself. The most powerful expression of this new kind of subjectivity is Kant’s anti-trinitarian personalism. Kant set out to cure the modern subject of atheism and utilitarianism by setting religion and morality on a new foundation, namely, the dignity of the person. Kant’s personalism glorifies the autonomy of the individual person as the only true value to which everything else must be subordinated. Man is equal to the Father, but not born from the Father. Fatherhood is the worst despotism imaginable, sonship the worst slavery. As Wojtyła reads him, Scheler offers a profound critique of Kant, but remains caught in a similar subjectivist shift in which human consciousness “sets the terms for reality itself” (Schmitz).

(3) *The Response*: Wojtyła’s response is, at one and the same time, a defense of the goodness of nature and of the trinitarian paradigm of personhood. To be a person is to stand in a relation of gift. To be a human person is to live as a body that offers a rich natural expression for the gift of self in spousal love.

The defense of the body in this theological response to the Cartesian-Kantian-Schelerian form of subjectivity is pivotal. The scientific rationalism spearheaded by Descartes is above all an attack *on the body*. Its first principle is that the human body, together with all matter, shall be seen as an object of power. Form and final cause must therefore be eliminated from it.

The response to such a violent scientific-technological attack on the body must be a defense of the body in its natural intrinsic meaning. The spousal mystery is the primary place at which this defense must take place, because the highest meaning of the body is found there.

St. Paul's magnificent synthesis concerning "the great mystery" appears as the compendium or summa, in some sense, of the teaching about God and man which was brought to fulfillment by Christ. Unfortunately, Western thought, with the development of modern rationalism, has been gradually moving away from this teaching. The philosopher who formulated the principle of "*cogito, ergo sum*"—I think, therefore I am—also gave the modern concept of man its distinctive dualistic character. It is typical of rationalism to make a radical contrast in man between spirit and body, between body and spirit. But man is a person in the unity of his body and his spirit. The body can never be reduced to mere matter: It is a spiritualized body, just as man's spirit is so closely united to the body that he can be described as an embodied spirit. The richest source for knowledge of the body is the Word made flesh. Christ reveals man to himself. In a certain sense this statement of the Second Vatican Council [*Gaudium et Spes*, 22:1] is the reply, so long awaited, which the Church has given to modern rationalism.²²⁶

Put negatively, John Paul II's response to Descartes is, "The body can never be reduced to mere matter." Put positively, the response is, "The richest source of knowledge of the body is the Word made flesh." What then, precisely, does the Incarnation reveal about the body according to *Gaudium et Spes*, 22:1, that long-awaited reply to Cartesian rationalism? "Truly, it is only in the mystery of the incarnate Word that the mystery of man takes on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of the one to come, namely, Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (GS 22:1). There is a close connection between *Gaudium et Spes*, 22:1 and 24:3. According to GS 22:1, Christ fully reveals man to himself through the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love. According to GS 24:3, the trinitarian exemplar of union between the divine Persons shows that man can only find himself through a sincere gift of self. These two formulations seem to aim at one and the same thing: for man to be fully revealed to himself and to find himself are at least closely connected, if not identical, though "be revealed" may have a more cognitive character, "find" a more comprehensive existential one.

226. John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, 19.

This close connection suggests a similarly close connection between the conditions that lead to such revelation and finding, namely, on the one hand, the revelation of the mystery of the Father and his love, and, on the other, the sincere gift of self. From the Father's love and the Trinity of Persons, through the creation of the world, all the way to the body, there is a single logic of gift. The body must be seen in these terms, in what John Paul II calls a "hermeneutics of the gift" (TOB 13:2; 16:1). In the Incarnation, Christ's body is the place of the divine redeeming gift of self. *As "the great mystery" of spousal love (Eph 5), the Incarnation shows that the meaning of the body is spousal.* All things, and in particular the body, were created in Christ and for him: Christ's gift of self is thus the goal that most deeply explains God's original intention in creating the body.

Within this overarching hermeneutics of the gift, Wojtyła develops a complementary perspective that responds to Descartes' attack on the body in terms of the philosophy of nature. In 1953, Wojtyła assembled a group of physicists to discuss the question of nature. "[Jerzy] Janik recruited the scientists who began to meet regularly with Wojtyła. Their first project was to read St. Thomas Aquinas and discuss his concept of nature against the backdrop of what they were doing in their labs and classrooms every day."²²⁷ It would be interesting to know what the results of this dialogue were. Cartesian principles are extremely difficult to eradicate, because for most practitioners of science they have taken on the unquestionable character of the self-evident.

In Wojtyła's sexual ethics, one can see the importance of the concern for nature. The main reason why it is difficult for people in the modern age, and particularly for modern intellectuals, to understand the Catholic vision of sex, he argues, is—biology. The restricted mechanist image of nature produced by natural science, and particularly by biology, obscures our vision for the order of living nature in all its richness and therefore prevents us from understanding and living sex in its full meaning. The nature of sex has become invisible through our Cartesian glasses.

227. Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 100.

The expressions “the order of nature” and “the biological order” must not be confused or regarded as identical, the “biological order” does indeed mean the same as the order of nature but only in so far as this is accessible to the methods of empirical and descriptive natural science.... This habit of confusing the order of existence with the biological order, or rather of allowing the second to obscure the first, is part of that universal empiricism which seems to weigh so heavily on the mind of modern man, and particularly on modern intellectuals, and makes it particularly difficult for them to understand the principles on which Catholic sexual morality is based. According to those principles...the sexual urge owes its objective importance to its connection with the divine work of creation of which we have been speaking, and this importance vanishes almost completely if our way of thinking is inspired only by the biological order of nature. Seen in this perspective the sexual urge is only the sum of functions undoubtedly directed, from the biological point of view, towards a biological end, that of reproduction. Now, *if man is the master of nature*, should he not mould those functions—if necessary artificially, with the help of the appropriate techniques—in whatever way he considers expedient and agreeable? *The “biological order,” as a product of the human intellect* which abstracts its elements from a larger reality, *has man for its immediate author*. The claim to autonomy in one’s ethical views is a short jump from this. It is otherwise with the order of nature, which means the totality of the cosmic relationships that arise among really existing entities.²²⁸

In this penetrating passage, Wojtyła identifies a way of thinking and seeing that is deeply hammered into the minds of children in school and reinforced daily in adults by the cultural establishment—the way of thinking and seeing defined by a mechanist form of natural science, comfortably settled in the position of the self-evident.

The power of this mentality derives in part from *hiding its nature as a way of thinking and seeing that flows from a definite choice*. It understands the world of nature, which it sees so selectively, simply as “the objective order of nature.” This is why Wojtyła’s observation is extremely important: “*The ‘biological order’, as a product of the human intellect...has man for its immediate author.*” Since we constructed this “biological order” based on our ambition for power over nature, it is

228. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 56–57; emphasis added. For a similar text in TOB, see 59:3.

not in the least surprising that we think we can take our place in the biological order as masters of the machine without any questions, except perhaps environmental ones. To this way of thinking, contraception and its mirror image, in vitro fertilization, seem the most “natural” things in the world.

For Wojtyła, the two orders, the order of person and of nature, are strictly united. “In the order of love a man can remain true to the person only in so far as he is true to nature. If he does violence to ‘nature’ he also ‘violates’ the person by making it an object of enjoyment rather than of love.”²²⁹ Thirty-three years later, John Paul II writes, “The natural law thus understood does not allow for any division between freedom and nature. Indeed, these two realities are harmoniously bound together, and each is intimately linked to the other.”²³⁰

The theological point (the spousal meaning of the body in the gift of self) and the philosophical point (person and nature are intimately united) were already highlighted above as the main points of difference in the comparison between the account of sex in Kant and in John Paul II (see above, pp. 55–63). (1) In Kant’s anti-trinitarian personalism of the unrelated self, spousal love plays no role. Sex is always a depersonalizing use of the person for enjoyment. (2) In Kant’s Cartesian view of nature, person and nature are alienated from each other. The procreative purpose is incidental to sex. According to Wojtyła/John Paul II, the body is not alien to the person in sex. The body is deeply meaningful with a twofold meaning: unitive and procreative. These two meanings bring us to the main thesis of *Humanae Vitae*, the inseparability of the unitive and procreative meaning of the conjugal act.

b. Why *Humanae Vitae* in Particular?

In the very last catechesis (TOB 133), John Paul II points to the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* as the true focus of TOB as a whole. Although he explicitly discusses *Humanae Vitae* only at the very end, in the last fifteen catecheses, *Humanae Vitae* sets the agenda from the beginning. “It follows that this final part [that is, the explicit discus-

229. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 229–30.

230. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 50.

sion of *Humanae Vitae*] is not artificially added to the whole, but is organically and homogeneously united with it. In some sense, that part, which in the overall disposition is located at the end, is at the same time found at the beginning of that whole. This is important from the point of view of structure and method” (TOB 133:4). John Paul II calls TOB as a whole a “rereading of *Humanae Vitae*” (TOB 119:5). Why does *Humanae Vitae* have such great importance for John Paul II that he dedicates his most carefully and profoundly elaborated work to it?

The “Majority Report” of Paul VI’s birth control commission (intentionally leaked to the press in 1967) is unequivocal in its support for the Baconian program, unequivocal in identifying this program with the divine will. “The story of God and of man, therefore, should be seen as a shared work. And it should be seen that man’s tremendous progress in control of matter by technical means and the universal and total ‘intercommunication’ that has been achieved, correspond entirely to the divine decrees.”²³¹ It would be difficult to formulate a more unqualified allegiance with the Baconian program. Technical mastery over nature corresponds “*omnino, perfectly, entirely*, to the will of God. Compare this unqualified allegiance to John Paul II’s prophetic warning in *Evangelium Vitae*: “Nature itself, from being ‘mater’ (mother), is now reduced to being ‘matter,’ and is subjected to every kind of manipulation. This is the direction in which a certain technical and scientific way of thinking, prevalent in present-day culture, appears to be leading when it rejects the very idea that there is a truth of creation which must be acknowledged, or a plan of God for life which must be respected.”²³²

According to the “Majority Report,” one of the reasons for the legitimacy of contraception is the legitimacy of power over nature (called a “duty”). “The reasons in favor of this affirmation [contracep-

231. Commission on Birth Control, “Majority Report,” in *The Catholic Case for Contraception*, ed. Daniel Callahan (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 150. Commission on Birth Control, “Original Latin Text of the Majority Report: Documentum Syntheticum de Moralitate Regulationis Nativitatum,” in *Contrôle des naissances et théologie: Le dossier de Rome: Traduction, présentation et notes de Jean-Marie Paupert*, ed. Jean-Marie Paupert (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 179.

232. John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 22.

tion is morally legitimate] are of several kinds: social changes in matrimony and the family, especially in the role of the woman; lowering of the infant mortality rate; new bodies of knowledge in biology, psychology, sexuality and demography; a changed estimation of the value and meaning of human sexuality and of conjugal relations; *but most of all*, a better grasp of the duty of man to humanize and to bring to greater perfection for the life of man what is given in nature.”²³³ The superlative “*but most of all*” deserves special attention. Among all the reasons for the moral legitimacy of contraception, the *foremost* reason, the reason that is *most of all* (“*maxime*”) a reason, is not the population explosion, not a personalist understanding of sexual intercourse, but the duty of humanizing nature. Humanizing is achieved, as the first text quoted above puts it, through “tremendous progress in the control of matter by technical means.”

It appears that those aligned with the majority report saw the issue of contraception as a question of *aggiornamento*, as bringing the Church up-to-date by embracing a new loyalty to the Baconian project. The Church’s openness to the modern age, her willingness to participate in the modern project, hinges in large measure on this new loyalty. In this light, one can perhaps understand one reason for the bitterness of the reaction of many Catholics against *Humanae Vitae*. The main problem of *Humanae Vitae* is not that it fails to grapple with social changes, infant mortality, the population explosion, and a personalist understanding of sexuality. The main problem is that it rejects loyalty to the Baconian program. It is an act of treason against the newly established alliance between Catholicism and modernity.

In *Humanae Vitae*, Paul VI accurately reports the important place of the Baconian program in the debate as exemplified by the “Majority Report.” He mentions the argument from “control over matter by technical means” last in a list of reasons for reconsidering contraception and qualifies it with an adverb close to the superlative, namely, *praesertim*, above all. “Finally, one should take note *above all* that man has made such stupendous progress in the domination and

233. Commission on Birth Control, “Majority Report,” 161, emphasis added; Latin 183.

rational organization of the forces of nature that he tends to extend this domination to his own total life: that is, to the body, to the powers of his soul, to social life and even to the laws which regulate the transmission of life.”²³⁴

John Paul II highlights the issue of power over nature in a similar way as the very heart or essence of the Catholic understanding of the transmission of life.

What is the essence of the teaching of the Church about the transmission of life in the conjugal community, the essence of the teaching recalled for us by the Council’s pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes* and the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* by Pope Paul VI? The problem lies in maintaining *the adequate relationship* between that which is defined as “*domination...of the forces of nature*” (HV 2), and “*self-mastery*” (HV 21), which is indispensable for the human person. Contemporary man shows the tendency of transferring the methods proper to the first sphere to those of the second. (TOB 123:1)

The fundamental problem the encyclical presents is the viewpoint of the *authentic development of the human person*; such development should be measured, as a matter of principle, by the measure of ethics and not only of “technology.” (TOB 133:3)²³⁵

This agreement between the two sides, those who opt for contraception and those who reject it, is striking. There is agreement that the Baconian project of technological mastery over nature lies at the heart of the issue of contraception. The manner in which the Catholic advocates of contraception see the nature of sexuality seems to be formed precisely by the way of seeing nature that emerged from the scientific-technological project. What a moral theologian opposed to *Humanae Vitae* writes against *Veritatis Splendor* is an eloquent witness of this deeply Cartesian formation of the mind:

It is not easy to avoid a sense of profound anticlimax, combined with a strong suspicion that what purported to be a critique of certain moral theories was after all only one more assault against critics who find no real plausibility in certain official Catholic teachings about sex

234. Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, 2.

235. For a moral judgment about contracepted sex, of course, the central issue is the object that proximately defines the moral essence of the act rather than the more general issue of power over nature. On “the essential evil” of contracepted sex, see TOB 123:7.

and, in particular, about contraception. It is certainly true that for a great many people who take morality very seriously the mere description of a bit of human behavior as, say, “sexual intercourse with the use of a condom” is morally significant; the statement, of itself, communicates nothing to elicit moral blame, moral praise, or even moral interest. To those people, of whom I am certainly one—and one who has read and pondered countless dreary pages on this subject—it is alternately funny and sad that an official doctrine of the Catholic church holds that anything identifiable as “contraceptive practices whereby the conjugal act is intentionally rendered infertile” can be denounced as “intrinsically evil” and “gravely disordered” behavior without knowing anything at all about the motives or results of these practices in individual cases.²³⁶

This text expresses the main issue particularly well in the dismissive formulation, “the mere description of a bit of human behavior as, say, ‘sexual intercourse with the use of a condom’...communicates nothing to elicit moral blame, moral praise, or even moral interest.” Sex appears in this statement, and particularly in its dismissive tone, as it does in Kant, namely, as a process that runs its course outside the realm of the person and of meaning. It is only when further motives of the person and results considered by the person enter that the biological process takes on moral interest.

The point of view of the author of this attack on John Paul II is hardly surprising. It is the default point of view of any person raised as a child and high school student in the twentieth century. No special effort is needed to breathe in the air of Cartesian anthropological dualism. It was a strange spectacle immediately after the publication of *Humanae Vitae* that theologians who meekly submitted to the dominant Cartesian mentality were celebrated in the secular press for their enlightened and courageous freedom from Church authority.

In contrast to the dominant mentality, John Paul II sustains *Humanae Vitae* to proclaim the good news—and it is indeed good news—that the human person “also *is* a body”—not merely “*has*” a

236. James Gaffney, “The Pope on Proportionalism,” in *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, ed. Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick (New York: Paulist, 1998), 59.

body, but “*is a body—è corpo*” (see Index at BODY 1). The meaning of the human body as experienced in sexual intercourse is deeply personal. The body, endowed with its own rich intrinsic meaning, speaks the language of self-gift and fruitfulness, whether the person intends it or not, because the person “is a body.” The body is not outside the person. Self-gift and fruitfulness are rooted in the very nature of the body, and therefore in the very nature of the person, because the person “is a body.”

John Paul II pinpoints this anthropological issue as the key issue in a passage of *Veritatis Splendor* that directly faces moral theories like the one just quoted.

Faced with this theory, one has to consider carefully the correct relationship existing between freedom and human nature, and in particular *the place of the human body in questions of natural law*.

A freedom which claims to be absolute ends up treating the human body as a raw datum, devoid of any meaning and moral values until freedom has shaped it in accordance with its design. Consequently, human nature and the body appear as *presuppositions or preambles*, materially *necessary* for freedom to make its choice, yet extrinsic to the person, the subject and the human act. Their functions would not be able to constitute reference points for moral decisions, because the finalities of these inclinations would be merely *physical* goods, called by some “pre-moral.” To refer to them, in order to find in them rational indications with regard to the order of morality, would be to expose oneself to the accusation of physicalism or biologism.

In this way of thinking, the tension between freedom and a nature conceived of in a reductive way is resolved by a division within man himself.

This moral theory does not correspond to the truth about man and his freedom. It contradicts the *Church’s teachings on the unity of the human person*, whose rational soul is *per se et essentialiter* [through itself and essentially] the form of his body. The spiritual and immortal soul is the principle of unity of the human being, whereby it exists as a whole—*corpore et anima unus*—as a person. These definitions not only point out that the body, which has been promised the resurrection, will also share in glory. They also remind us that reason and free will are linked with all the bodily and sense faculties. *The person, including the body, is completely entrusted to himself, and it is in the unity of body and soul that the person is the subject of his own moral acts.* The person, by the light of reason and the support of virtue, discovers in

the body the anticipatory signs, the expression and the promise of the gift of self.²³⁷

To conclude, the purpose of the theology of the body is to defend the body against its alienation from the person in Cartesian rationalism. Put positively, the purpose is to show the divine plan for human spousal love, to show the goodness and beauty of the whole sexual sphere against its cheapening in the “objective, scientific” way of looking at nature. God’s plan and its renewal by Christ, the redeemer, is imprinted deeply within the bodily nature of the person as a pre-given language of self-giving and fruitfulness. For the person to live sexuality in an authentic manner is to speak spousal love in conformity with this truth of the language of the body. True human fulfillment in the sexual sphere can be found only by following this divine plan for human love. This is why the defense of *Humanae Vitae* is so important, important for the good of the human person. “*The fundamental problem the encyclical presents is the viewpoint of the authentic development of the human person; such development should be measured, as a matter of principle, by the measure of ethics and not only of ‘technology’*” (TOB 133:3).

7. Structure and Argument

Many readers feel at sea in TOB with no clear sense of where they are and where they are going. The well disposed attribute this feeling to the “cyclical,” or “mystical,” or “Slavic,” or “phenomenological” character of TOB; the less well disposed find TOB “mind-numbingly repetitious.”²³⁸ In fact, this impression is mistaken. It is in large measure due to the omission of John Paul II’s own chapter and section headings in all editions of TOB except the Polish (see above pp. 9–10). TOB has a rigorous and clear order of thought throughout. When one follows John Paul II’s divisions of the work with care, the structure and main argument become transparent. The following table gives an overview of the first three levels of the structure.

237. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 48.

238. Luke Timothy Johnson, “A Disembodied ‘Theology of the Body’: John Paul II on Love, Sex & Pleasure,” *Commonweal*, January 26, 2001.

Overview of the Structure

PART 1: THE WORDS OF CHRIST

CHAPTER 1: CHRIST APPEALS TO THE “BEGINNING” (TOB 1–23)

1. What Is Meant by “Beginning”?
2. The Meaning of Original Solitude
3. The Meaning of Original Unity
4. The Meaning of Original Nakedness
5. Man in the Dimension of Gift
6. “Knowledge” and Procreation (Gen 4:1)
7. [Conclusion: An Integral Vision]

CHAPTER 2: CHRIST APPEALS TO THE HUMAN HEART (TOB 24–63)

1. In the Light of the Sermon on the Mount
 2. The Man of Concupiscence
 3. Commandment and Ethos
 4. The “Heart”—Accused or Called?
 5. The Ethos of the Redemption of the Body
 6. Purity as “Life according to the Spirit”
 7. The Gospel of the Purity of Heart—Yesterday and Today
- Appendix: The Ethos of the Body in Art and Media

CHAPTER 3: CHRIST APPEALS TO THE RESURRECTION (TOB 64–86)

1. The Resurrection of the Body as a Reality of the “Future World”
2. Contenance for the Kingdom of Heaven

[Conclusion of Part 1: The Redemption of the Body]

PART 2: THE SACRAMENT

CHAPTER 1: THE DIMENSION OF COVENANT AND OF GRACE (TOB 87–102)

1. Ephesians 5:21–33
2. Sacrament and Mystery
3. Sacrament and “Redemption of the Body”

CHAPTER 2: THE DIMENSION OF SIGN (TOB 103–17)

1. “Language of the Body” and the Reality of the Sign
2. The Song of Songs
3. When the “Language of the Body” Becomes Language of the Liturgy (Reflections on Tobit)

CHAPTER 3: HE GAVE THEM THE LAW OF LIFE AS THEIR INHERITANCE (TOB 118–33)

1. The Ethical Problem
2. Outline of Conjugal Spirituality

[CONCLUSION]

a. The Overall Structure

The structure of a text can be understood by asking two interrelated questions, again and again on each level of division. What is the purpose of the whole? What are the main parts that serve this purpose?

As argued above, the purpose of TOB as a whole is to defend the spousal meaning of the body against the alienation between person and body in the Cartesian vision of nature. All the fundamental questions of our age—questions about the meaning of the body, about the meaning of love, about nature, technology, and progress—come together in the issue of *Humanae Vitae* as in a tight knot. In order to understand these questions, one needs “an integral vision of man.” “It is precisely by moving from ‘an integral vision of man and of his vocation, not only his natural and earthly, but also his supernatural and eternal vocation’ (*Humanae Vitae*, 7), that Paul VI affirmed that the teaching of the Church ‘is founded upon the inseparable connection, willed by God and unable to be broken by man on his own initiative, between the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning.’”²³⁹

Given that the overall goal of TOB is to present an integral vision of man, how do the main parts of TOB serve this goal? In the very last catechesis, John Paul II explains the first level of division as follows: “*The first part* is devoted to the *analysis of the words of Christ*, which prove to be suitable for opening the present topic.... *The second part* of the catechesis is devoted to the *analysis of the sacrament* based on Ephesians” (TOB 133:1). “The catecheses devoted to *Humanae Vitae* constitute only one part, the final part, of those that dealt with the redemption of the body and the sacramentality of marriage” (TOB 133:4). Although these texts mention three parts, the first two parts seem to belong together. They constitute John Paul II’s theoretical account of human love in the divine plan, which he calls “an adequate anthropology” (see Index at ANTHROPOLOGY). The “final part” on *Humanae Vitae* turns to the concrete moral application of this anthropology in married life, above all in the question of contraception.

239. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 32.

The reflections about human love in the divine plan carried out so far would remain in some way incomplete, if we did not try to see their concrete application in the area of conjugal and familial morality. We want to take this further step, which will bring us to the conclusion of our, by now, long journey, under the guidance of an important pronouncement of the recent magisterium, the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, which Pope Paul VI published in July 1968. We will reread this significant document in the light of the conclusions we reached when we examined the original divine plan and Christ's words referring to it. (TOB 118:1)

In this text, one can see a clear distinction between a more theoretical discussion of "human love in the divine plan" and a more practical application of this discussion, particularly to the issue of contraception.

Ciccone draws attention to another feature that sets off the part on *Humanae Vitae* from the other two. In Parts 1 and 2, John Paul II focuses on Scripture: on the words of Jesus in Part 1, and the words of Paul in Part 2, while the Final Part turns to the text of *Humanae Vitae*. "This [final part on *Humanae Vitae*] does not stand in a series with the other two. This is clear already from the formal point of view, because it does not unfold on the basis of particular biblical texts. Very fittingly, therefore, is it called, not 'Third Part,' but 'Final Part,' as the point toward which the two preceding parts are oriented and on which they converge."²⁴⁰

Ciccone's last point should be highlighted. The Final Part is not a mere appendix to a work on biblical anthropology. It is the goal that shapes Parts 1 and 2. John Paul II himself explains the importance of the Final Part.

If I draw particular attention precisely to these final catecheses, I do so not only because the topic discussed by them is more closely connected with our present age, but first of all because *it is from this theme that the questions spring* that run in some way through the whole of our reflections. It follows that this final part is not artificially added to the whole, but is organically and homogeneously united with it. In some sense, that part, which in the overall disposition is located at the end, is at the same time found at the beginning of that whole. This is

240. Lino Ciccone, *Uomo—Donna: L'amore umano nel piano divino: La grande Catechesi del mercoledì di Giovanni Paolo II* (Leumann Turin: Elle Di Ci, 1986), 21.

important from the point of view of structure and method. (TOB 133:4)

One understands the structure of TOB correctly if one sees that the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* is present as the form-giving goal from the very beginning. It is first in intention, even if last in execution. The title of the final part is appropriate to its character as goal: "HE GAVE THEM THE LAW OF LIFE AS THEIR INHERITANCE." John Paul II does not view the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* simply as a particular moral prohibition, but as a precious inheritance from the Creator that is closely connected with fostering life as a whole.

In his own division of the text, John Paul II attaches the final part as Chapter 3 to Part 2 rather than making it separate as Part 3. The actual arrangement of a book is dictated by a variety of considerations, including those of a literary sensibility that strives for symmetry and a certain evenness of length in major divisions. Division depends not only on the logic of the argument.

What is the relation between the two parts of the theological anthropology, "THE WORDS OF CHRIST" and "THE SACRAMENT"? How do they serve the overall purpose in connection with each other? John Paul II characterizes them as follows: "*The first part* is devoted to the *analysis of the words of Christ*, which prove to be suitable for opening the present topic.... *The second part* of the catechesis is devoted to the *analysis of the sacrament* based on Ephesians (Eph 5:22–33), which goes back to the biblical 'beginning' of marriage expressed in the words of Genesis, 'a man will leave his father and his mother and unite with his wife, and the two will be one flesh' (Gen 2:24)."

On one level, the relation between these two parts is that between the words of Christ and the words of Paul: "The first part is dedicated to *the analysis of Christ's words*.... The second part...[is] based on Ephesians [5]." Yet, what John Paul II emphasizes in the italicized text is not the sequence from Jesus to Paul. There is a certain asymmetry. Part 1, he insists with italics, is dedicated "to *the analysis of Christ's words*." Part 2, he insists again with italics, "was dedicated to the *analysis of the sacrament*." It is only after this characterization of theological content or function that he adds "based on Ephesians."

If "analysis of the sacrament" is the theological function of Part 2, what is the theological function of Part 1? The titles John Paul II gives

to the whole work provide a clue. “The whole of the catecheses that I began more than four years ago and that I conclude today can be grasped under the title, ‘Human Love in the Divine Plan,’ or with greater precision, ‘The Redemption of the Body and the Sacramentality of Marriage’” (TOB 133:1). The overall title mentions a single subject, “Human Love in the Divine Plan,” while the subtitle has two parts, “The Redemption of the Body” and “The Sacramentality of Marriage.” Since John Paul II says in the text quoted above that Part 2 is about “the sacramentality of marriage,” one is led to assume that Part 1 is about “the redemption of the body.” The Conclusion of Part 1 (TOB 86) confirms this assumption. It focuses on “the redemption of the body.” At the very end of that Conclusion, John Paul II writes, “Everything we have tried to do in the course of our meditations in order to understand the words of Christ has its definitive foundation in the mystery of the redemption of the body” (TOB 86:8).

The phrase “the redemption of the body” is taken from Romans: “Not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom 8:23). In a theology of the body, the redemption of the body is the ultimate point of arrival, the end that determines all steps. In a letter written a few months after the conclusion of TOB, John Paul II seems to apply the concept “theology of the body” particularly to Part 1. “As you know, at my weekly General Audiences during the past several years, I presented a catechetical series of talks on the theology of the human body and the sacramentality of marriage, including within it a confirmation and further analysis and development of the teaching of Paul VI contained in *Humanae Vitae*.”²⁴¹ The three parts distinguished in TOB 133 are clearly visible in this text. John Paul II appears to use the phrase “the theology of the human body” to refer specifically to Part 1, followed by Part 2 on “the sacramentality of marriage,” and, set off from these two, the analysis of *Humanae Vitae*.

Part 1 is in some sense already the complete theology of the body. Since the “redemption of the body” is the final end considered by a

241. Letter to a meeting of bishops from North and Central America and the Caribbean in Dallas, Texas (Jan. 16, 1985).

theology of the body, reflection on it implies a complete theology of the body in all its essential articulations.

To understand all that “the redemption of the body” implies according to Romans, an authentic theology of the body is necessary. We have attempted to build one, appealing first of all to the words of Christ. The constitutive elements of the theology of the body are contained in what Christ says when he appeals to the “beginning” concerning the question of the indissolubility of marriage (see Mt 19:8), in what he says about concupiscence when he appeals to the human heart in the Sermon on the Mount (see Mt 5:28), and also in what he says when he appeals to the resurrection (see Mt 22:30). Each one of these statements contains in itself a rich content of an anthropological as well as ethical nature. Christ speaks to man—and speaks about man, who is a “body” and is created as male and female in the image and likeness of God; he speaks about man, whose heart is subjected to concupiscence; and, finally, about man, before whom the eschatological perspective of the resurrection of the body opens up. (TOB 86:4)

This text is helpful for understanding the function of Part 1. When it analyzes the three words of Jesus from the point of view of “the redemption of the body,” Part 1 presents all “the constitutive elements of the theology of the body.” Ciccone rightly observes, “the two expressions [*redemption of the body* and *theology of the body*] are, in fact, equivalent to each other in the language of John Paul II.”²⁴²

If Part 1 already presents the whole theology of the body in its constitutive elements, what is left for Part 2 to add? One aspect of the complementary roles of Parts 1 and 2 has already been mentioned, namely, the transition from the words of Jesus to the words of Paul (a technique used on three further occasions in TOB, twice in Chapter 3 of Part 1 and once in Chapter 1 of Part 2). As for theological content, Part 2 deepens and unfolds Part 1. The redemption of the body is closely connected with “the spousal meaning of the body.” In fact, the definitive redemption of the body is nothing other than the final and glorious realization of the spousal meaning of the body in the resurrection and beatific vision (see TOB 67–68). From the very beginning, the spousal meaning of the body is “sacramental.” It is a sign that manifests and communicates holiness (see TOB 19:3–6). It signifies the covenant between God and his people, between Christ and the

242. Ciccone, *Uomo—Donna*, 19.

Church, and ultimately the mystery of mysteries, namely, the communion between the divine Persons in the Trinity. For this reason, after a first comprehensive account of the redemption of the body in Part 1, John Paul II deepens and unfolds this account in Part 2 by focusing on the “*sacramentum magnum*,” the great mystery of love revealed in Ephesians 5. In schematic form one can thus divide TOB as a whole as follows:

- PART 1: The three words of Christ on the redemption of the body (TOB 1–86)
- PART 2: The sacramentality of marriage according to Ephesians 5 (TOB 87–117)
- FINAL PART: *Humanae Vitae* (TOB 118–32)

b. Alternate Structures

The Italian one-volume edition (UD) divides *Man and Woman He Created Them* into six cycles that correspond to a large extent to the six chapters in Wojtyła’s book.

1. The Beginning (TOB 1–23)
2. The Redemption of the Heart (TOB 24–63)
3. The Resurrection of the Flesh (TOB 64–72)
4. Christian Virginity (TOB 73–86)
5. Christian Marriage (TOB 87–117)
6. Love and Fruitfulness (TOB 118–133)

These six cycles differ from the six chapters in Wojtyła’s book in two respects. The discussion of virginity in UD is a separate cycle rather than a subsection of Chapter 3; and the book’s Chapters 4 and 5 come together to form UD’s Cycle 5.

The first level of division in UD’s headings and table of contents is the level of the six cycles. There is no division into two parts. Yet, as the titles given by the editor of UD already indicate, there is a close relation between Cycles 4 and 5: Christian virginity and Christian marriage belong together as the two concrete states of life in which the theology of the body is lived out. On this basis, one can readily see a two-part structure in UD. The first three cycles offer a general account of Christian anthropology while the last three cycles apply this anthropology to the concrete life of Christians in the two states of life, virginity and marriage. The boundary between the two parts

suggested by UD is earlier than in Wojtyła's book. It comes before the discussion of virginity rather than after it.

On the basis of UD, West divides the work in a similar way as follows.²⁴³

PART 1: Who Are We? Establishing an Adequate Anthropology

Cycle 1: Original Man

Cycle 2: Historical Man

Cycle 3: Eschatological Man

PART 2: How Are We to Live? Applying an Adequate Anthropology

Cycle 4: Celibacy for the Kingdom

Cycle 5: The Sacramentality of Marriage

Cycle 6: Love & Fruitfulness

This way of dividing and reading the text seems in itself legitimate; it is also backed by the considerable authority of UD. It should not be rejected, but seen as an alternate and pedagogically effective way of organizing the argument.

When one compares the two divisions, the main difference is that, in John Paul II's own division of the text, virginity is seen predominately through the lens of the resurrection as an anticipatory sign of the resurrection. In UD and West, it is predominately seen as a state of life.

Another illuminating structural proposal is offered by Pascal Ide, who divides the first part of TOB according to the four historical states of the body.²⁴⁴

PART 1: The Theology of the Body

1. The body in the state of original innocence (TOB 1–23)

2. The body in the state of sinful nature (TOB 24–43)

3. The body in the state of redeemed nature (TOB 44–63)

4. The body in the state of glorified nature (TOB 64–72)

5. Application of the state of glorified nature to continence for the kingdom of heaven (TOB 73–86)

243. See Christopher West, *The Theology of the Body Explained: A Commentary on John Paul II's "Gospel of the Body"* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2003), 51–53.

244. See Pascal Ide, «Don et théologie du corps dans les catéchèses sur l'amour dans le plan divin,» in *Jean-Paul II face à la question de l'homme: Actes du 6ème Colloque International de la Fondation Guilé*, edited by Yves Semen (Boncourt: Guilé Foundation Press, 2004), 159–212, here 207–9.

PART 2: The Theology of Marriage

6. General Study of the Sacrament of Marriage (TOB 87–117b)

7. Application to the Pastoral Care of Marriage and the Family (TOB 118–133)

The strength of Ide’s structural proposal is that it highlights the sequence of the four historical states of man, a sequence objectively contained in John Paul II’s argument. Reaching an overall number of seven cycles is, of course, a good thing as well. The fact remains, however, that John Paul II’s primary division of Part 1 is tripartite, following the three words of Jesus that are the primary expressions of a Christian theology of the body; and his primary division of Part 2 is tripartite, two chapters on the two dimensions of any sacrament (grace and sign) and the final section on *Humanae Vitae*.

UD’s, West’s, and Ide’s readings of the structure are theologically true and pedagogically helpful. Although authors must choose a single principle of division to avoid confusion in a book’s headings and table of contents, they may well intend the text to allow several ways of reading. A certain “polyphony” of structures need not and should not be eliminated.

c. The Structure in Detail

PART 1: THE WORDS OF CHRIST: If the purpose of Part 1 is to present a theology of the body in its constitutive elements, what are its main parts and how do they serve this purpose? John Paul II divides it into three chapters, each of which analyzes a different word of Jesus about the redemption of the body:

The first part is devoted to the *analysis of the words of Christ*, which prove to be suitable for opening the present topic. We analyzed these words at length in the wholeness of the Gospel text: and in the course of a reflection lasting several years, it seemed right to throw into relief the three texts analyzed in the first part of the catecheses.

There is first of all the text in which Christ appeals “to the beginning” in the dialogue with the Pharisees about the unity and indissolubility of marriage (see Mt 19:8; Mk 10:6–9). Continuing on, there are the words Christ spoke in the Sermon on the Mount about “concupiscence” as “adultery committed in the heart” (see Mt 5:28). Finally, there are the words transmitted by all the Synoptics in which Christ appeals to the resurrection of the body in the “other world” (see Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25; Lk 20:35–36). (TOB 133:1)

John Paul II compares these three words of Jesus to a triptych, an altarpiece with three panels that form a meaningful whole with beginning, middle, and end.

Next to the two other important dialogues, namely, the one in which Christ appeals to the “beginning” (see Mt 19:3–9; Mk 10:2–12) and the other in which he appeals to man’s innermost [being] (to the “heart”) while indicating the desire and concupiscence of the flesh as a source of sin (see Mt 5:27–32), the dialogue that we propose to analyze now is, I would say, *the third component of the triptych* of Christ’s own statements, the triptych of words that are essential and constitutive for the theology of the body. In this dialogue, Jesus appeals to the resurrection, thereby revealing a completely new dimension of the mystery of man. (TOB 64:1)

The triptych of words forms a whole, beginning, middle, and end, inasmuch as the first word is concerned with the beginning, with God’s original plan for human love; the second with the middle, that is, human history after the fall and before the resurrection, including the present time; and the third with the end, that is, the future resurrection and the definitive fulfillment of human life in the beatific vision. In these three words, Jesus speaks about one and the same thing: God’s plan for human love. He speaks about it in the original intention of the Creator (Chapter 1: Christ Appeals to the “Beginning”), in its corruption by the fall and restoration by Christ (Chapter 2: Christ Appeals to the Human Heart), and in its definitive fulfillment after the resurrection (Chapter 3: Christ Appeals to the Resurrection). The perspective of the redemption of the body unites all three chapters.

CHAPTER 1: CHRIST APPEALS TO THE “BEGINNING”: The opening chapter is particularly important, because it sets the content of the other two chapters. What is to be realized by Christ’s redeeming power in human history (Chapter 2) and fully realized by that same redeeming power after the resurrection (Chapter 3) is nothing other than God’s original plan for human love (Chapter 1). John Paul II’s famous discussion of Genesis 1–2 is part of Chapter 1. It analyzes Genesis, not simply in itself as an account of the beginning, but as a component of *Christ’s* teaching about the beginning.

If the overall purpose of Chapter 1 (TOB 1–23) is the presentation of God’s original plan for human love, what are the main parts of

that chapter, and how do they each serve this purpose? The teaching of *Humanae Vitae* hinges on “the two meanings of the conjugal act: the unitive meaning and the procreative meaning” (HV 12). These two meanings seem to be the main structuring principle of Chapter 1. After an introduction (Section 1), John Paul II first takes up the unitive meaning (Sections 2–5) and then develops the procreative meaning organically out of the unitive as essentially implied in the spousal meaning of the body (Section 6). “The procreative meaning...is rooted in the spousal meaning of the body and comes forth organically, as it were, from it” (TOB 39:5). The conclusion of the chapter is an important discussion of the “integral vision of man” based on this spousal meaning of the body in contrast to partial visions proposed by various sciences (Section 7).

In his discussion of the unitive meaning (Sections 2–5), John Paul II first analyzes three original experiences of man: original solitude, original unity, and original nakedness without shame (Sections 2–4). The fruit of this analysis is the concept “spousal meaning of the body,” the central concept of TOB as a whole, first introduced in TOB 13:1. In Section 5, “Man in the Dimension of Gift,” John Paul II then formulates a comprehensive theological program that he calls “hermeneutics of the gift” within which he analyzes the concept “spousal meaning of the body,” first in itself (Section 5A) and then as manifested in original innocence (Section 5B).

1. What Is Meant by “Beginning”?
2. The Meaning of Original Solitude
3. The Meaning of Original Unity
4. The Meaning of Original Nakedness
5. Man in the Dimension of Gift
 - A. The Spousal Meaning of the Body
 - B. The Mystery of Original Innocence
6. “Knowledge” and Procreation (Gen 4:1)
7. [Conclusion: An Integral Vision]

CHAPTER 2: CHRIST APPEALS TO THE HUMAN HEART: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you: Whoever looks at a woman to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Mt 5:27–28). After an introducto-

ry section on Christ's second word (Section 1), John Paul II turns to Genesis 3 to observe the origin of sexual concupiscence and the formation of "the man of concupiscence" (Section 2). He then analyzes the three main elements of Jesus' statement one by one: the commandment against adultery, the meaning of "looking at a woman to desire her," and the meaning of "has committed adultery in his heart" (Section 3). He then steps back from the details of Jesus' word to analyze the new "ethos of the body" expressed in it. He shows that Christ does not in the first place accuse the heart, but calls it (Section 4) to live according to the ethos of the redemption of the body (Section 5) according to the Spirit who creates purity of the heart (Section 6). He concludes with an overview of the Gospel of the purity of heart (Section 7).

1. In the Light of the Sermon on the Mount
2. The Man of Concupiscence
 - A. The Meaning of Original Shame
 - B. Insatiability of the Union
 - C. The Corruption of the Spousal Meaning of the Body
3. Commandment and Ethos
 - A. It Was Said, "Do Not Commit Adultery" (Mt 5:27)
 - B. "Whoever Looks to Desire..."
 - C. "Has Committed Adultery in the Heart..."
4. The "Heart"—Accused or Called?
 - A. Condemnation of the Body?
 - B. The "Heart" under Suspicion?
 - C. Eros and Ethos
5. The Ethos of the Redemption of the Body
6. Purity as "Life according to the Spirit"
7. The Gospel of the Purity of Heart—Yesterday and Today
- Appendix: The Ethos of the Body in Art and Media

CHAPTER 3: CHRIST APPEALS TO THE RESURRECTION: "In the resurrection they will not marry" (Mt 22:30). John Paul II takes up the question of the resurrection and the final fulfillment of the spousal meaning of the body in the vision of God, first in the teaching of Jesus (Section 1A) and then in the teaching of Paul (Section 1B). The immediately following discussion of continence for the

kingdom of heaven considers virginity as an anticipatory sign of the resurrection, first in the teaching of Jesus (Section 2A) and then in that of Paul (Section 2B). An overview of “redemption of the body” concludes Part 1.

1. The Resurrection of the Body as a Reality of the “Future World”
 - A. The Synoptics: “He Is Not God of the Dead but of the Living”
 - B. Pauline Interpretation of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:42–49
2. Contenance for the Kingdom of Heaven
 - A. The Words of Christ in Matthew 19:11–12
 - B. Paul’s Understanding of the Relation between Virginity and Marriage (1 Cor 7)

PART 2: THE SACRAMENT: John Paul II’s discussion of the “*sacramentum magnum*,” the great mystery of spousal love in Ephesians, highlights the importance of his discussion of Genesis. Ephesians itself refers back to the beginning when it describes the mystery. “Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother and unite with his wife, and the two will form one flesh. This mystery is great; I say this with reference to Christ and the Church” (Eph 5:31–32). John Paul II accordingly reads Ephesians in light of Jesus’ teaching about the beginning, including Genesis 1–2. Conversely, his reading of Ephesians sheds light on his reading of Genesis in Part 1.

The principle of division in Part 2 is the distinction between the *grace* of the sacrament and the sacramental *sign* that signifies and realizes this grace.

Given that the sacrament is the sign by means of which the saving reality of grace and the covenant is expressed and realized, we must now consider it under the aspect of sign, while the preceding reflections were devoted to the reality of grace and the covenant. (TOB 103:3)

The reflections about the sacrament of marriage were carried out in the consideration of the *two dimensions* essential to this *sacrament* (as to every other sacrament), namely, the dimension of covenant and grace and the dimension of the sign. Through these two dimensions,

we continually went back to the reflections on the theology of the body that were linked with the key words of Christ. (TOB 133:2)

CHAPTER 1: THE DIMENSION OF COVENANT AND OF GRACE: John Paul II offers a detailed reading of Ephesians 5:21–33 (Section 1). He then steps back from the details of the text to offer a more global view of the great mystery (Section 2). In the final section (3), he explores the connections between Ephesians and Christ’s words as discussed in Part 1, first from the perspective of Christ’s words (Section 3A) and then from the perspective of Paul’s words (Section 3B).

1. Ephesians 5:21–33
 - A. Introduction and Connection
 - B. Detailed Analysis
2. Sacrament and Mystery
3. Sacrament and “Redemption of the Body”
 - A. The Gospel
 - B. Ephesians

CHAPTER 2: THE DIMENSION OF SIGN: In order to understand the sacramental sign, John Paul II develops the concept of “language of the body” (Section 1). The sacramental sign has one focal point in the words of conjugal consent and another focal point in sexual union, in which the bodies of man and woman speak “prophetically” in the name and with the authority of God. The Song of Songs presents this erotic language of the body in its full human integrity (Section 2). This section is clearly one of the most important in the whole work. At its beginning, John Paul II says, “It seems to me that what I want to set forth in the coming weeks is the crowning, as it were, of what I have explained” (*Insegnamenti* text of the catechesis on May 23, 1984, see p. 549). In Section 3, John Paul II uses Tobit as a springboard to develop an argument about the close relationship between the language of the body in sexual union and the language of the sacrament according to Ephesians and the Church’s liturgy.

1. “Language of the Body” and the Reality of the Sign
2. The Song of Songs
3. When the “Language of the Body” Becomes Language of the Liturgy (Reflections on Tobit)

FINAL PART: HUMANAE VITAE (attached as Chapter 3 to Part 2; CHAPTER 3: HE GAVE THEM THE LAW OF LIFE AS THEIR INHERITANCE): John Paul II first presents the encyclical's teaching about contraception (Section 1) and then gives a panoramic view of conjugal spirituality according to *Humanae Vitae* (Section 2).

d. The Main Argument

There is a single main argument that runs through TOB. It is enriched by many subthemes, but is in itself clear and simple. What is at stake in the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* about the inseparability of the unitive and procreative meaning of the conjugal act is nothing else than “rereading the ‘language of the body’ in the truth” (TOB 118:6). John Paul II develops the concepts “language of the body” and “rereading [it] in the truth” in the section on the sacrament in the dimension of sign (TOB 103–16). The whole argument preceding TOB 103 can be understood as providing the foundation on which the concept of “rereading the ‘language of the body’ in the truth” can be understood. The key concept in this foundation is “the spousal meaning of the body.” It is this meaning that is reread in the truth when man and woman engage in authentic sexual intercourse. Let us trace this argument in more detail by looking at some of the key passages that carry it forward.

PART 1, CHAPTER 1: CHRIST APPEALS TO THE “BEGINNING”: The foundation of the argument is laid in Chapter 1, in which John Paul II interprets Jesus’ teaching about God’s original plan for human love. The highpoint of the argument is the extensive discussion of the spousal meaning of the body in the context of a hermeneutics of the gift (TOB 13–19). In the concluding passage, John Paul II writes:

Man appears in the visible world as the highest expression of the divine gift, because he bears within himself the inner dimension of the gift. And with it he carries into the world his particular likeness to God, with which he transcends and also rules his “visibility” in the world, his bodiliness, his masculinity or femininity, his nakedness. A reflection of this likeness is also the primordial awareness of the spousal meaning of the body pervaded by the mystery of original innocence.

Thus, in this dimension, a primordial *sacrament* is constituted, understood as a *sign that efficaciously transmits in the visible world the*

invisible mystery hidden in God from eternity. And this is the mystery of Truth and Love, the mystery of divine life, in which man really participates. In the history of man, it is original innocence that begins this participation and is also the source of original happiness. The sacrament, as a visible sign, is constituted with man, inasmuch as he is a “body,” through his “visible” masculinity and femininity. The body, in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it.

...Original innocence, connected with the experience of the spousal meaning of the body, is holiness itself, which permits man to express himself deeply with his own body, precisely through the “sincere gift” of self [*Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3]. Consciousness of the gift conditions in this case “the sacrament of the body”: in his body as man or woman, man senses himself as a subject of holiness. (TOB 19:3–5)

The key terms of John Paul II’s whole argument are brought into play in this passage: the spousal meaning of the body linked with the gift of self, and the efficacious sacramental transmission of trinitarian life by the body in its spousal meaning.

PART 1, CHAPTER 2: CHRIST APPEALS TO THE HUMAN HEART: The spousal meaning of the body is also the criterion according to which one must judge man’s historical state. In this state, a battle takes place between concupiscence and the spousal meaning of the body.

The image of the concupiscence of the body that emerges from the present analysis has a clear reference to the image of the person with which we connected our earlier analyses on the subject of the spousal meaning of the body. In fact, as a person, man is “the only creature on earth which God willed for itself” and at the same time the one who “cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3). Concupiscence in general—and the concupiscence of the body in particular—attacks precisely this “sincere gift”: *it deprives man, one could say, of the dignity of the gift, which is expressed by his body through femininity and masculinity, and in some sense “depersonalizes” man, making him an object “for the other.”* Instead of being “together with the other”—a subject in unity, or better, in the sacramental “unity of the body”—man becomes an object for man, the female for the male and vice versa. (TOB 32:4)

The problem of concupiscence is thus not that it gives an excessive importance to sex, but that it fails to give it adequate importance.

It isolates sexual pleasure from its essential context in the life of persons.

PART 1, CHAPTER 3: CHRIST APPEALS TO THE RESURRECTION: John Paul II shows the final fulfillment of God's plan for human love in the beatific vision. This end, while being last in time, is first in intention. Being first in intention, it determines everything else, including God's original plan for human love. Again "the spousal meaning of the body" is the central concept.

The reciprocal gift of oneself to God—a gift in which man will concentrate and express all the energies of his own personal and at the same time psychosomatic subjectivity—will be the response to God's gift of self to man. In this reciprocal gift of self by man, a gift that will become completely and definitively beatifying as the response worthy of a personal subject to God's gift of self, the "virginity" or rather the virginal state of the body will manifest itself completely as the eschatological fulfillment of the "spousal" meaning of the body, as the specific sign and authentic expression of personal subjectivity as a whole. (TOB 68:3)

Again, one should take note of the importance of the "spousal meaning of the body." The ultimate fulfillment of the human person, and thus the ultimate measure of all moral acts, lies in realizing the spousal meaning of the body.

PART 2, CHAPTER 1: THE DIMENSION OF COVENANT AND OF GRACE: Part 2 moves from the teaching of Jesus to its reflection in the "great sacrament" of Ephesians 5. In his account of the grace of the sacrament, John Paul II unfolds the content of the "*magnum mysterium*" of spousal love. This is "the truth" by which the spousal meaning of the body is measured.

The analogy of the love of spouses (or spousal love) seems to *emphasize* above all *the aspect of* God's *gift of himself* to man who is chosen "from ages" in Christ (literally, his gift of self to "Israel," to the "Church"); a gift that is in its essential character, or as gift, total (or rather "radical") and irrevocable. This gift is certainly "radical" and therefore "total."...

...The analogy of marriage, as a human reality in which spousal love is incarnated, helps in some way to *understand the mystery of grace* as an eternal reality in God and as a "historical" fruit of the redemption of humanity in Christ. Yet, we said earlier that this biblical analogy not only "explains" the mystery but also, conversely, the mystery

defines and determines the adequate way of understanding the analogy and precisely that component of it in which the biblical authors see “*the image and likeness*” of the divine mystery. Thus, the comparison of marriage (due to spousal love) with the relationship between Yahweh and Israel in the Old covenant and between Christ and the Church in the New, is at the same time decisive for *the way of understanding marriage* itself and determines this way. (TOB 95b:4–5)

In this text, John Paul II describes spousal love in agreement with St. John of the Cross as a gift of self that is radical and thus total and irrevocable. God’s covenant with human beings and the gift of his grace are essentially spousal. It is by this measure of God’s gift of himself in Christ that spouses must measure the spousal meaning of their bodies. The *sacramentum magnum* in its dimension of covenant and grace is thus the measure of the sacrament in the dimension of sign.

PART 2, CHAPTER 2: THE DIMENSION OF SIGN: The concept of “reading” or “rereading” the “language of the body” appears first in the section on the sacramentality of marriage in the dimension of sign.

The words, “I take you as my wife/as my husband,” bear within themselves precisely that perennial and ever unique and unrepeatable “language of the body,” and they place it at the same time in the context of the communion of persons. “I promise to be faithful to you always, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, and to love you and honor you all the days of my life.” In this way, the perennial and ever new “language of the body” is *not only the “substratum,”* but *in some sense also the constitutive content of the communion of persons.* The persons—the man and the woman—become a reciprocal gift for each other. They become this gift in their masculinity and femininity while they discover the spousal meaning of the body and refer it reciprocally to themselves in an irreversible way: in the dimension of life as a whole. (TOB 103:5)

What should be noted in this text is that John Paul II develops the concept of “the language of the body” out of “the spousal meaning of the body.”

FINAL PART: *HUMANAE VITAE* (CHAPTER 3: HE GAVE THEM THE LAW OF LIFE AS THEIR INHERITANCE): The main teaching of *Humanae Vitae*, namely, the need to respect the inseparability of the unitive and the procreative meaning of the conjugal act, is equivalent, John Paul II argues, to the need to “reread the ‘language of the body’

in the truth.” “Nothing else is at stake here than reading the ‘language of the body’ in the truth, as has been said several times in the earlier biblical analyses. The moral norm, constantly taught by the Church in this sphere, recalled and reconfirmed by Paul VI in his encyclical, springs from reading the ‘language of the body’ *in the truth*” (TOB 118:6). “The concept of a morally right regulation of fertility is nothing other than rereading the ‘language of the body’ in the truth” (TOB 125:1).

The main argument of TOB is thus very simple and clear. Its first step consists in unfolding the teaching of Jesus about the spousal meaning of the body (in its three dimensions: in God’s original plan “from the beginning”; in the present struggle with concupiscence; and in the future fulfillment by the resurrection). Its second step consists in observing how this spousal meaning functions in the great sacrament of love, particularly in the language of the body that is the effective sign of this sacrament. Its third step consists in showing that *Humanae Vitae* simply asks men and women to reread this language of the body in the truth. The persuasive power of the argument lies in its ability to bring the teaching of Jesus to bear on the question of the genuine development and happiness of the human person. Jesus’ teaching has an *inner* persuasive power, which lies in the beauty of God’s plan for human love.

e. A Guiding Star for Reading TOB

With Pascal Ide, one can condense the whole argument of TOB in the statement, “Gift expresses the essential truth of the human body.”²⁴⁵ There is a deep continuity between Wojtyła’s point of departure in St. John of the Cross’s theology of the spousal gift of self, and this core of John Paul II’s argument in *Man and Woman He Created Them*. “*Aimer c’est tout donner et se donner soi-même*. To love is to give everything and to give oneself,” writes St. Thérèse of Lisieux, in full agreement with her teacher St. John of the Cross and her student John Paul II.²⁴⁶ Her axiom can serve as a guiding star for the voyage through TOB.

245. Ide, “Don et théologie du corps,” 161.

246. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *Pourquoi je t’aime, ô Marie!, Why I Love you, Mary*, stanza 22.

Three important points should be kept in mind for a correct understanding of this guiding star. First, following John Paul II, one should avoid an excessive distinction between eros and agape, between sexual fulfillment and the disinterested gift of self in the love between man and woman.²⁴⁷ It would not be agape, but a slap in the face of one's spouse to say, "I give myself to you only for your own good. I am not interested in any pleasure you might give me." Erotic tension and sexual enjoyment are essential parts of spousal agape. Through such tension and enjoyment, the human body speaks the spousal gift of self in sexual intercourse.

As ministers of a sacrament...man and woman are called to *express* the mysterious "*language*" of their bodies in all the truth properly belonging to it. Through gestures and reactions, through the whole reciprocally conditioned dynamism of tension and enjoyment—whose direct source is the body in its masculinity and femininity, the body in its action and interaction—through all this *man*, the person, "speaks." (TOB 123:4)²⁴⁸

Second, in proposing his sexual politics of radical gift, John Paul II does not cast even a shadow of suspicion on sexual intercourse as

247. "Fundamentally, 'love' is a single reality, but with different dimensions; at different times, one or other dimension may emerge more clearly. Yet when the two dimensions are totally cut off from one another, the result is a caricature or at least an impoverished form of love" (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 8). *Agapē* is the word chosen by the Septuagint and the New Testament as the general word for love. It does not, as such, have the specific meaning of "purely self-giving love." *Erōs* is used only twice in the Septuagint (Prov 7:18; 30:16), never in the New Testament. One can see the breadth of "*agapē*" in 2 Samuel 13:15. After David's son Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar, "he was seized with a very great loathing for her; indeed, his loathing was even greater than the *agapē* with which he had agapically loved her, *hyper tēn agapēn hēn ēgapēsen autēn*." The *New Revised Standard Version* translates "*agapē*" in this context correctly as "lust." "His loathing was even greater than the lust he had felt for her" (2 Sam 13:15). The meaning "purely self-giving love" that has tended to attach itself to "*agapē*" seems to be mainly the result of the repeated use of "*agapē*" for love in the New Testament, particularly in the context of discussions of God's love for us.

248. It is difficult to see how a careful reader of TOB can accuse John Paul II of giving an incomplete picture of spousal love on this point. "A more complete picture should recognize that the gift of self also involves some human fulfillment and sexual enjoyment.... The papal teaching on marriage and sexuality fails to develop or even mention the role of sexual pleasure in marriage." Curran, *Moral Theology of John Paul II*, 170–72; 187. For the many passages overlooked by Curran, see Index at PLEASURE, together with cross-references.

such, on sexual pleasure as such. In this respect, his vision of the ethos of the Sermon on the Mount differs profoundly from Manichaean contempt for sex.

The adequate interpretation of Christ's words (Mt 5:27–28) as well as the "praxis" in which the authentic *ethos* of the Sermon on the Mount is realized step by step, must be absolutely free from Manichaean elements in thought and attitude. A Manichaean attitude would have to lead to the "annihilation of the body"—if not real, then at least intentional; to a negation of the value of human sex, that is, of the masculinity and femininity of the human person; or at least to their mere "toleration" within the limits of the "need" marked off by procreation. By contrast, on the basis of Christ's words in the Sermon on the Mount, the Christian *ethos* is characterized by a *transformation of the human person's consciousness and attitudes*, both the man's and the woman's, such as to express and realize, according to the Creator's original plan, *the value of the body and of sex*, placed as they are at the service of the "communion of persons," which is the deepest substratum of human ethics and culture. While for the Manichaean mentality, the body and sexuality constitute, so to speak, an "anti-value," for Christianity, on the contrary, they always remain "a value not sufficiently appreciated." (TOB 45:3)²⁴⁹

It is clear that John Paul II sees much need for change in this area. He sees an insufficient appreciation of the goodness of sexuality among Christians. In his view, Christians suffer from this defect not because they are Christians, but because they are affected by the Cartesian vision of nature characteristic of the Modern Age and the consequent banalization of sex characteristic of the sexual revolution. One might well summarize John Paul II's judgment about the sexual revolution in this way: the sexual revolution does not sufficiently appreciate the value and beauty of sex. It deprives sex of its depth by detaching it from the spousal meaning of the body. It favors the sexual lie, in which the language of radical gift is overlaid by the contrary language of individual autonomy and the use of persons for pleasure. John Paul II clearly and frequently affirms the goodness of sexual

249. Again, a careful reader could hardly write, "The impression given by *The Theology of the Body* is that passion and sexual pleasure are totally suspect and in need of control. The Pope does not seem to acknowledge a fundamental goodness about sexuality, despite the ever-present danger of lust and concupiscence." Curran, *Moral Theology of John Paul II*, 170.

pleasure (see Index at PLEASURE), but he sees sexual pleasure as belonging by its deepest and innermost nature to the dynamism of radical gift between man and woman.

Third, TOB is not primarily an admonition to follow the *law* of the body, but a persuasive proclamation of the *gospel* of the body. John Paul II does not see Jesus primarily as a moralist, as teaching a high ideal of self-giving love that leaves human beings in despair about the weakness of their flesh and the failure of their attempts to measure up to ideal love. On the contrary, Jesus speaks primarily as the redeemer, who overcomes sin and opens the way for a real transformation, for life in the Spirit. He is the redeemer of the body (see Index at REDEMPTION OF THE BODY), who has the power to inscribe the law of love on hearts of flesh. “I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh” (Ezek 11:19). “I will write my law on their hearts” (Jer 31:33). He can demand a radical gift of self, because he himself made such a gift of himself to the human race, and his gift is effective.

Christ’s words, which flow from the divine depth of the mystery of redemption, allow us to discover and strengthen the bond that exists between the dignity of the human being (of the man or the woman) and the spousal meaning of his body. On the basis of this meaning, they allow us to understand and bring about the mature freedom of the gift, which expresses itself in one way in indissoluble marriage and in another by abstaining from marriage for the kingdom of God. On these different ways, Christ “fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22:1). *This vocation is inscribed in man according to his whole psycho-physical compositum precisely through the mystery of the redemption of the body* [emphasis added].

Everything we have tried to do in the course of our meditations in order to understand the words of Christ has its definitive foundation in the mystery of the redemption of the body. (TOB 86:8)

In *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul II shows the implications of the centrality of redemption for the authentic form of Christian morality.

Jesus shows that the commandments must not be understood as a minimum limit not to be gone beyond, but rather as a path involving a moral and spiritual journey towards perfection, at the heart of which is love (cf. Col 3:14). Thus the commandment “You shall not murder” becomes a call to an attentive love which protects and promotes the life of one’s neighbor. The precept prohibiting adultery becomes an

invitation to a pure way of looking at others, capable of respecting the spousal meaning of the body.... *Jesus himself is the living "fulfillment" of the law* inasmuch as he fulfills its authentic meaning by the total gift of himself: *he himself becomes a living and personal law*, who invites people to follow him; through the Spirit, he gives the grace to share his own life and love and provides the strength to bear witness to that love in personal choices and actions (cf. Jn 13:34–35).²⁵⁰



In *Man and Woman He Created Them*, John Paul II left us the core of his great vision, deeply rooted in St. John of the Cross, a vision focused on the mystery of love that reaches from the Trinity through Christ's spousal relation with the Church to the concrete bodies of men and women. The voyage through TOB is long and at times very difficult, but it will richly reward you, the reader, for your time and effort.

250. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 15.