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THE QUESTION OF THE HUMAN PERSON: SUMMIT OF FIRST PHILOSOPHY

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(originally published in *Aletheia* #4 – December 1993)

Let us begin with a brief review of how the question of First Philosophy comes about for us. Today, more than ever, the philosopher is interested in looking at man and all his dimensions: man working, man loving, man cooperating, man who is in the world, man who is counted among the living beings, and finally man who exists. This man who exists becomes aware that he exists, that he is. It is through his existence that he is in communion with all the realities that he can experience and know, however he is also radically distinct from each and every reality by his own being, which is personal and individual.

To understand in a philosophical way what man is, we should always come back to the experience that we have of him. It is through experience that we can discover what he is and his spiritual way of existing in all of his different dimensions. However, it is necessary to understand well that even though we can grasp through an internal and external experience what the man who works is, it is much more problematic to grasp what he is in so far as he is. For, precisely speaking, we do not have a direct experience of "being." Philosophy begins by experience in Philosophy of the Artistic Activity, in Ethics, in Political Philosophy; the same holds true for the Philosophy of Matter (of nature) and the Philosophy of the Living Being. We truly have five experiences *sui generis*, five different experiences which are five starting points of the five major orientations of realistic philosophy. We do not, however, have an experience of being in the strict sense of the term since we have never encountered it.

These five experiences do however have something in common. All of them put me into contact with reality and even into contact with the most perfect reality that I can experience: man. It is man who works and transforms a reality that is other than himself, man who loves another man, man who cooperates with another man, man who discovers the material universe, the physical world into which he is born, man who is a living being. And, it is truly man who exists, who is. The unity of all my experiences beyond their diversity is constituted by the judgment of existence "I am"; man in me exists.

All my experiences, not my intuitions, thus lead me to this discovery: I am, I exist. The various intuitions, even the one called "the intuition of being" are always based upon relations. Every intuition allows me to discover a new relation which was hidden from me and then suddenly is unveiled for me. The suddenness of this unveiling is what delights me since through it, the intuition enables me to grasp, as it were, a whole new world. My

intuitions thus project me into a new universe that is beyond the one that I usually experience. However, these intuitions do not let me know whether I have reached a real, existing world or simply a world that my own intelligence creates. The relation as such can really exist independently of me or it can be a relation "of reason". It all depends on its foundation. It is in this sense that we can say that the relation as such is beyond the judgment of existence, that it remains at the level of "possible forms" which do or do not exist.[1]

The Judgment of Existence "This Is" and the Discovery of the Proper Principles of Being

The judgment of existence precisely speaking is "this is" or "I am." One of the major philosophical questions is that of trying to know whether one should begin with "I am" in order to reach "this is," or if, on the contrary, one should start with "this is" and end up at "I am." For the philosopher, it is of utmost importance to discover this order for from it arise two Metaphysics which are totally different, that of Aristotle and that of Descartes.

If I begin with the affirmation "I am," I will grasp being relative to "I." I will remain in the immanence of my "I" and will not be able to go beyond it. If I begin in this way, I will not be able to grasp being in itself for I will always grasp it relative to my "I," which I alone can grasp. Indeed I will only be able to reach the "this is" in a particular way, through my "I am," which is in fact a particular existence.

If I begin with the affirmation "this is," I will progressively succeed in grasping the personal character of the "I am" because by affirming "this is" I do not confine myself to the immanence of my knowledge. Rather, I can discover what is unique in this intellectual touch of the existing reality, which is other than my own knowledge and actualizes it. In fact, while affirming "this is" I can highlight the proper signification of "is" beyond the "this." The "this" can apply to all kinds of existing realities: this cow, this tree, myself as well. In order to more fully emphasize the "is," I can isolate it by looking at it for itself. In doing so, I question by asking, "What is being? What is being considered as being, in itself?" In other words, when I affirm "this is," I can emphasize either "this" or "is." If I emphasize "this," I look at the one who exists, man who exists, who is there in front of me, man who works, man who loves (I can also look at all living beings)… I experience "this," but I do not look at "is" in itself. If I emphasize "is," then I intend to look at it in itself and I question: "What is *being*?" And, to better know being, I come back to my initial experience while looking at it in a new way, in the very light of my question. The *being* of every existing reality interests me. In this way, I can reach being in all of its objectivity. I go beyond the "I am" in order to only look at that which is in so far as it is. The question, "What is being?" acquires all its strength, takes on its entire signification.

[1] Very intuitive people know well that they always have a tendency to "take flight" a little. To take flight is not necessarily something bad or a way of falling into a ditch, but it implies going beyond what is immediately given. This can enable one to discover a principle, a hidden source, a real, invisible cause, but it can also lead to deviations… Intuition in and of itself is neither true nor false, neither good nor evil; it enables us to go further. It can thus be at the origin of discovering that which is beyond and in this sense, it transcends immediate experience. It can thus both lead to and lead away from the judgment of existence.

For Heidegger, the question, "What is being?" is the major question; it is what is most important in our search for being. One must even remain in this question because through it, one reaches what is ultimate in our search for truth. His position is very significant and interesting. For if the question, "What is being?" is fundamental, how can it be explained by something even more fundamental? Usually we explain what is secondary by what is fundamental, the effects by their causes. But how can we explain this fundamental question? By something more fundamental, being itself. This implies that being be considered as prior to the question, "What is being?" From Heidegger's perspective, this is impossible because being only appears in its entire purity of being thanks to one's question, thanks to one's thought, which can separate being from all the "beings" by negating them. In doing so, one can no longer respond to this question; it remains the summit of one's intellectual research.

For Heidegger, being is only grasped in its entire purity, in so far as being, thanks to and in one's thought. If, on the contrary, we understand that in the judgment "this is" and in the question, "What is being?" being is presented to us in two different modalities, such as white and whiteness, but that it still has the same signification, we will then be able to return to the judgment of existence "this is" grasped in any given reality existing apart from our affirmation. All the analysis of First Philosophy must therefore be done based upon these experiences, in light of the question: "What is being?" according to the form and according to the end.

By asking: "What is being according to the form?" I seek to grasp the radical and primary determination of that-which-is in so far as being. This question leads me, progressively and inductively, to the discovery of the primary determination of that-which-is: the substance. This question must look at a specific existing man and every existing man. My question arises from the judgment of existence that I have discovered through a man who exists. In analyzing this man, in the very light of this question, I discover what is primary in him at the level of being: his substance.

In experiencing an existing man, Peter, I notice the great diversity of his determinations (what we commonly called the ten categories). I cannot stop at any of these. Even those that are called "first substance" and "second substance" cannot be what is first from the viewpoint of being because these two essential determinations are correlated and mutually call for one another. We must go beyond them by discovering their proper source: the substance, proper principle of that-which-is in so far as being. This substance is indeed the soul; but the soul is principle of life and the substance is the proper principle of that-which-is. The major question about the distinction between that-which-is in so far as being and one's *life* surfaces immediately. Philosophically speaking, this question cannot be examined here.[2]

This primary discovery of the substance leads me to the second question: "What is being?" no longer according to the form, but according to the end: "With a view to what is that-which-is?"

Understand that the question about the τί έστι of that-which-is can be asked in four different manners: What is being according to the form? what is being according to matter? what is being according to the efficient cause? and what is being according to the final

[2] The question of the soul is treated in philosophy of the Living Being. It is then seen as a means of access to the discovery of the substance. We see it here again as well as in a view of wisdom.

cause? The question, "What is being according to matter?" is a false step, a dead end, because matter, from the philosophical standpoint, is completely relative to the form. It cannot be first from the viewpoint of that-which-is. Averroes and Lenine both said that matter was a proper cause of being. For them, being and becoming are identical since one can only experience the becoming of that-which-is. The search for the τί έστι, for the *what is it?* is therefore brought down to a dialectical description of the πως, the *how*.

Similarly, the question, "What is being according to the efficient cause?" does not have a response either because, in fact, being in so far as being is beyond becoming and because the direct and proper efficient cause is always a part of becoming. We constantly have this experience. When writing, I experience the efficient cause as long as I am writing because as long as I am writing there is a becoming. However in the order of that-which-is in so far as it is, there is no proper efficient cause. I thus understand that I cannot grasp the act of creation (which touches being) through becoming. By virtue of this fact, no scientific knowledge, which is constantly linked to becoming, can discover the act of creation. This fact is of crucial importance in today's world, which is facing atheistic ideologies. Every atheistic ideology reduces being to becoming. Now if I were to reduce being to becoming and were logical in my system, I would only end up by affirming that God does not exist.

The second metaphysical question, which is similar to the first yet very different, is the question about the *finality* of that-which-is: "What is that-which-is in so far as being according to the final cause?" or "Why is being as such?" This question can also be phrased in another way that is more understandable for us: "What is the ultimate meaning of being?" I cannot respond that it is the substance because the substance remains in the immanence of that-which-is. Now the fulfillment of all the realities that I see is beyond the immanence of these beings. All the realities that I experience, and most especially the human reality, cannot be fulfilled by and in themselves, because of their limits. I cannot affirm that everything that is beyond my vital immanence—my lived experience—does not exist. Of course, all of this can exist in me in a way that is purely intentional, but what is intentional is real. It can be an anticipation of something that is beyond me. By means of our intelligence, we can go beyond our direct experience; this demands that we ask ourselves the question: "Is there a reality beyond this direct experience?" Without a doubt, it is in this way that we can best understand this search for the *finality* of being—that which is its end, its fulfillment, its perfection, that-beyond-which there is nothing else.

Within the existing reality I can have the experience of two states, the state of the one who is sleeping and the state of the one who is awake. We have this experience every day. It is really the distinction of two states that are in the same reality, in the same being. Being thus possesses two states and I find this distinction throughout my entire human life and all my activities. I must therefore ask a question about the order of these two states at the level of that-which-is in so far as being in order to grasp this order in the most profound and true way. If there are two states, then there is something more profound and ultimate than these two states, and which explains them. In this way, the philosopher progressively enters into the induction of being-in-act and grasps the finality of that-which-is in so far as it is.

We thus discover two fundamental divisions of that-which-is in so far as being. The first division is the one where being presents itself to me by means of the source of all determinations—the substance—and by the secondary determinations—qualities and

accidents. In the second division, being presents itself to me by means of two completely different states—a state of act and a state of that-which-is in potency. Beyond these two states I grasp being-in-act, principle-end of that-which-is and being-in-potency, which is completely relative to being-in-act.

"One": Property of Being

After having discovered the two proper principles of that-which-is in so far as being, we should clarify, in light of these two principles, the property of that-which-is considered from the viewpoint of being since what is proper to scientific knowledge is to know the experienced reality in light of its proper causes and thereby clarify all that is essential to this reality. Without trying to expound upon the great tension between the two philosophies of Aristotle and Plato, between Aristotelians and Neo-Platonists, let me simply recall that for Aristotle, "one" is an *acolyte* of that-which-is; and for Plato, "one" is beyond that-which-is as such. Basically, this amounts to discovering that every philosophy concerning the conditioning of our thought affirms that "one" is first while what is primarily contained in our thought is being. On the contrary, the philosophy that seeks to know that-which-is, the existing reality, affirms, due to our experiences, that that-which-is is first, and, by the same fact, it discovers "one" as a property of that-which-is, relative to that-which-is.

Indeed, "one" is not only that which is not divided, but also that which cannot be divided; it is the undivided. It is thus that which is beyond matter, beyond quantity, beyond the possible. Matter is source of divisibility, just as quantity and the possible are. What characterizes being as such is to be beyond matter and becoming. Grasping being, that-which-is, is direct because that-which-is primarily determines and specifies the intelligence. On the other hand, grasping "one" implies the negation of all potency, of all divisibility; it is thus mediated by negation, which is an operation proper to the intelligence. Being imposes itself upon my intellectual knowledge whereas "one" is its proper fruit. If "one" is the proper fruit of my knowledge, it is closer to it because it remains immanent to it, whereas being always transcends my thought.

This explains how, thanks to the light given by the substance, proper principle of that-which-is in so far as being (in the order of the cause according to the form), we can clarify that everything that is in so far as it is, is one due to its radical determination which excludes every indetermination and every relativism. This allows us to grasp the extent to which being demands a radical autonomy. That which is one proclaims this autonomy since it is not relative in itself. We understand as well how, thanks to the light given by being-in-act, proper principle of that-which-is in so far as being (in the order of the final cause), we can clarify that everything that is in so far as it is, is one precisely because it does not have to seek a complement, an end outside itself. It has in itself its own perfection, its end. This allows us to grasp the extent to which being requires goodness. It is capable of attracting, of being source of love.

Inasmuch as that-which-is in so far as it is, is one, I can also say that what is second or relative is multiple. The "many" or multiple thus concerns the 'accidental' being and the being in potency, which is always relative. Since in fact there are five modalities of being-in-

act and five modalities of being-in-potency, I can immediately affirm that there are also five modalities of unity and five modalities of multiplicity (the unity of the substantial *esse*, of truth, of goodness, of the vital operation and of movement.)[3]

"One" and the Person

According to the Thomistic scholastic tradition, First Philosophy ended with this search for the one and the many and culminated in the question: "Does a first Being, whom religious traditions call God, exist?" This search is what has been commonly called the means of access to the existence of the first Being.

Is there not however therein an omission that has had very serious consequences? Indeed, should not a true human philosophy be completed by a study of the human person at the proper level of being? Is not the most perfect reality that we can experience the human person? Some have neglected to study the person at the level of being in order to better understand the relationship between being and the spirit. A direct consequence of this omission has been the opposition between the philosophy of being and the philosophy of the spirit. Is this not, precisely speaking, the whole tragedy of European philosophy? Did not Metaphysics of being in decadent Scholasticism give rise to a livelier philosophy, that of the spirit? According to Descartes, this philosophy turns its back on Aristotle, in the sense that it inverts the order of the two first philosophical questions. For Aristotle, the first question is about whether such and such a reality exists and then one questions in order to know what it is, its profound signification. Descartes does just the opposite and leans toward a primacy of the spirit over the existing reality.

Some have wondered if a sort of synthesis of these two European-born philosophies could be made. It seems impossible, because one excludes the other. In fact, according to one of these positions, thought is relative to that-which-is; according to the other, human thought measures all realities in our universe, even man. In reality, is it not necessary to go right to the end of the philosophy of being and touch in a very realistic way what is entirely particular to the human person? In this way, one will be able to assume what is original in the philosophy of the spirit without separating it from First Philosophy, but by extending the latter in a proper search for the "I am."[4]

We must thus ask ourselves if there are not two conclusions to First Philosophy, that of "one" and that of the human person. What is sure is that the entire decadent Scholasticism, the entire Thomastic Scholastic Metaphysics ends with the question of the one and the many. Is this correct? Is it not necessary to introduce the question about the human person as a conclusion to Metaphysics? Otherwise, would we not remain in an anthropology like that of

[3] There are in fact six modalities of unity: the substance's unity is an immanent unity of determination; the unity of existence is the unity that emerges on the side of act as that which is substantially ultimate—it is the unity of our autonomy; truth's unity implies perfection in the order of intelligibility; the good's unity is the unity of the reality that is capable of attracting another, giving an end to a human person; the unity of the vital operation is a complex unity which implies a diversity within a vital unity; and the unity of natural movement—in diversity and succession, there is a certain unity.

[4] Is this not the only way to be faithful to St Thomas Aquinas' thought? Indeed, his theology is truly a theology of the person; it demands a First Philosophy of the person. In his time this did not exist. He had to seek out in theology what the person is, the *ratio personae*, something that can only be grasped at the metaphysical level.

Kant?[5] Do we not have to go beyond anthropology and discover the question of the person? Let us try to grasp this bond of necessity between the analysis of that-which-is in so far as being and the person, just as we have grasped the bond of necessity between the question of the one and the many and that of substance and act.

Why does Metaphysics, First Philosophy, have, as it were, two conclusions? Why, after having made the analysis of that-which-is, should I necessarily look at the human person? If Scholasticism declined so profoundly, it is in fact because the question about the human person was not considered. All of philosophy is ordered toward the inquiry about man. I do philosophy in order to know man; otherwise I should just be satisfied with modern science. Of course, in the order of extension, biological science will tell me a lot more about man's body than philosophy will; the ophthalmologist will say a lot more than any philosopher who speaks about vision. The philosopher needs to take all of this information into account, but he has not necessarily discovered it by himself. For this reason, it is important for the philosopher to be friends with an ophthalmologist, with a biologist, etc.

The philosopher considers man. If he does so, then his last metaphysical consideration should not be about "one," but about the human person. Is not the human person the *how* of the most perfect being that I experience? Indeed, the most perfect being that I experience is really my person; I can directly experience it. I can directly grasp my "I am" by reflecting on my own way of existing. In this way, I discover that the affirmation of my "I am" is really like a unique and extraordinary experience. It completes all philosophical inquiry and shows how philosophy always remains connected to existence, to the existing reality, to the most perfect existence that I can experience. If the philosopher seeks to grasp the proper principles of that-which-is in so far as being, it is in order to better grasp the concrete reality of man, his proper existence. For it is indeed man that interests the philosopher before all else; man is Peter, James, John. The philosopher also seeks to understand how man and woman can experience borderline situations, especially nowadays. He understands that he should not leave it to the psychologist to speak about the human person and borderline situations. Psychology in and of itself cannot discover the person's concrete existence, for it cannot discover the person's true finality.

If philosophy has as its aim to know man, then I cannot end my First Philosophy with a property of being; I must end it with man, that is to say, the human person. This is of crucial importance nowadays. In order to revive a taste for Metaphysics, we need to understand that philosophy alone can enable us to know man in a concrete way. Some might object that philosophy is abstract, but this is false. Philosophy never lets go of the judgment of existence. Psychology is more abstract than philosophy. It is abstract because it studies laws. Philosophy studies the person; it does not study laws, but the person as it is, as it is in each one of us. Every man should be capable of recognizing himself in this philosophy of the person.[6]

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[5] Kant in opposition to Metaphysics or First Philosophy invented the word "anthropology".

[6] There are therefore two conclusions: the *how* of being, "one", and the how of the most perfect being that I can directly experience, the human person. In fact, no one nowadays has a Metaphysics which ends with man. If people had been faithful to St Thomas Aquinas, they would have seen that he had a metaphysical conception of the human person, but as a theologian. He therefore uses his metaphysical conception of the person in theology. Indeed St Thomas Aquinas begins with the *logical* definition of Boëthius and ends up with a metaphysical conception of the person. The entire evolution of St Thomas' thought happens with regard to the topic of the person. He went back to Aristotle in order to perfectly understand

From "This is" to "I am"

Let us now enter into the ultimate question of First Philosophy. Whereas the analysis of First Philosophy begins with the judgment of existence "this is," it indeed ends in the judgment of existence "I am." In this way, everything that is true in the philosophy of the spirit can thus be assumed by realistic philosophy. A realistic First Philosophy goes from "this is" to "I am." It cannot begin with the "I am" in order to reach being. In fact, in the affirmation "this is," as we have seen, the "this" is relativized by the "is", whereas in the "I am," the "I" is never relativized. This is the fundamental difference between these two judgments of existence. When I say, "this is," this judgment can imply my "I am" as well as the "I am" of my neighbor. My neighbor exists just as I exist; I do not have a particular privilege over my neighbor. However, when I discover my "I am," my "I am" is unique; I am the only one who can have access to it. My neighbor cannot have access to it. I thus see why the "I," and not being, will dominate if I begin Metaphysics with the "I am." If, on the contrary, I begin Metaphysics with the judgment of existence "this is," being dominates, and not "this." This is quite clear and important.

By affirming "I am," I am aware of being unique in relation to the whole world; there are not two "I am's" which are identical. It is very important to become aware of the originality of the "I am" in our metaphysical inquiry and to understand that there is something unique in the affirmation "I am." In fact, I grasp my being from the inside. Descartes understood this fact quite well—*Cogito, ergo sum.* By the *cogito*, I reach my "I am;" I reach it through my knowledge, through the awareness I have of existing. Otherwise, I would not be able to say "I am." So, in a certain way, in the "I am," knowledge is prior to being. If this knowledge is a metaphysical knowledge, my knowledge of the "I am" will be in its prolongation and hence will not be psychological. This affirmation "I am" will have a great interiority. It is through the knowledge of being and its proper principles that I reach the "I am." By affirming it at this level, I know that I am unique; and I am aware of the danger of the affirmation "I am" if it is cut from the entire metaphysical analysis of being that must come before it. If I say "I am" without having in act the entire analysis of being, my "I am" will be transformed into my psychological ego—I am, and I have built a fence that shows that I am at home with myself, perfectly myself. I am a hermit in my "I am," no one can come into my little interior garden, my paradise. If someone does want to come in, I will say to him, "You cannot come in, you have no idea what it is." Although the "I am" is unique at the metaphysical level, it remains open to other realities. However, the danger is that I can enclose myself in my "I am," and isolate myself. This danger comes from the confusion between Metaphysics and psychology. At the level of our consciousness,

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what Boëthius said at the level of Logics: "the person is the individual substance of a rational nature." St Thomas tried to give us a metaphysical conception of the person that would allow us to say something about the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity at the theological level. To introduce the topic of the person into First Philosophy is therefore to be faithful to the spirit of St Thomas Aquinas and to see that the decadent Scholasticism has not been faithful. If we do not introduce the topic of the person into First Philosophy, we would be unfaithful to St Thomas since he himself had a metaphysical conception of the person. Indeed, it is impossible to speak about the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity while having a purely logical conception of the person. St Thomas wanted to discover what the person is in metaphysics in order to speak correctly and honorably about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, about the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity.

psychology prevails. It is clear that my way of existing is unique, that my way of thinking is unique, that my way of loving is unique. If I remain in the exercise of my life, I know that I alone can act—I think; I myself think; I myself love. Therefore, there is a very great danger of solipsism, according to the expression used be idealistic philosophies.

In a realistic philosophy, I know that when I affirm my "I am," the affirmation of my existence is present. My existence participates in existence. It is therefore necessary to know existence by beginning with the judgment of existence "this is" in order to profoundly know my existence. In this way, I recognize that the whole metaphysical analysis of that-which-is in so far as being is necessary for the full comprehension of "I am." We thus understand how important it is to avoid this withdrawal of being into ourselves; this turning inward inevitably leads to solipsism, confining oneself to one's own awareness of self. We therefore ought to truly grasp the difference there is in the affirmation "I am" at the end of the metaphysical analysis and the simple, spontaneous "I am", which does not imply any metaphysical analysis.

Afterwards we can try to clarify what is proper in the affirmation "I am" comparatively to the affirmation "this is." In "this is," I affirm first of all a reality which surpasses me. I cannot assimilate the being of a reality. I can only reach existence in a judgment and not in an apprehension, which always has a quidditative mode. If I know being only according to a quidditative mode, I do not really know being; I reach something of being, but I do not reach being. I must therefore affirm that being is first of all given to me as something that transcends me and that I do not assimilate; it is given to me in a pure gratuitousness. It is the other when it concerns man; it is the table, the floor on which I walk, it is everything that is. However, when I affirm, "I am," I have an internal experience of that-which-is, at least with regard to my being. I therefore grasp being from the interior, not being in so far as it is, but my being. I grasp my being from the interior; I thus have an intimate knowledge of my being. It is not a transcendent knowledge of being, but an intimate one. What is most intimate in me is my existence, my act of existence. I can thus, from the interior, grasp being through my being, without leaving my being. I have a direct grasp of existence, which is indispensable so that the knowledge I have of being through the metaphysical analysis become a knowledge which is very close to me, very intimate, one that is very interior to my "I am," my being. There is thus something that is completely new. For, although I am familiar with my being, I am not familiar with being in so far as being. Being in so far as being is quite objective whereas my being is mine… There is a joy in knowing that I am unique in my being. Just as there is the "genetic code" at the scientific level, there is a "metaphysical code" of being. It is my being and through it, I grasp the concreteness of being, my actual existence.

This first observation is critical in order to understand that I truly have two different complementary yet irreducible understandings of that-which-is. On the one hand, there is the knowledge of that-which-is in its most perfect objectivity, thanks to the judgment of existence and the analysis of that-which-is in so far as being; and on the other hand, there is the knowledge of the sense of the existing being in its most perfect subjectivity, since I alone know it. Being is therefore beyond the objective-subjective distinction. In this way, I discover the greatness of First Philosophy. It is what is most objective, and it is also what is most subjective, thanks to its ending in the "I am." The subjectivity is based upon the "I am,"

but it is a radical subjectivity which is at the level of the "how" of the substance, at the level of that-which-is. Many of the objections with regard to realistic philosophy disappear when one understands that First Philosophy's whole analysis culminates in this philosophical consideration of the "I am." In other words, realistic philosophy cannot remain in the analysis of that-which-is in so far as being; it must end in the experience of the "how" of the most perfect reality that I can experience: the person.

Autonomy: First Dimension of the Person

In the "I am" I grasp that my being implies a radical autonomy; I am radically autonomous in my being. Of course, the philosopher should ask himself whether this radical autonomy is absolute or if there is a being that could be the basis of this autonomy. However, I first of all need to have the experience of this "I am" and through it, experience my autonomy in the order of being since I am the only one who discovers my "I am."

If the experience of my "I am" allows me to grasp my autonomy in the order of that-which-is, it is precisely because the substance is implied in the "I am." By the "I am" I thus have a concrete experience of the substance, proper principle according to the form of that-which-is. In the "I am," I intellectually touch, as it were, my substance—of course, I do not touch it as the proper principle of that-which-is, rather I touch it in its own modality of existing, its πως. It is proper to the substance to subsist, to exist by or in and of itself. I therefore touch my substantial existence that has its autonomy and is source of all the other determinations of my individual being. Understand here that this experience is not formally speaking the experience of my soul. The experience of my soul is something other than the experience of the "I am." It is necessary to clearly make the following distinction: the experience of the presence of my spiritual soul is an *affective* experience while the experience of my "I am," my existence, is an experience of *First Philosophy*.

The Search for Truth: Structure and Nobility of the Person

The "I am" also implies the capacity to seek the truth. "I am seeking the truth" and discovering in this way what structures my person in so far as it is spiritual. This search for truth in my "I am" can have very different modalities. However the "I am seeking the truth," which, in a certain way, finalizes my spirit, implies above all the inquiry of First Philosophy about existing reality. I discover in myself an appetite for truth, a radical desire for truth. This desire for truth is an essential part of my person. A human person who does not seek the truth will always be lacking something in his person. This deficiency is even the most fundamental one and has many consequences. A man who deliberately does not seek the truth is a person who remains imperfect since the truth is the good of the intelligence, of my spirit, of my spirit in so far as it possesses an intelligence whose good is the truth. If I do not seek the truth, I turn away from my good, from an essential and primordial good. I must do all that is possible to reach truth; I know that in seeking the truth, I develop what is most vital and noblest in me, for the intelligence is truly what is noblest in me. Using what is greatest

and most perfect in my intelligence necessarily leads me to discover the nobility of my person. The human person acquires his true nobility inasmuch as he seeks the truth. In this way, I experience that my being is a spiritual being that is beyond the world of quantity and matter. To seek the truth and discover it is the deepest nobility of my person, and I am responsible for this discovery of truth. This search demands from me a constant effort and a very great lucidity, especially in today's world where the search for truth is so little in act, acknowledged so little. It thus implies a very great effort, a constant struggle—we often must accept to be alone while ascending to the source, all the while being convinced that only the truth can perfect one's spirit, one's intelligence, and give it its true dignity. Indeed if I only listen to men's opinions, my intelligence cannot reach its nobility; it does not acquire any independence and remains a slave. I can only free myself from this slavery inasmuch as I seek the truth; only the truth can free us.[7]

We must discover this very important connection between the search for truth and the development of the person. Only the search for truth can give the person his dignity and allow him to acquire an ever-greater awareness of his responsibilities and freedom—freedom with regards to the environment in which he is. If I seek the truth, I depend upon the reality that exists, yet I become more and more free from all human opinions. Such a discovery is critical for the life of my intelligence as it helps me grasp the proper dimension of the *nobility* of the human person and at the same time makes me aware of my autonomy. The fundamental autonomy of the substance is lived out in the very search for the truth. If this search for truth is not present, I cannot truly live by my autonomy; I will thus live it in an imaginative way, dependant upon all the seductions and slogans around me. Of course, in this search for the truth, I gradually *discover* this fundamental autonomy, yet I know that I still have to *acquire* it. I become aware that I am capable of this search for truth and that only the discovery of the truth at all levels will free me from every dependence arising from the environment in which I live. It is truly this search for truth that establishes my freedom and which allows me to widen this sphere of freedom.

Lastly, this search for truth will lead me to ask: "Does a being more perfect than what I am exist, a being that is prior to me, to my "I am?" The search for truth obliges me to go beyond my direct experience to discover the presence of the invisible in what is visible. By discovering that which *exists*, I overcome the opposition between what is visible and what is invisible by taking into account their order: either what is visible to what is invisible (temporal order) or what is invisible to what is visible (order of perfection). The search for truth also demands that I seek to discover whether someone upon whom I am radically dependant and who cooperates in this search for truth with me exists or not. In other words, does my intelligence have a paternal source beyond itself, a source that is constantly drawing it? Or, am I in a total desert without any ultimate answer even though I thirst for truth? Are the human beings around me the only ones who can give me an answer? They are like me, and I should simply respect their experience, which, if they are older and if they have sought the truth themselves, is probably greater than mine.

It is a good thing, because of my love for truth, to seek and find those who can help me in my quest, those who are like mediators and who can lead me to a deeper discovery of

[7] Cf. Jn 8:32

truth. It is also good for me to make use of the human heritage. Have not all friends of wisdom, all philosophers, discovered something that can help me go much further in this search for truth? This love for truth should also cause in me a love for the human heritage of religious traditions, especially the Judeo-Christian tradition. The search for truth should lead me to inquire about the man whom the Judeo-Christian tradition shows me as being more than just a man; he is superhuman and not only that, he is the Son of God. Is it true? Obviously, I am no longer able to have a direct contact with him since he is no longer of this world. If he were still here on earth, then I should try to go see him; the love for truth should lead me to take that step. I should have the same reasoning when considering all the other founders of religions. Are Mohammed and Buddha as worthy of belief as Jesus?

Thus, the search for truth is not only an essential part of the dignity of my human person, but it is also the central point; I am capable of standing erect and following my path without stopping at any religious or political *a prioris*, which is something that demands a very great strength. Every *a priori* diminishes my human dignity because it limits my search for truth and impedes me from being totally myself. Every discovery of truth allows me to acquire a new freedom with regard to other people. This fact is extremely important in the discovery of the nobility of my human person, which I am capable of developing. Am I not responsible for the depth, the fullness, and the grandeur of my own person in this search for truth, which is truly what structures my person, that is to say, what allows me to attain my autonomy and be aware of the development of my person? In this way, I discover that philosophical inquiry wholly geared towards the truth is my primary good because it allows me to discern between opinions and truth.[8]

In the development of my person, the lucidity that allows for this self-education of *my person* is necessary. I do not first of all seek to acquire such and such a virtue, but to discover my proper finality. My intelligence enables me to discover my true good, and the first good that I reach in relation to my person is truth, because the search for truth opens me up to what is infinite. In the search for truth there are no limits; we can always go deeper and thus discover in this way that the human person is in some way without limits. However, we need to clarify that, although the human person does not have any limits in the order of the search for truth, he does have limits in his existential autonomy since his being is limited. The human person is limited by time; he is a particular age and was born in a particular place. He also has a family, which either supports him or limits him. There are two things that one should become more deeply aware of in self-education. On the one hand, one should come to see the limitations of one's person in the order of being; the human person has not set his own limits for his existence since he is not the source of his existence. His existence is a fact, even for himself. On the other hand, one should be capable of a quasi-infinite search in the order of truth—we say quasi-infinite because one is limited by time and place. Age will diminish one's biological capacities of strength, but not one's lucidity for seeking the truth. The human person can thus discover that the age of body is not the same as that of his spirit.

[8] This enables us to understand that however interesting mathematics may be, they do not give the same nobility because they do not help me discover my own person. They do enable me to have a very wide regard but do not directly ennoble my person. By this same fact, every science that depends upon mathematics in its formal structure will not be able to help me discover the truth in the full sense of the term. There is certainly a mathematical truth, but it is a truth which does not directly say anything about the human person, my "I am," whereas philosophy does present me with a truth that looks at the human person as such.

He will then come to discover something new, that is, that he is not quite totally limited. He can overcome his age and distinguish his biological and physical age from his deeper age, which is his spiritual longevity.

There is, in this discovery, an infinite opening up to the search for truth. This opening is not the existence of the human person, for it remains in the order of intentionality. It obliges me to go right to the end of my search and ask if a First Being, whom religious traditions call God, exists.

Love of Friendship: Finality and Fulfillment of the Person

Alongside the awakening to seek the truth right to the end, there is also a natural spiritual thirst to love in the human person. The third dimension of the human person, of my person, is that I am a being who thirsts to love, who cannot find in himself his absolute good. The good implies existence, and the human person is limited in his being. However, although he is limited in his existence, he has a quasi-infinite capacity to love which is similar to his infinite desire for truth; that is why the human person cannot be his own final good, his end. Of course, the person can and should love himself; his existence is his primary good. However, the search for truth is a superior good and his existence should thus be finalized (find its end) in this search for truth in such a way that if he were no longer able to seek the truth, he would surely lose his finality or end. The person might then ask himself if it would not just be better to disappear. This question is one that a lot of intellectuals and cultivated people ask nowadays: if the search for truth is the end of the human person, the day when my physical strength no longer allows me to seek the truth or if I must live in a country where the search for truth is hindered, would it not be better to disappear, to have the courage to commit suicide? Indeed, my earthly life is limited while my spirit is not limited, but what is there after death? Philosophically speaking, I am unable to know. Nonetheless, can I not affirm that whatever there is after death is surely better than remaining under the yoke of old age or under a tyrannical yoke? Do I not have the right to free myself of these yokes?

This question is something very serious when asked at the level of the human person. I cannot respond to it at this point in the philosophical inquiry, but I can affirm that I have discovered a quasi-infinite capacity for loving in the very depth of the person. I know that the person is only worthy of honor inasmuch as he seeks the truth, is only interesting to himself and to others inasmuch as this search is current. Now, the search for truth causes me to discover that the human person can *always* love another with a spiritual love of friendship; this is what gives life meaning, true significance. No human person is alone in the world; he has a true bond with others and is capable of developing this bond. Thus just as the search for truth finalizes the human person, so too the love of friendship can finalize him. The human person is capable of being the friend of someone who loves him and capable of loving someone who will become his friend. He can take initiatives in the order of spiritual love. While truth imposes itself on the human intelligence—it is possessed by truth—the human person is free when it comes to choosing a particular person as a friend. The person does not spontaneously love everybody; but he can allow a spontaneous, first love for someone to

become gradually a true, free choice of friendship. When he discovers what friendship is, he discovers a new development of his own person in himself.

As a person, I can be a friend to my friend; and if my friend is someone honorable, that is, someone who seeks the truth, who is dignified enough to seek the truth, my friend's search for truth will become mine. We will be two seekers of truth and thus even more capable of reaching it. A friend communicates everything that is his good to his friend; his most precious good is the search for truth. He communicates it in a way such that his friend will be able to get the most from it.

Search for Truth and Love of Friendship: Cooperation or Rivalry?

The friend whom the human person loves, the one he has chosen as his friend, is truly his good; he is even his end. Is he more of an end than the search for truth? This is something that we need to try to understand in the human person's development. If the search for truth imposes itself upon the human person as something more fundamental than friendship, then love of friendship should be ordered towards the search for truth. If on the contrary love of friendship fulfills the human person more than the search for truth or allows him to be more of a human person, then the search for truth should be at the service of love of friendship. Here we touch upon a critical question for the human person. He can have two deep *élans*, two deep natural appetites, one for the search for truth and another for the choice of a friend, for loving another human person. However the human person cannot remain in this duality. He has to choose at some point in time, but how can he choose?

The person can immediately understand that the search for truth increases his autonomy—something that love of friendship cannot do. Love of friendship does not increase one's personal autonomy, but gives it meaning by fulfilling it. It is therefore impossible to have one without the other. We must understand that these two great *élans* that are in the human person should always be present without becoming rivals, but in constantly stimulating or emulating one another. The more the human person loves his friend, the more he desires to give the best of himself, which is his discovery of truth. The love of friendship that the person has for someone therefore increases and stimulates his love for truth; his love for the truth in turn increases his autonomy and causes his choice of the friend to be yet freer. It is also more qualitative and implies an even greater lucidity.

These two deep élans should thus never be dialectically opposed. They should, on the contrary, cooperate in order to become deeper, intensify and acquire an ever more profound lucidity in a constant emulation. These two paths, far from being dialectically opposed, put me in the presence of the human person's depth and autonomy, and they also show me how the human person is capable of surpassing himself and thus capable of being fulfilled. He finds his fulfillment by surpassing himself, by loving someone in a true friendship, which demands a true generosity, a gift of self. Although one may get the impression that he is wasting his time because of his friend—time he could be using to seek the truth—it is actually not wasted because it is given to the friend. By it, he grows in worth, because he enables his person to reach its end.

In the human person, there are thus two ways to increase his dignity: the search for truth, which happens slowly and progressively, and love of friendship, which happens more immediately. The two cooperate since the search for truth alone cannot fully bring about the development of the human person. Although the truth is the good of the person, it is not the proper good of a *particular* person. Moreover, it is a good that is not necessarily substantial; it can be, but is not so necessarily. For, in the search for truth, the truth remains remote whereas in love of friendship, the end is immediately given to me. That is why there is something in love of friendship quite new with respect to the search for truth: a good that is the personal good of my person. This good does not increase my autonomy and even seems to make the friend dependant upon his friend. When I love someone, I am relative to him and he thus apparently diminishes my autonomy. One who seeks the truth while not being in a friendship remains totally free; one who seeks the truth while living a true friendship is no longer totally free, he is bound to his friend. Evidently, for one who seeks the truth, friendship can appear to be something separate from his end, a disturbance to him, something that limits his freedom; the friend can become a rival of his search for truth. Conflicts can arise between these two great appetites of the human person; therein lies a danger, it's sure. We must understand, however, that it is probably the best way to purify love of friendship so that this love does not become possessive. It is *passion-love* that is possessive. If we truly love the other for him, we like for him to seek the truth. He becomes more himself since in seeking the truth he is ennobled; we thus like this search for him. It is indeed when passion dominates that the search for truth can become a rival to love of friendship.

The search for truth is thus the guarantee of an authentic love of friendship if it does not give rise to jealousy among friends. It is certain that this search for truth enables love of friendship to reach all its grandeur and depth and, by this very fact, loving someone who seeks the truth is surely a guarantee that this love of friendship will reach its fulfillment since this search for truth is the greatest good that one can acquire on earth at the human level. It not only causes me to discover the nobility of my person, but the depth of my spirit and my whole self, the depth of my "I am" as well, and thus manifests my capacity of being my friend's true good. Indeed, while it is impossible that I be my own proper good, I can be a true good for a person, especially if I seek the truth.

How can I be another's good and not my own good? I can be another's good because I am other than him and because, by this very fact, I complement what he is. I cannot be my own good because I am limited in my goodness and thus cannot find my fulfillment in myself. Nevertheless I have to love myself in order to love another; it is the *sine qua non* condition, but not the determination of my love.

If the human person is lucid, he is aware of these two essential aspects of the spirit. He then understands how one can so easily opt for a philosophy of the spirit; it is even the great temptation. One will no longer consider the philosophy of reality, of being. He will be seduced by the fact that the spirit, which seeks the truth and is capable of loving another, is quasi-infinite whereas the being that he discovered in himself is limited. One is constantly coming up against these limitations.

It is thus possible that one opt for a philosophy of the spirit rather than a realistic philosophy. Remember that this is a temptation. In fact, if I am attentive to what I am as a human person, I can respond to this temptation and even use it by understanding the meaning

of its seduction. If one analyzes what is implied in the search for truth, it is easy to understand that this search is rooted in the very depths of our spirit and dwells in our "I am," in our existence. It is not, of course, our existence, but does presuppose it and cannot cut itself off from it or be separated from it. That is why it is indeed a temptation to confuse being and the life of the spirit in us—the life of the spirit in the search for truth and in the capacity for love of friendship. In order to avoid this temptation, it is necessary to distinguish between being and life, between being and spirit. The human person is only true when he acknowledges the clear distinction between his substantial autonomy and his quasi-infinite capacity to seek the truth, his quasi-infinite capacity to love a friend (in the sense that there are no internal limits to this love, although it remains intentional, which means real, yet secondary). The human person should respect the autonomy of his being in the very depths of this quasi-infinite thirst for truth.

The quasi-infinite search for truth in the human person consists first of all in distinguishing truth from sincerity. This constitutes an essential part of the human person's lucidity. If I no longer distinguish sincerity from truth, sooner or later I will necessarily opt for a primacy of the development of the spirit. Although Sartre makes the distinction between *in-itself* and *for-itself*, it is clear that being-*in-itself* is of no importance to him. (Being *for-itself* can only be an intentional being, a being which seeks the truth by its spirit, whereas *in-itself* is the substantial being, the reality.) Sartre is only interested in being *for-itself!* Actually, being *for-itself* would not exist if there was not being *in-itself.*

Similarly, if I did not distinguish being from life, I could affirm that the spirit does not exist if it does not subsist in itself and by itself, even beyond this search for truth which manifests the spirit's élan, its end. But how could the spirit exist in itself? At the level of life, the spirit remains in the immanence of the intellectual knowledge; at the level of being, it cannot but be relative to the human person who alone subsists. This is perhaps what enables us to understand how the human person can never abandon his capacity to love. If he were to only seek the truth, he would very quickly risk being seduced by this search; he would no longer consider anything but his fundamental autonomy at the level of being and substance, and would no longer respect this radical distinction between being and life. His capacity to love is what enables him to keep this realism because it enables him to reach an existing good other than himself, a good which transcends him. In the search for truth, the person remains in his immanence.

One can thus discover in the human person a permanent source of crisis, which obliges one to constantly place himself back into the realism of the judgment of existence, the realism of the substance. The distinction between substance (principle according to the form) and act (principle according to the end) must always be grasped in act in the affirmation "I am." To disregard this distinction leads to serious confusions. My "I am" therefore implies the actual grasp of the search for truth and of love of friendship, but this actual grasp radically presupposes the grasp of my existence in its substantial autonomy. In other words, I find in myself, at the level of my "I am," this distinction between substance and act. I see that it is possible to separate them, but by separating them, I destroy them. In the analysis, I distinguish them; in my person, I profoundly unite them. My person thus implies this very deep unity of intelligence and will, of search for truth and capacity to love.

Love of friendship with respect to another can always progress. I can never say in the order of love of friendship, "Stop, that's enough." This is so, not only because I can always know better the one whom I love and thus love him better, but also because the one whom I love can always go further in the nobility of his human person, just as I too can always go further in the nobility of my human person. Consequently, love of friendship also has a quasi-infinite possibility of progressing—quasi-infinite because it is not infinite, it is limited. Objectively, love of friendship in itself can infinitely develop; but in reality, I am in time and in space. And so, it cannot infinitely develop. Besides, my friend is not the First Being; he is limited like me. Once again the question arises: if I am no longer able to love my friend because of my weakness or because of illness, should I not do away with myself? If I am sick, I am a burden for my friend. Does one, however, have the right to do away with himself once he discovers that it would be better for him to disappear? This is a very important ethical question. For someone who has not yet discovered that he has a spiritual soul that depends upon a Creator, it is very difficult to respond. He must discover in himself the limit of his responsibility. He has not acquired his being; it escapes his *dominium*. He must therefore respect and tolerate it. His being does not depend upon his friend; he did not receive it from him. His friend has no authority over him, and this is true for all men. He must therefore accept the situation that has been given to him: his being is not under his control.

Prudence: Practical Wisdom of the Person

The fourth dimension of my person, of my "I am," is the discovery of a practical wisdom whereby I am capable of orienting my life by choosing means for the search for truth and means that will enable love of friendship to progress. I am in a certain way my own master; I can manage my life-capital in whatever way I find best. This is usually called the exercise of prudence. Prudence requires that one know oneself, one's own qualities as well as one's shortcomings. It demands that one know what is quasi-infinite in oneself, recognize one's own limitations, and prudently manage one's resources. It is also necessary to clarify what is good to avoid according to the different stages of development of the human person in order to acquire a more perfect prudence and most especially, a greater capacity to love and to search the truth. I manage differently my life-capital depending upon the development of my person, but always according to my two great ends—this is truly the role of prudence. In order for prudence to exist, however, one needs to acquire other virtues. These virtues are what have been commonly called the cardinal virtues: justice, fortitude, and temperance. They enable prudence to reach its full stature, and their acquisition is essential to the person's development. Prudence is in fact a *personal* virtue, which balances the time one must consecrate to seeking the truth and the time one must give to fostering love of friendship. It can also judge the time needed for sleeping, rest, and relaxation. Prudence harmonizes the complexity of one's life, enables one to gradually get rid of all *a prioris*, and saves the time lost by all the passional and imaginative forces. Thanks to prudence, man is attentive to all that he does, and in everything he does he is lucid and perfectly finalized. Every action that

is not finalized is imprudent. The search for truth and the search for true love of friendship must therefore be ever present in act.

Prudence should also make the human person aware of all the passional struggles that could come about in him and everything else that conditions or slows down his true development. Is this not the psychological viewpoint that has to be assumed? The entire sphere of the psyche is truly the passional and imaginative sphere, which is often manifested in a violent, volcanic way because of all the previous repressions which have been forgotten. Prudence demands that, throughout one's activities, one become aware of that which is too often excessive and reveals old repressions dating from childhood.

Finally, from a prudential standpoint, it is necessary to clarify that it is not at all reasonable to reject *a priori* the existence of a Superior Being, a Creator. Indeed, this *a priori* would terribly limit the human person's development. Atheistic ideologies do, by this very fact, stop the development of the human person. The prudential viewpoint also requires that we not refuse *a priori* the importance of religious traditions.

Artistic Activity: Glory of the Human Person

The entire activity of *facere* or work is a part of the human person. It is the fifth dimension. Work is essential to the human person's development. Ordinarily, man is capable of working, and he should work. Each one has to accomplish a work and do it with the greatest possible perfection with a view to a finished work in the area of his expertise. To realize a work is not something optional for the human person in his development; it is a way for him to be more himself. We need to clarify, however, the different ways in which the human person can perfect himself while working.

Man ought to transform the universe in which he finds himself in order for it to be at the service of man. He has to cooperate with this universe and make use of it, although he should not exploit it. In exploiting it, the human person would be destroying himself because he is a part of it by his body. This is an important question for the future of the human person; if he renders his vital milieu uninhabitable, the human person will annihilate himself. He should, on the contrary, use the vital milieu by cooperating with the universe's matter.

Man's work can become artistic in character. We need to clarify, however, the fact that there is an artistic activity of a craftsman, an artistic activity that perfects the living being and man, and an artistic activity that has the goal of creating a beautiful work that pleases the eye. In this art that realizes a work for itself there can be three degrees: the production of a sacred work, the production of a religious work, and the production of a Christian work. We thus understand what art adds to the development to the human person. Man, by his intelligence, dominates the universe in which he is and can give this universe a more spiritual face, one that is closer to man.

Artistic activity can help the human body develop by removing obstacles that could oppose its growth. By maintaining the body in perfect health, artistic activity can also help it be more at the service of the spiritual soul. Maintaining the human body in full harmony with the soul is part of the human person; When we help the body be more in harmony with the soul, the human body can then be used for the search for truth and the blossoming of love of

friendship. Prudence also works to progressively assume man's body in order to make of it a human body. Therein we grasp how the human person creates a particular spiritual atmosphere around himself, just as a large oak tree does in a forest. This keeps him from being constantly subject to the surrounding milieu's domination; instead of undergoing this domination, he transforms it by rendering it more human. All of this is part of the human person.

Through artistic activity, the human person can thus shine and create a new environment that is more suitable to his development as well as that of other persons. This helps us understand how the human person should avoid confusing efficacy and finality in his development. Efficacy is in no way a measure of the human person. I therefore never have the right to measure human work by efficacy even though work demands to be efficacious. Is this not a constant error nowadays? Efficacy has become criteria for truth. This diminishes the human person by bringing him down to a material level. Indeed, efficacy would be king in a purely material world, but in a spiritual world, efficacy is at the service of finality.

The question about fecundity in the human person finds itself situated in this light. We must understand that the human person is capable of loving someone and choosing him or her in order to share a life together and form a family. This is an essential element of the human person. I was conceived in littleness, in the maternal womb; I was totally dependant upon my mother and humanity. I have a duty, as I grow older, to preserve the human species and help it progress and be more itself. I am aware of what this humanity is and that it is capable of being more fully what it should be. From a purely human point of view, do I have the right as a human person to consecrate my whole life to the search for truth while surpassing this natural call for procreation. At a purely philosophical level, is the search for truth a good capable of finalizing man to such a point that he be excused from procreation?

We must understand the greatness of procreation and human fecundity, which are directly linked to love and cannot be understood by efficacy. Efficacy cannot measure human fecundity. This fecundity remains something that is properly human and is under the control of human prudence and wisdom. We must indeed not forget about this particular development of the human person through fatherhood and motherhood; it distinguishes the person of man from the person of woman, both in procreation as well as in education. We can thus ask ourselves if there is a difference between man and woman in all the previous developments. It is a very important question and it must be asked, even if one does not readily discover the answer.[9]

The Body: Substantial Conditioning of the Person

Lastly, the human person assumes a body. This is the sixth dimension. We thus have a metaphysical regard on the body, which will help us understand that the human person must

[9] In his metaphysical analysis, the philosopher does not study man and woman's capacity to complement one another. At the level of the person, he has to consider it and understand how this capacity to complement one another is necessary for the full development of the human person. So, if in the development of the human person there is a rivalry between man and woman, there is a risk that both will be affected. Man is thus concerned by the question about "woman's freedom"; he cannot not be concerned. If I am a man, I do not have the right to study my human person (we are at the philosophical level) without looking at the person of woman; in fact, man and woman complement one another.

know his body. Manichaeism, which considers the body as source of evil, is contrary to the human person's nobility. So too the exaltation or idolatry of the body is contrary to a true knowledge of the human person. These two regards on the body are present today, and it is thus very important to see clearly how the body is a part of the human person. It is necessary to give the body its rightful place without however exalting it.

The body is an essential and substantial part of the human person. At one and the same time, it manifests the greatness and the limits of my human person. It is really the substantial conditioning of my person. The entire conditioning of my human life and my person's development is rooted in the body. The body is therefore the substantial conditioning in the sense that it is primary in the order of conditioning. It is truly the root of the entire conditioning of my being. By this same fact, the person cannot simply be satisfied with respecting the body as a distinct instrument. He must cooperate with his body by loving it and treating it as a conjoint instrument, as an essential part of himself. This part should however be completely relative to his spiritual soul because it is not the body which ennobles the person, but rather it is the search for truth which ennobles him.

The body conditions not only the human person's development but the person himself in what he is. It thus conditions my substantial autonomy by showing me its limitations. The substantial autonomy of the human person is not absolute; the body manifests this in its own visible way. At conception, the human person was buried in a radical dependence with regard to his mother and father. He could have not existed; he exists thanks to his parents' will. The person depends first of all on the will of men, of parents, for his existence. God creates the soul as an answer to the parents' desire. It is not something that God decides in and by himself; that is what is so extraordinary. In the genetic order or the order of conditioning, the parents are ahead of God. From the philosophical viewpoint, it is important that this be seen. By it we better grasp the family's fundamental role since, from his beginning, the person completely depended upon the family. If therefore the human person in his embryonic state totally depends upon his parents, man ought to respect the family. Otherwise, he destroys what he fundamentally is.[10]

The body is thus truly the substantial, radical conditioning of the human person; it exists from the beginning of his development right up until the very end. This conditioning, although it limits my autonomy, enables this autonomy to exist. The body calls for respect. It is by knowing the body as this conditioning that I can better use it with respect, orientate it with respect and not reject it or forget about it. True, the human person cannot substantially modify his body, but he can use it in order to develop and more fully assume this body.[11]

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[10] In this perspective, we need to try to understand how far man can go in helping with the embryo's development: can one perform a surgery on an embryo? Being given that we are unable to know exactly what we are doing when we intervene in the embryo's development, how far can we go? This is a very important question that needs to be taken into consideration when looking at the human person's development. One has to be sure that the modification made can enable the person to better reach his end. A just Nation ought to condemn the power of the citizens who desire to modify the body of a tiny infant or transform the body of an adult.

[11] If the body was not a substantial part, a substantial element, of the human person, I could say that it is something exterior to the human person. However it is not exterior to the person since the latter can change because of his body. I am tall or short, I am ill, handicapped, in good health—these are several examples of things that can change my person without determining it. The body does not finalize the person, but conditions him in a substantial way, from the beginning to the end. We can thus respond to the question that we saw earlier. If the body essentially conditions the person and being and autonomy, I see that my autonomy is limited; therefore, if my body grows too weak and the search for my end in the order of the search for truth or in my capacity to love, do I have the right to commit suicide? No, because it is not me who has made my being. My body conditions me; it conditions me substantially. It therefore conditions me as something radical that I

We also must understand that the human person implies stages in his growth because his body substantially conditions him. However the stages that punctuate growth and which are manifested by the person's age only show us the conditioning of the human person's development. In reality, it is the development of the search for truth that profoundly structures the human person. Thus the harmony between the stages of biological age and the interior stages of the search for truth is what enables us to clarify the different stages of the human person's evolution, and not simply his biological age. Although age can indicate to me certain aspects of the human person's development—some who are only forty-five act as if they were seventy-five and others who are seventy-five live as if they were only forty-five—it cannot entirely determine these stages because the vitality of the search for truth maintains the true life-capital in man. The life of the spirit sustains the person's development more than the growth of his biological life does.

I can also consider how my body makes me be a part of the universe. I therefore depend upon the universe, upon different regions, climates, and their different harmonies. Deeper still, I depend, because of my body, upon an atavism. While I do depend upon my ancestors with regard to this atavism, I am also responsible for the formation of the bodies of all those for whom I will be source of life—a life that will come from me. If I free myself from this natural duty of being source of human life in order to personally consecrate myself to the demands of the search for truth, I then assume another responsibility with regard to my fellow men. This responsibility is spiritual; I have to be a witness to the truth for them. But once again, the question arises: at a purely human level, can the search for truth free me of this duty of procreation? It seems that we ought to say yes since this search stems from the nobility of the spirit and gives a spiritual meaning to the human person; although procreation finalizes biological life, it cannot finalize the human person. The human person can only be finalized by love of friendship, which is usually the proper source of procreation; and as we have seen, the search for truth is not at all opposed to love of friendship. On the contrary, the search for truth is the guardian of the latter and it can emerge as being fundamental.

By means of the body, the human person thus remains dependant upon the exterior and interior universe in many different ways. By this same fact, there is a constant struggle happening within the development of my person. That is why this development either goes from victory to victory or from defeat to defeat, or it alternates between victories and defeats. One needs to be very clear about this point. There are defeats over one's health, defeats in the search for truth in which error can be introduced and cloud everything over depending upon the past and present milieu, and defeats in love of friendship. In the end, all this complexity comes from the body, from this substantial conditioning that is never overcome. Usually, this conditioning by the body should be at the service of the end; but when this substantial conditioning by the body is too powerful, it can become an obstacle to the person's development and be added to his natural limits. Having seen this, we can clarify the fact that many limits which emerge in the development of the person come from the person's

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cannot dominate; I recognize that it exists and that it conditions me. I do not have a direct power or authority over my being. I must therefore respect my body in its littleness and its old age because it does not belong to me. I cannot suppress it. Here we understand that euthanasia is philosophically condemnable. I can also clarify the fact that I do not have the right to harm my own health; humanly speaking, from the point of view of the human person, I have to be vigilant about my health. Of course, I can have an ascetic life in order to more profoundly develop the search for truth and my capacity to love, but this asceticism or domination of my body has to have a just measure and respect the vitality of my body.

poor use of his body and not from the body itself (otherwise, the body would be evil and unbearable). On the other hand, the human person's good use of his body can help his proper development. The use of our body can cause the body to become a good disposition that helps lead us to our true end.

From what we have seen, it is easy to understand that the human person is very complex yet implies a profound unity. This unity demands that all the complexity be well ordered, in harmony, and that this order constantly be renewed because of struggles and fights.

The Religious Attitude: the Person's Openness to the First Person

Out of the study of the complexity and unity of the human person arises the question about going *beyond* this most perfect reality that I experience. The human person is truly the summit of First Philosophy; however, by the human person, our philosophical intelligence opens up to a First Person, source of our being and spirit. The philosopher thus discovers in his "I am" the seventh dimension of the human person. It is the proper religious attitude of the creature who adores; this demands from the philosopher to look at everything again in a new light, in a regard of wisdom.