A Religious, Ethical and Philosophical Study of the Human Person in the Context of Biomedical Practices

Submitted by Douglas JW Milne, M.A., B.D., M.Th., Th.D.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Philosophy

School of Philosophy

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Australian Catholic University
Research Services
Locked Bag 4115
Fitzroy, Victoria 3065
Australia

December, 2006

Statement of Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for, or been awarded, another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of the candidate's knowledge and belief, original, except where acknowledgement is made in the text through footnotes.

Abstract

A Religious, Ethical and Philosophical Study of the Human Person in the Context of Biomedical Practices

From the book of Genesis the human person is presented as divine image-bearer, a Godlike status that is further explained in terms of the dual constitution of matter and spirit.

Natural Law provides a person-centred ethic that draws on a number of human goods that emanate naturally from the human person and lead in practice to human flourishing. This theory empowers towards making ethical decisions in the interest of human persons.

Aristotle explained the human being as a substantially existing entity with rational powers. By means of his form-matter scheme he handed on, by way of Boethius, to Aquinas, a ready model for the Christian belief in the dual nature of the human person as an ensouled body or embodied soul.

Applying the new scientific method to the question of the human self David Hume concluded that he could neither prove nor disprove her existence. By so reasoning Hume indirectly pointed to the need for other disciplines than empirical science to explain the human person.

Emmanuel Levinas has drawn on the metaphysical tradition to draw attention to the social and ethical nature of the human person as she leaves the trace of her passing through the face of the other person who is encountered with an ethical gravitas of absolute demand.

The genesis of the human person most naturally begins at conception at which point and onwards the human embryo grows continuously through an internal, animating principle towards a full-grown adult person.

The main conclusion is that biblical anthropology and metaphysical philosophy provide the needed structures and concepts to explain adequately the full meaning of the human person and to establish the moral right of the human person at every stage to respect and protection.

Table of Contents

A Religious, Ethical and Philosophical Study of the Human Person in the Context of Biomedical Practices

Introduction

In the 20th century there was a definite turn to the human person that took place in most fields of human enquiry. A number of factors can account for this. First, since the Enlightenment there had been a quest to offset the effects of a scientific worldview, with its model of regularity and predictability, by justifying the freedom and difference of human persons in such a world. Secondly, the human genocide that was part of two world wars and the result of totalitarian regimes in east and west, cried out for international legalisation that would enshrine the rights of human beings for the future (the "never again" theme). Thirdly, the mid-century movement of Existentialist philosophy was one attempt to shore up a defence of the human person against the depersonalising forces of a modern world that was relying increasingly on technological prowess and the power of capital. Fourthly, the cultural revolution of the 1960s, that changed human lifestyles in the western world into the 21st century, was a far-reaching protest on behalf of human freedom and the centrality of human persons in a technological future. Fifthly, there has been the rise of personalist philosophies that argued for a return to the human personal subject as the reference point for all interpretations of the modern world.[1]

---

[1] In Roman Catholic circles this influence derived from the work of the Belgian philosopher Louis Janssens, which combined a philosophical anthropology with the moral act. This ethical philosophy influenced the documents of Vatican II (e.g. *Gaudium et Spes*, Part I, chapter I) and the public statements of John Paul II. See Dolores Christie, *Adequately Considered. An American Perspective on Louis Janssen's Personalist Morals* (Louvain: Peeters Press, 1990).

The rise of biotechnology in the second half of the 20th century introduced unprecedented ethical questions about the beginnings and endings of human life. At the heart of these issues were questions about the nature of human beings and their status as persons. These questions have only intensified as the technologies of IVF and stem cell research have developed in sophistication and in their ability to control the gift of life itself. Questions in bioethics may not therefore be divorced from a philosophy of the human person that informs them.[2] It is the stated aim of this thesis to investigate the meaning and mystery of the human person with a view to opening up the ethical considerations that must follow from this.

We have mentioned the *mystery* of the human person because it is only as we are able to resolve that mystery that we will be in a position to provide appropriate ethical guidelines for the resolution of human problems connected with biotechnologies.[3] Even in a world that human beings have managed to understand, map out and harness extensively, the question what the human being essentially is in himself remains unanswered. The ancient Jewish psalmist asked the question: What is man?[4] but we are still working on an answer in the 21st century. What we lack is an integrated vision of the human person, what the human person is in himself, why he exists and for what end. Science cannot answer those sorts of questions, though

---

[2] Dennis Sullivan, "A Thirty-Year Perspective on Personhood: How Has the Debate Changed?" in *Ethics and Medicine* 17, 3 (2001), p. 177: "The concept of personhood remains the central and enduring focus of any intelligent discussion of bioethical norms. Whether the perspective is secular or religious, couched in theological discourse or philosophical verbiage, any theory that wishes to show how man should behave must begin with what man is. . . Thus, personhood is the 'ground zero' of bioethical reflection."

[3] Fraser Watts in Fraser Watts (ed.), *Christians and Bioethics* (London: SPCK, 2000), p. 9: "In all discussions about human bioethics, it is important to hold on to the principle we are 'persons'. All decisions about what is appropriate in human biotechnology need to be based on an adequate understanding of what it is to be a person, and what is appropriate for persons."

[4] Psalm 8, a creation psalm that reflects the narrative of creation in Genesis 1.

science is their source. Only religious faith and metaphysical philosophies[5] specialise in questions of this kind by answering them in holistic ways. This does not mean that the mystery disappears,[6] since religious faith and metaphysical philosophy both begin and end in wonder at the very existence of human beings, but they help us explore the mystery without extinguishing it. For this reason we have relied on these complementary sources, of divine and human wisdom, to provide some insights into the perennial question of the human being in himself.

The appropriateness of turning to religious truth and metaphysical philosophy is seen in the fact that both have shaped the western attitude to human beings and their treatment in public life. In classical times the Greek word προσωπον and the Latin term *persona* both had to do with the individual but as one who was always viewed within a social context, mainly the πολις. The idea of the human person as an individual centre of consciousness grew out of Christian debates in the early centuries about the nature of the divine Persons of the Trinity and the unique Person of Jesus Christ. This notion was first articulated in writing by Augustine of Hippo in the *Confessions* in which he carried on a dialogue between himself and the Personal God of salvation. Then in the sixth century came the first definition of the human person as *substantia individua naturae rationalis,*[7] a philosophical definition that conditioned the theological anthropology of later theologians like Thomas Aquinas.

---

[5] Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), applies the term metaphysics to "any enquiry that raises questions about reality that lie beyond or behind those capable of being tackled by the methods of science."
[6] Norman Ford, *When Did I Begin?* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), p. 74: "There will always be mysteries when we try to explain the constitution of any individual being in philosophical terms."
[7] Originally composed by the Latin philosopher Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius in one of his *Theological Tractates* around 512 CE.

Throughout the Christian era a dualistic view of the human person as consisting of a body and a soul, as separate and irreconcilable elements, has run alongside the biblical teaching on anthropology. Empirical and secular philosophers and ethicists of the Modern period have attacked as unviable this particular way of describing the human being,[8] which owes more to Neo-Platonism in the early centuries of the church than the integrationist view of the Bible itself. But these modern theories of the personal self have differed among themselves as well.[9] Also into the ideological and ethical mix of the late 20th century came Peter Singer's version of Utilitarianism with his commitment to sentience and functionality as the defining characteristics of human persons. On this definition of the person only those who can show signs of personhood, such as having a sense of the future or engaging in social intercourse, qualify as persons and enjoy the full protection of the law. This exposes human embryos, for example, to unjust discrimination and maltreatment, as being pre-persons, potential persons or non-persons.[10]

In light of the above the thesis follows a logical order of analysis and reflection. Through a biblical-theological study of the first two chapters of the book of Genesis the thesis establishes the groundwork for a theology of the human person as a personal subject who is created like God, created for God, created for personal relations, created as the steward of creation, and created as an integrated being.

---

[8] See, for example, Michael Tooley, "Personhood" in *Companion to Bioethics* (Blackwell, 1998), pp. 9, 12.

[9] So, Edwin Hui, *At the Beginning of Life. Dilemmas in Theological Bioethics* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2002), p. 43, refers to "Rene Descartes's self-enclosed substance", "John Locke's inert substance" and "the separable substance of David Hume".

[10] See Gordon Preece (ed.), *Rethinking Peter Singer* (London: InterVarsity Press, 2002).

Because of the human dimension of many biotechnological procedures and products, the second chapter of the thesis examines the principles of natural law theory proposed by Germain Grisez, as being most suited to answer the ethical dilemmas posed by these technologies, because of its centeredness on the human person.

The third chapter takes up the options proposed by four representative philosophers of the human person – Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, David Hume, and Emmanuel Levinas. They have been chosen for a number of reasons. First, these four philosophers have all addressed the subject of the human person and so represent a wealth of reflection on the subject; secondly, together they cover the major stages of western philosophy, that is, the Classical, the Christian, the Modern and the Postmodern, with their particular assumptions, questions and methods; thirdly, they represent a variety of viewpoints, and so a variety of choices, substantiated with arguments, about the human person. The aim of the third chapter is to consider the relative merits of these four viewpoints for constructing an integrated and adequate view of the human person.

Chapter four considers the most controversial question of all, when does personhood arrive? Through a close analysis of the scientific evidence and the philosophical and ethical arguments attaching to the science, the conclusion is drawn that conception is the logical and most natural point for attributing personal existence as present.

The major finding of the thesis is that there are plausible arguments for believing in the human person as a self-existing subject of personal agency and relationships, and that the concepts of Christian theology and the

arguments of metaphysical philosophy provide the best resources for constructing such a belief and defence.

1. The Human Person in Biblical-Theological Perspective

The Bible contains no ready-made definition of the human person in the modern sense though it will be argued that it points to something very close to that concept through its discourses and narratives and contributes something uniquely its own to the discussion of human personhood. What it does do is present the reader with its own account of the human story involving an original creation, a fundamental failure and the subsequent recovery of humankind through the gracious intervention of the Creator God in the Person of Jesus Christ. The biblical narrative from the beginning presents us with the picture of a highly Personal God who creates human beings like himself, whose personal creaturely existence is able to resonate with his own higher Being. The Creator God bonds with human beings by means of covenants that, like memoranda of understanding, establish the relationship along lines of personal love, trust, and promise.[11] By creating humankind in God's own likeness creation itself is given a covenantal structure in which God is committed to the welfare of humankind and they, in turn, are pledged to the service and fellowship of their Creator King.[12]

---

[11] See D.J. McCarthy, *Old Testament Covenant. A Survey of Current Opinions* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), especially pp. 4-6, 86-89; Edward Ball, "Covenant" in Coggin & Houlden (eds.), *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM, 1966), pp. 142-147.

[12] The belief in a creation covenant is supported from the way Jesus Christ is seen as Mediator in creation as well as redemption (John 1:1-3; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:1-3); his new covenant is cosmic in its scope and infers a prior covenant with the whole of creation (Rom 8:18-23; Col 1:19-20); Adam in creation is the type of Jesus Christ in redemption in that both are federal representatives of larger constituencies (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:2-22, 4-49); God's covenant with Noah appears to reconstitute the earlier covenant with Adam over creation (Gen 6:8, 18, 9:1-17); the second creation narrative (Gen 2:4-25) that supplements the first uses the covenant name of God, that is Yahweh, throughout suggesting that the God who made his covenant with the people of Israel had already made a covenant with all people in creation; the Old Testament writers frequently refer to the creation order that God maintains (Jer 5:2, 33:19-26; Hos 2:18; Job 38:10; Psa 104:9, 148:6); the Old Testament writers hold out the hope of a new creation order in fulfilment of the covenant promises of the Creator God of Israel (Psa 72, 89; Isa 11:1-9, 65:17-25, 66:6 23; Ezekiel 34. See in the New Testament the book of Revelation chapter 21). In the secondary literature see Robert Murray, *The Cosmic Covenant* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1972).

Method of Study

In order to engage in the task of relating biblical texts and their theology to biomedical ethics we must adopt a definable and verifiable method of study. This should be dictated by the nature of the material we are working with, in this case, the ancient texts of the Bible. The dominant principle here is that "a method is a tool . . . which must be adequate to its subject matter." [13] But in the nature of the case the ancient writings of the Bible are also "sacred" writings, in that they claim and are held to convey more than merely a series of historical facts or culturally conditioned reflections. They use the language of faith in response and witness to the acts and words of God, which find their ultimate and transcendent *telos* in Jesus Christ, with a view to eliciting faith in those who read or hear them. [14] This is the principal explanation for Christianity's long tradition of *fides quaerens intellectum* in dependence on the sacred writings of the Old and New Testaments, as faith's ultimate authority. We are therefore committed from the start to reading and interpreting these texts in their status as divine Revelation through the divine inspiration of their human authors. [15]

Because of their nature as human and historical writings reading and interpreting biblical texts requires historical, cultural and linguistic skills that have come to comprise the historical and syntactical method of biblical interpretation. Yet, because of their nature as divinely authored writings the historical study of the biblical texts alone does not and cannot deliver all that there is to know from them in terms of truth content and moral

---

[13] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, volume I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 59-60. We reject the cultural chauvinism that says that because a text or tradition is old, it cannot have relevance or speak with any authority to people today. Such a hermeneutical stance, widespread in certain circles of academia, is based more on prejudice than a scientific openness to all sources of truth and knowledge, whatever their origin or chronology may be.

[14] 2 Timothy 3:15 - 16.

[15] See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Homebush, NSW: St Pauls, 1994), paragraphs 106, 107; "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation", paragraph 11, *The Documents of Vatican II* , (New York: Guild Press, 1966).

wisdom. Also required is a theological method of study that allows the modern reader to hear their substantive and universal messages about God, humankind, the natural world, the historical process, creation, fall, redemption, Jesus Christ, the church, all as divine Word addressing us with final authority.

The construal of a viable message, mined from the Bible's leading concepts, history of faith and moral wisdom, depends on the preliminary work of biblical exegesis, which entails the historical and linguistic engagement with the text. Now all interpreting of the biblical text takes place at the rendezvous of horizons of meaning and reference, from three worlds. There is the world behind the text (the cultural and historical milieu), the world of the text (the literal meaning of the text intended by the original author), and the world of the reader of the text (the modern world conditioned in numerous ways by contemporary culture and the reader's own experience). [16] The art of hermeneutics is seen in the degree to which we are able to combine these three perspectives into a coherent and fruitful synthesis of meaning.

The Early Chapters of Genesis

For historical and theological reasons we have chosen the early chapters of the book of Genesis as our thesis starting-point, so as to provide a preliminary framework for a Christian approach to the ethical questions raised within the biomedical sciences. [17] The strangeness of this choice is offset by the remarkable correspondence between the far-reaching questions raised in bioethics and the sorts of insights and answers given in

---

[16] Francis Moloney, "Life, Healing, and the Bible: A Christian Challenge", *Pacifica* 8 (1995), pp. 315 - 321 describes these three worlds respectively as a window, a portrait, and a mirror.
[17] John Paul II refers frequently to Genesis in his encyclicals and public statements. See especially *Redemptor hominis* (1979), *Laborem exercens* (1981), *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1988).

these biblical texts. These questions, by general agreement, have to do with the nature of human beings and their relationship to the rest of the world, both human and sentient. These chapters begin to answer these underlying issues [18] through the powerful drama of cosmic creation, human infidelity, and restoration hope, read in the greater light of the crowning act of the drama - the coming of Jesus Christ, original Creator and God-Man Redeemer. "Read in the light of Christ, within the unity of Sacred Scripture and the living Tradition of the Church, these texts remain the principal source for catechesis on the mysteries of the 'beginning': creation, fall, and promise of salvation." [19]

How should we read these early texts of Scripture? Much has been written and asserted about the mythological background of these chapters, but even those who read them in this way willingly admit that "in the quality of its insight into the human condition Genesis stands alone." [20] Actually the biblical narratives show clear evidences of a demythologising process, one that has purged them of any admixture of pagan elements, and sets them apart from the plethora of cosmogonies that permeated the ancient world of cultures. [21] For example, the sun and moon are no longer heavenly beings worthy of veneration and ritual practices. [22] Corresponding to this

---

[18] Interesting is the way that writers both Christian and secular on bioethics and biotechnology, have turned to the early chapters of Genesis as a conceptual contact-point for their scientific work and how they envisage it. The American theologian, Ronald Cole-Turner, heralded this referencing in his *The New Genesis* [18]; Donald and Ann Bruce have compiled their work under the title *Engineering Genesis* [18]; More recently, Ian Wilmut, Keith Campbell and Colin Tudge, the designers and creators of Dolly, have titled their book *The Second Creation.*

[19] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Homebush: St Pauls, 1994), paragraph 289.
[20] Richard Cavendish, "First Man", *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion and the Unknown* , ed. R. Cavendish, New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1995, p. 903.
[21] The Old Testament scholar Hermann Gunkel was the first, in 1859, to argue the case for the demythologised reading of the Genesis 1 creation narrative.
[22] William Kramer, *Evolution and Creation*, (Huntingdon: Our Sunday Afternoon Visitor Publishing Division, 1986), p. 144: "The history of creation is unique, so the Genesis narrative does not fit easily into familiar categories. The sacred author knew that creation happened, but there were not eyewitnesses, so he related the history, not in myths which do not suppose real events, but in narratives that clothe real events."

philosophical refinement the literary style of these chapters may be described as semi-poetic (Genesis 1), prose narrative heavily laden with symbolism (Genesis 2 - 3), and simple narrative writing (Genesis 4 - 11). A variety of literary sources can possibly be detected (the hypothetical J and P), which represent differing theologies, yet this variety of materials has been skilfully woven together by some final editor to form the extant text that now reads as a coherent, simple, faith-oriented, narrative account of the cosmos and the beginnings of humankind on the earth. [23]

Key Texts

Several key statements are made in the course of the two creation narratives that make up the first part of the biblical text of the book of Genesis.[24] These have proved fertile for Christian reflection and theological formulation on the nature of the human person in Scripture. The first of these (Genesis 1:26-27) describes humankind as made with the likeness of God, a description that is not explained further in the text but that has engendered a great deal of speculation in the history of interpretation. The second passage (Genesis 1:28) builds on the first by ascribing to humankind a unique role in relation to the rest of creation, a description that speaks today with great relevance. The third description (Genesis 2:7) is richly metaphorical but just for this reason singles out humankind as uniquely fitted for the service of God and humankind in the

---

[23] Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977), pp. 30 - 33: "We do not enter into the spirit of Genesis unless we recognize from the outset that its intention was to write a history. . . Genesis took itself seriously as serious history, the beginning of a history that its authors had seen triumphantly fulfilled in their own lifetimes. . . Creation and fall are not in Genesis simply theologoumena; they are events like other events that succeed them. . . The book forms a history unto itself, and a history that may be rightly appropriated by everyman, since it is truly everyman's history. The principle of this assertion is most readily apparent in the first eleven chapters, where its authors have professedly related the history of their people to the history of mankind as a whole."
[24] For the use of these chapters in modelling a response to the challenges of genetic science, see Ronald Cole-Turner, *The New Genesis: Theology and the Genetic Revolution* (Louisville: Westminster Press, 1993); Donald Bruce & Ann Bruce (eds.), *Engineering Genesis. The Ethics of Genetic Engineering in Non-Human Species* (London: Earthscan Publications, 1998); Ian Wilmut, Keith Campbell, Colin Tudge, *The Second Creation. The Age of Biological Control by the Scientists Who Cloned Dolly* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2000); John Paul II in many of his encyclicals and public statements.

world. These three texts, when taken together, constitute an impressive introduction to biblical and theological anthropology that invites us to see the human person through the eyes of faith on the basis of the sacred text of Holy Scripture.

1.1 God's Covenant-Creature – the Image-Bearer

Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Exegesis

There is general agreement that the two terms "image" (*tzelem*) and "likeness" (*demuth*) are interchangeable (Gen 5:1-3).[25] "We have not two but one expression".[26] Whereas other living things were created according to their own kind of image (verses 11, 12, 21, 24, 25), the template for human beings was nothing less than God the Creator. No other creature is described in this way thus giving the human being a status beyond any other living being. To reinforce this lesson the divine Creator pauses and soliloquises before bringing forth this unique creature (verse 26).

---

[25] John Scullion, *Genesis* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 20: ". . . we have a composite phrase known as a hendiadys, ie. the expression of a complex idea by two words connected with 'and'. Orthodoxy distinguishes the image and the likeness of God, the former being retained after the fall, the latter having been lost, but to be regained in the Resurrection."

[26] Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11* (London: SPCK, 1984), p. 145. Using two parallel terms like this is typical of Semitic poetic style as many other examples in the Old Testament literature show.

The origin of the image concept is thought to have been the royal house ideology of the ancient Middle East,[27] in which rulers over vassal states erected images of themselves in public places around their territories as a visible symbol of their personal rule. In the same way human beings are the visible representatives of the invisible God who has created everything.[28] This is a remarkably original feature of the Hebrew creation narrative.

Such a teaching is especially unusual in a religious society that strictly prohibited any representation of the divine being (Exod 20:4-6). It is original among the religious beliefs of other Mesopotamian cultures for which, in their creation myths, the human person is the plaything, the slave of the gods, the frightened inhabitant of a menacing natural world. For Genesis humanity is a dialogue partner of God and is given the prerogative reserved to royal personages to exercise dominion in the divine name.[29]

Theology

Being the image of God is the most comprehensive way human beings are described in biblical Revelation and so it is "the central truth about us".[30] Although the statistical occurrences of image/likeness in relation to humankind are few in number they do appear in weighty contexts that have to do both with God's original creation work and his recreation work through Jesus Christ that we call Redemption.[31] Because redemption builds on and restores the creation image of God, anthropology is central to

---

[27] Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 58; Sinclair Ferguson, "Image of God" in S. Ferguson & D. Wright (eds.), *New Dictionary of Theology* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1988); Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

[28] The later prohibition of the Decalogue against making images of God (*demuth*, Exod 20:4) means that human beings are themselves the only legitimate image of God on earth.

[29] Charles M. Murphy, *At Home on Earth. Foundations of a Catholic Ethic of the Environment* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 91.

[30] Derek Kidner, *Genesis* (London: Tyndale Press, 1968), p. 50.

[31] See Gen 9:6 where the presence of God's image in the human being makes acts of murder capital offences; Eph 4:20-24 and Col 3:9-10 where the renewed self in Jesus Christ is being affirmed as the basis of transformed living; Jas 3:9 where the gravity of defaming a fellow human being rests on his being a divine image-bearer.

Christian conceptions of the human being also. "As Christians, we begin from the presupposition that the human person is an icon of God, a finite expression of God's infinite self-expression."[32] And because Jesus Christ is the human image of God perfectly restored and enacted in history,[33] Christian thought turns to him as the epitome of what the human image means.[34]

The same biblical references to the image of God confirm this by assuming that human beings, whether considered in their natural or in their redeemed status through Jesus Christ, remain in the divine likeness. Even the trauma of the Fall event (Genesis 3), which is so detrimental to the spiritual and moral equilibrium of human beings, does not efface the image. The Redemption in Jesus Christ renews the image; it does not create it *de novo*. Thus the divine image, in biblical perspective, is definitive for understanding the human person.[35] The divine image is universally present in human beings.

What are we to understand by the image of God in humankind? Numerous explanations have been offered in the history of biblical interpretation.[36] Our intention here is not to review the relative merits of those views (which cover 2000 years of Christian writing) but to articulate our own

---

[32] Kallistos Ware, "'In the Image and Likeness': The Uniqueness of the Human Person", in J.B. Chirban (ed.), *Personhood. Orthodox Christianity and the Connection Between Body, Mind and Soul* (London: Bergin & Garvey, 1996), p. 2.

[33] See 2 Cor 4:4 (". . . Christ who is the likeness of God"); Col 1:15 ("he is the image of the invisible God . . ."). Although these texts may refer in the first place to the intra-divine likeness of the second Person to the First Person they also refer to that image as incarnated and historicised in Jesus Christ.

[34] See in particular Karl Barth's fundamental treatment in *Church Dogmatics* III/2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1968) where he sees Jesus as the real and representative man who lives his life for God as his true creature (# 44.1), who lives for other men as the true covenant-partner of God (# 45.1), who lives his life as a whole as soul and body (# 46.1) and who lives in his time for God and all other men (# 47.1).

[35] See Gen 5:1-3; 9:6; 1 Cor 11:7; Jas 3:9; also how Paul in 1 Cor 15:49 totalises the idea of the image that we bear first in Adam and then in Christ.

[36] Westermann surveys these points of view in his commentary, pp. 147-155; see also A.J. Clines, "On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Supplement Series 293 (1998), pp. 447-498.

understanding of the meaning of the image in its possible bearing on the question of personhood. When the Bible speaks of the human being as in the image of God it is saying first that there is an analogy of some profound kind between God and humankind. Since analogy is not identity we may not conclude that everything that we believe to be true about God may be applied to humankind.[37] But it does mean that we must begin with what is true about God if we are to arrive at a reliable picture of humankind. So what is distinctive about the God of creation in the first two chapters of Genesis?[38] What stands out is the way that this creating God consistently acts and interacts as a Personal Subject by creating, blessing and commissioning everything that he has made.[39] This is particularly true in relation to his human creature whom he commands and commissions for special tasks on the basis of a relationship of special intimacy.[40] In all of this the Creator appears as very alive, One who delights in beauty, order, diversity and fruitfulness, whose creative work is richly endowed, generous in its terms of reference, and very good in being for his pleasure and the benefit of everything he has brought into being.

Applied to the human being the divine likeness should then consist in our existence as individual subjects whose nature it is to interact with other

---

[37] Barth, *op. cit*., p. 324: "Quite obviously we do not have here more than an analogy, i.e., similarity in dissimilarity." Behind these modern definitions lies the classical treatment of the subject by Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* I.q.13.art. 5.

[38] David Wilkinson, *The Message of Creation* (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2002), pp. 35-36, rightly complains that a great deal of the writing about the image of God has not arisen from the study of the text and context of Genesis 1 but has been the work of systematic theologians seeking more speculative answers to the question.

[39] This personalist reading of Genesis 1 is borne out by the richly personalist way John begins his Gospel with the same intentional opening "in the beginning". Only John now interprets the God of Genesis 1 as the Self-subsisting Trinity, especially the Personal Word who was with God in intimate fellowship yet separate Personally from God, and through whom God created everything that exists. There is special mention made of the Word being the Light of humankind, an expression and relationship that may recall the making of humankind in the image of God.

[40] Later in the biblical narrative the God of Israel chooses the name I AM (Exod 3:14) as his way of identifying who or what he is. This name identifies God as the One who exists in himself as the personal Subject who addresses his creatures in the first person ("I") and then in the second person ("ye") and who covenants with them in personal commitments of mutual fidelity and love.

beings of our kind and with other kinds of being. This is the nature of personhood that each receives as a divine gift as well as a task to be explored and expressed in action. The human being is someone, a subject, a self and an "I", not a something, an object, a non-self or an "It".[41] Sometimes the image of God has been placed in human capacities or qualities like rationality but these are the indices of the image rather than the image in itself. Essentially the image of God is what we as humans constitutionally are, more than the sorts of activities or abilities that humans characteristically do or show.[42] We therefore venture the belief that the image of God *is* the human person as an autonomous self, a moral subject, and agent of individual acts, the willing source of creative relationships of all kinds.[43] This is what makes us essentially what we are as human beings in likeness to what God essentially is as the Tri-Personal God.[44] This is the explanation of our most characteristically human acts

---

[41] Ware, *op. cit.*, p. 11: "By virtue of the divine icon placed in our hearts, we are capable of mutual love, open to unending growth, endowed with self-awareness, entrusted with free will, and each of us distinctive and unique." *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Homebush, NSW: St Pauls, 1994), par. 357: "Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called to covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead."

[42] Donal O'Mathuna quoted in Scott Rae & Paul Cox, *Bioethics. A Christian Approach in a Pluralistic Age* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), p. 132: "It is not that humans are the images of God because they have certain rational or spiritual capacities. It is because humans are images of God that spiritual and rational activity is part of what it means to be human."

[43] A small number of writers make this equation between personhood and the divine image, such as R.N. Wennberg, *Life in the Balance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985). Gerald Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man", *Tyndale Bulletin,* 42.2 (1991), pp. 222-223: "The notion that the εικων του θεου is the basis on which human relationships should be based, and the standard by which they should be conducted is the common element which provides us with the key to understanding what the image of God in man means. Relationships are only possible between persons, and it is this elusive concept, the thing which defines man as a 'who', not as a 'what', which gives the image its meaning." John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body. Human Love in the Divine Plan* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997), p. 449: "*Man is a person, man and woman equally so*, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God."

[44] We are not suggesting that the doctrine of the Trinity is present in Genesis 1 although the "us" of verse 26 may be taken at least in a binary sense of elemental dialogue between God and his Spirit (verse 2). The explanation of the "us" as a royal "we" lacks support elsewhere in Hebrew idiom in the Old Testament and so it would be better to understand it as some kind of divine Self-exhortation or deliberation before the significant act of making the divine image-bearer. The overall kingdom motif in the creation narratives resides elsewhere as in the issuing of royal decrees (for example, the practice of naming, Gen 1:5, 8, 10) and the publishing of royal promises (for example, providing food to all living creatures, Gen 1:29-30) and granting of royal rights (for example, the right of access to the garden and all its trees, Gen 2:8-9, 16). But the Creator God of Genesis 1 is made one with the LORD God of Israelite worship in the

and capabilities such as loving, reasoning, choosing, creating, imagining, speaking, and originating.

This means that the image of God is endemic to human existence. The Bible appears to be ambiguous here because it attributes the likeness to every human being yet presents its message of salvation through Jesus Christ as a recovery of the image of the Creator.[45] The background of Genesis 1:26-27 shines through these Pauline texts ("the allusion to Gen 1:27 is irresistible").[46] Something of what was lost through Adam – spiritual and moral knowledge of God with conformity to his moral will – is restored through Jesus Christ, but the divine likeness that defines the human person can never be lost. While the formal image remains the material image has been forfeited. The Creator God is not only absolute Personal Subject but equally perfect moral Paradigm. But in the case of the human person sin has separated the two aspects and left the human subject divided and weakened in character though still functioning in human ways through thinking, choosing, relating, creating, and acting. Salvation is in Jesus Christ because through him God's grace begins to restore the moral image, at the same time reintegrating the whole human person.

Understanding the image as human personhood/individual selfhood enables us to explain the richly relational nature and activity, first of the Creator God, and then of his human creatures, in the biblical drama. Personhood leads to relationship(s) with other kinds of being and even with inanimate being. Thus God creates light and darkness, night and day, stars, the sun

---

double narrative of Genesis 1 and 2 (the supposed E and P sources), who then becomes the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ of the New Testament tradition.

[45] See 1 Cor 15:49, Eph 4:24 and Col 3:10. N.T. Wright, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1979), pp. 138-139: "The intention of creation is fulfilled in redemption, and, conversely, redemption is understood as new creation."

[46] C.F.D. Moule, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 120.

and moon, seas and mountains, plants and animals of all kinds, and finally humankind bearing his own likeness. God designs them all, calls them all good, commissions them in different ways and especially enters into inter-personal dialogue with humankind. In a similar way human persons parallel this by relating in different ways and at the different levels of their creaturely being, first with their Creator Lord, with one another as a human pair, with the living creatures God has entrusted to their care and finally with their physical environment and the very soil beneath them. In these relational ways, confirmed by choices, acts and words, both God and humans personalise what they respectively and essentially are. The human person is a social self that finds his natural extension in personal unions, most profoundly with the Subject Self of God but equally with other human selves.[47]

> The image concept and all that flows from it has many repercussions for our understanding of human existence. We are like God, in that we are persons who can relate to our world, to other human beings, and also to God in personal ways. As persons, we make choices and act upon them; we have values and value-systems; we are aware of ourselves and of others, of our needs and aspirations, and also of the needs and aspirations of others; we are held to be responsible for our actions. Persons are inherently creative and religious, forever longing for something, after someone, greater than themselves. Running through all these characteristics is a yearning for loving and meaningful relationships.[48]

---

[47] Because of the close affinity of the substantial self and its personal, relational activities some writers, for example, Edwin Hui, *At the Beginning of Life. Dilemmas in Theological Bioethics* (London: Inter Varsity Press, 2002), pp. 37-38, prefer to speak of the bipolarity of the human person, that is, ". . . both substance and relations, both being and becoming, are essential categories for a complete understanding and definition of human personhood. In other words, there is bipolar or dyadic structure to human personhood comprised in a substantial pole and a relational pole. These poles need to be resynthesized or reintegrated as the substantiality and the relationality of the human being in order for us to see the person in proper focus."

[48] D. Gareth Jones, *Brave New People. Ethical Issues at the Commencement of Life* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1984), p. 20.

Just because the human person is an individual self and subject we are able to know ourselves from others, at the same time moving towards them in openness, justice and friendship.[49]

Recent studies in the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity help confirm these insights into our understanding of the human person.[50] Instead of comparing the human with the sub-human and finding the image in the differences, thus working from man to the animals, theological anthropology works from the human to the Divine, and finds the image in the similarities. As a Triunity God's unique Being is best understood as a transcendent Self, actualising itself each moment in a communion of equal Persons. The Persons exist separately yet co-inhere collectively as the One Being in a community of perfect and active Love. As a paradigm of human persons we can draw from this the inference that the human person is an individual self that naturally co-exists with and for other persons in love.[51] All the biblical data within the first two chapters of Genesis fits in with this interpretation of the image of God in humankind. The institution of marriage that concludes the second creation account (Gen 2:18-25)

---

[49] The New Testament witness to Christian salvation pivots on the assumption of the personal-relational nature of human beings in that salvation requires the Personal appearing of the God-Man Jesus Christ, his saving work through death and resurrection is above all understood in the personal category of Reconciliation, and Love lies at the heart of biblical ethics in Jesus, John and Paul because love is about persons not objects. Christianity is about the restoration of human persons through the Personal action of the God who is absolute Subject.

[50] The theologian who has influenced most writers in this field is John Zizioulas in his *Being As Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985); "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: a Theological Exploration of Personhood" in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28/5 (1975), pp. 401-448. Zizioulas argues that the idea of Person affirms at once both an ekstatic and a hypostatic aspect of being. This means that a person is always more than individual as a being that wants to *relate to* another; and in doing so the person discovers its absolute uniqueness in freedom. Otherwise see, for example, Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God. Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity* (London: Continuum, 2004); Stanley Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self. A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

[51] O'Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 177: "Authentic personhood does not spring out of one's private experience but is given and received within relationships. To be a person is to be an interpersonal subject, sharing love and giving oneself in love. True personal individuality comes by existing in and for other persons. We need each other in order to be ourselves."

reaffirms this interpretation by declaring the fact and the undesirability of solitude and the goodness of human companionship, love and intimacy.[52]

The inter-personal nature of the divine image confirms the covenantal nature of human being since relationships of all kinds bring with them as an intrinsic part of them particular responsibilities of love, service and goodwill. Covenant is the divinely preferred instrument that enshrines the ontological principle of selfhood as being in relationship. This applies firstly to the Being of God who may be described as the archetypical covenanted community of mutually dependent and committed Persons, then derivatively and analogically to human persons who co-exist in social unions of different kinds such as marriage, family, clan, city, nation, generation and so on. For this reason the most profound Johannine definition of the Godhead is Love (1 John 4:8, 16) which is always shown to other persons, interiorly to God in Himself as Three-Personned, and analogically among human beings who in this way prove their divine likeness. The biblical principle of covenant which rests in the theology of the divine Persons offers itself as a powerful and flexible guide to the ethics opened up in the biomedical sciences. Instead of starting with rights such an ethic would open from the perspective of mutual human obligations.[53] Love is the guardian of morals.

---

[52] John Paul II, *Love and Responsibility* (London: Harper Collins, 1982), explains this in terms of the inner life of Man which is spiritual and causes him to reach out and relate to the external world through his real self. This inner life which is rational allows him at the same time to know God. Barth, *op. cit.* IV/2 # 45, p. 324: "God created him in his own image in the fact that he did not create him alone but in this connexion and fellowship. . . God himself is not solitary . . . although he is one in essence he is not alone . . . It is inevitable that we should recall the triune being of God at this point. God exists in relationship and fellowship. . . He is himself I and Thou, confronting himself and yet always one and the same in the Holy Ghost . . . Because he is not solitary in himself, and so does not will to be so *ad extra*, it is not good for man to be alone, and God created him in his own image, as male and female. This is what is emphatically said in Gen. 1.27, and all other explanations of the *imago Dei* suffer from the fact that they do not do justice to this decisive statement. . . God is in relationship, and so too is the man created by him. This is his divine likeness."

[53] Paul Ramsey, *The Patient as Person* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973) pioneered this model, following the work of Karl Barth in his determination for theological ethics, in biomedicine. Ramsey was following Barth's covenant theology in this approach to the practice of medicine. Unfortunately Ramsey,

This means that the human person is something existing in himself, an independent subject-agent subsisting and interacting in a world of other human agents.[54] Because the human person is a real, existent self and subject, the individual human being expresses himself by orderly words and acts, just as the Creator does in the whole work of creating. Human being[55] grounds and conditions the existential life of a person, just as we believe the Being of God grounds and conditions his Personal life.[56] This raises the deeper, philosophical issue of whether we should approach the subject in a nominalist or in a realist way.[57] Since the image of God concept joins humankind with God in a fundamental way, the same question of method and presupposition applies, whether we are thinking about the divine nature or human nature. A nominalist approach means that we deny the real existence of universals, such as persons, or that there is such an entity as humanness, by which human beings might be defined. A realist approach means that we believe that universals are real, that it is meaningful to speak about fixed forms, and that there do exist certain

---

unlike Barth, did not carry through on his own stated principles in the rest of the book because, on his own admission, an ethicist needs to go into the technicalities of the problems he takes up, because a Christian ethicist finds himself joined by men of other persuasions and because "there is in actuality a community of moral discourse concerning the claims of persons" (p. xii). In spite of this methodological concession Ramsey said enough to indicate the fruitfulness of a covenant-centred or theological-ethical approach to bioethics. See also Bernard Haring, *Free and Faithful in Christ* (Homebush: St Paul Publications, 1981), vol. 3, p. 5.

[54] This idea coincides with the Aristotelian concept of substance as that which exists in itself, numerically one and independently of any other being of which it may form a part or accident, as that which is itself the abiding and unifying centre of its own characteristics, activities and properties.

[55] It must be said that the Bible knows nothing of being in itself, only personal being. The revelation of God is always of Personal Being, likewise humans are always personal beings or beings-in-relationship. Personal existence links God and humans, and so defines the image of God at its centre.

[56] On the image of God in humankind John Paul II, *Theology*, p. 29: "The first account of man's creation . . . which is of a theological nature, conceals within itself a powerful metaphysical content. Let us not forget that the text of Genesis has become the source of the most profound inspirations for thinkers who have sought to understand 'being' and 'existence'. . . . Notwithstanding certain detailed and plastic expressions of the passage, man is defined there, first of all, in the dimensions of being and existence *('esse')*. He is defined in a way that is more metaphysical than physical."

[57] Some have argued that there is a biblical basis for nominalism understood as a good God naming what is evil for good purposes. This leads to the question whether the morally good is so because of what God wills (and so contingent) or because of what God is (and so unchangeable). Nominalism in this sense introduces arbitrariness into morality and would be a misunderstanding of the God of the Bible.

properties that may characterise a species, in this case God or humankind. Probably the best option here is to take a position of metaphysical realism that includes the general and the particular in its purview. The Bible consistently uses topics like life, sin, law, grace, and salvation in a realistic way with the understanding that these terms signify objective realities in which human persons participate. In the same way biblical realism means that when we speak about God or human persons we are referring to objective entities which have stable and independent existence in themselves, beyond us and the discourse we use about them.

Jesus Christ as human is the image of the invisible God,[58] the second and last Adam,[59] who embodies perfectly what divine likeness truly looks like in a human life. In particular we encounter him in the Gospels as an individual Self-agent who relates responsibly in the three dimensions of human existence: firstly, to God as his heavenly Father in trust, love and obedience;[60] secondly, to his fellow human beings in compassion, service and good works;[61] thirdly, to the natural world as his Father's world in redemptive power, respect and care.[62] In all of this he is the servant-lord of creation who lives and works for others in the service of his Father God.[63] Jesus is the perfect epitome of the embodied image of God in humankind and as such both the model of true humanity and the means of achieving it. He confirms the lessons of the creation story, that is, that man is God's creature, and without God cannot understand himself nor function as he was intended to do in the space-time world. In Jesus we see the Spirit/Breath of God dwelling permanently and completely in a human life

---

[58] 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15.
[59] 1 Cor 15:45, 47.
[60] Matt 22:34-38, 26:38-44.
[61] Matt 22:39; Acts 10:37-38.
[62] Matt 6:26-30; Luke 12:6.
[63] See again footnote 12 above.

as the ground of his human existence, the principle of human integration and the source of human flourishing in holy living and the loving service of others. He is the man of God *par excellence*, the servant of the Lord, the man for others, the man of love, the servant of all. This is the heart of the divine in the human, the making visible in human flesh, suffering and mortality, the plan of God for humankind on earth. "At last, in Christ, human beings can be what God intended them to be."[64]

If Jesus Christ is the true image of God in personal, human embodiment then he is "the definitive human being"[65] with all that this means when considering the possibilities of engineering the human being in the biological sciences. His personal humanity is a type that defines both the content and the limits of the human, beyond which we may not trespass without threatening our authentic humanity and exposing our species to destructive distortions and irreversible experiments of what it means to be human. Such chimeras would fall under the same ban as the act of murder and on the same grounds, that is, that they violate the image of God in humankind.[66] Our ideal of personhood must remain the historical Jesus who assumed our bodily as well as spiritual nature in the event of the Incarnation.[67] That event was a universal, representative one for all humankind. For it to be redemptive it had to be normal, and normative in being redemptive.

> Jesus Christ was born a member of that species [sc. *homo sapiens*] and by
> that fact has "consecrated" it. He is the perfect human exemplar in his basic
> physiological structure and in his behaviour. To be sure, no assertion is
> being made here about a photographic image: sex, colour of skin, eyes or

---

[64] Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

[65] Joseph Ratzinger, *In the Beginning . . .* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) p. 5.

[66] Gen 9:6; Jas 3:9.

[67] In 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 Paul speaks of bearing the image of both the earthly man Adam and the heavenly Man Jesus. In each case this image-bearing is a totalising idea that involves embodiment along with moral conformity.

hair, size, weight. Rather, what is important are those psycho-physiological elements genetically determined which are shared by all human beings regardless of their race or condition. Ultimately, what must be protected in any genetic alteration of the human being are the cognitive-affective powers, including the capacity to make free choices. . . the fact that the Son of God took on personally this human nature – that is, became a member of homo sapiens – has granted to it a consecration which prohibits any substantial genetic alteration that would generate a distinct species or individual whose intellectual and volitional capacities were compromised even to the point of not being able to share in the glory of the Resurrected Christ.[68]

The Christian doctrine of the divine image in human beings is perhaps the strongest conceptual deterrent against the charge of speciesism that is levelled against the belief that human beings are of greater worth over other species. This Christian belief, derived from the creation account in Genesis, has given rise to the general principle of the sanctity of human life. This connection is recognised by critics of the doctrine, who have consequently aimed their principal objections at the assumptions behind the principle.[69] Their contention is that all species are equal and that to discriminate in favour of one against others is a denial of animal rights. Their ethical objection is against the exploitation of animals just because they are reckoned less than human and so expendable. This has led to the argument that sentience rather than species membership should be the criterion for deciding where legal rights lie.[70] Judged by this principle certain circumstances may arise in which animals may suffer more than humans since, for example, humans can be aware of the limits and reasons for the suffering they may undergo. This same principle could also make it acceptable to use infants or mentally-retarded people for experiments

[68] Albert Moraczewski in R. Nelson (ed.), *On the New Frontiers of Genetics and Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 143.

[69] See Helga Kuhse & Peter Singer, *Should the Baby Live? The Problem of Handicapped Infants* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 18-20.

[70] See Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 55-60, for a discussion of this argument.

involving pain, since neither of these groups would experience the anticipatory dread of suffering that normal adult human beings do.

However, not only does the image of God doctrine not give any licence to inflict pain needlessly on animals, it acts as a protection against such exploitation because the image of God makes for responsible relationships with the animal kingdom, entrusted by God to humankind (Gen 1:28 and carried out at 2:19-20). At the same time it guarantees human right to life, respect and care throughout the extent of a person's natural life.[71] Sentience alone can never decide moral rights and wrongs since sentience is a subjective and uncertain barometer that human agents will disagree about, whereas the image of God is a definition of the human being as such, and immediately establishes moral and legal rights and duties of care and protection for everyone. Jesus supported this value-judgement about human beings in a number of his parables, healings and sayings (Matt 12:9-13; Mark 2:23-28, 5:1-13; Luke 12:6-7, 15:20-24). Without an extrinsic point of reference, such as the image of God gives, it is difficult to argue against the principle of equal consideration of interests.[72]

> But the Christian is obliged to make this fundamental discrimination. We have been addressed by God, and as it were commanded forth from the whole range of creatures to be distinct in the sense that our whole identity, what it means to be human, is bound up with calling before God, and with the joy and responsibility of reflecting his glory. . . if, in other words, all living human beings whatever their stage of development are "in the divine image" in the sense of being set in relationship with God and having a history and destiny under God, then every living human being confronts me with a moral claim. In New Testament terms, every living human being is my neighbour, with a claim on me to neighbour-love. . . Each living human

---

[71] The noble history of medical services over the period of the dominance of Christianity in western cultures was due largely to the belief that every human being bears a likeness to God.

[72] In a secular age the appeal to the image of God, in defence of human dignity and rights, carries less and less weight with a majority of people. Yet even without it people have an instinctive sense of the rightness of the argument.

being, however young, is a partner in the human family, constituted by the divine image, and stands morally before me as my neighbour.[73]

The image of God means that we must look outwards from human beings rather than inwards in order to unlock the human mystery.

The Being of God is the measure of the human, not the reverse. James Watson, one of the discoverers of the double helix of human DNA, and first director of the Human Genome Project, believed that mapping the human genome would uncover the mystery of Man. But the biblical view has always been that the mystery of human beings lies in their unique creation as the image of God, not in their biological inheritance. "A non-reductionist point of view acknowledges that higher-level, more complex human capacities depend upon lower-level biological processes, but it also contends that these human abilities or functions cannot be solely explained by or reduced to their biological underpinnings."[74] The image of God theology alerts us to the implausibility of all reductionist anthropologies, not least in genetic engineering.

The biological and social sciences explain human beings by patterns of cause and effect, made verifiable by empirical methods of observation and investigation, on the basis of data gathered. The image of God theology tells us that human beings can never be reduced to the sum of their biological parts or sociological habits. As an example of a reductionist approach based on the findings of these sciences there is "genetic

---

[73] David Atkinson, "Some Theological Perspectives on the Human Embryo" in N. De S. Cameron (ed.), *Embryos and Ethics. The Warnock Report in Debate* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1987), p. 48.
[74] Audrey R. Chapman, *Unprecedented Choices* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), p. 198. Also Leon Kass, "Making Babies – The New Biology and the 'Old' Morality", *The Public Interest* (Winter, 1972), p. 53; Nicholas Wade, *The Ultimate Experiment* (New York: Walker & Company, 1977), p. 154: "We have paid some high prices for the technological conquest of nature, but none perhaps so high as the intellectual and spiritual costs of seeing nature as mere material for our manipulation, exploitation and transformation. With the power for biological engineering now gathering, there will be splendid new opportunities for a similar degradation of our view of man. Indeed, we are already witnessing the erosion of our idea of man as something splendid or divine, as a creature with freedom and dignity. And clearly, if we come to see ourselves as meat, then meat we shall become."

essentialism" which means reducing "the self to a molecular entity, equating human beings, in all their social, historical, and moral complexity, with their genes".[75] But none of the empirical sciences has yet succeeded in explaining the full range of humanity's aptitudes, intuitions and aspirations which are God-like in their potentialities, powers and prowess and are better explained by such an inclusive paradigm as the image of God.[76] Human beings are multi-dimensional creatures, highly developed, and open to what is infinite and transcendent, both conceptually through imagination and reason, and experientially through personal freedom, morality and relationships. The irony of the modern period of western culture, science and technology is that we are still asking the ancient question: What is Man? (Psa 8:4) and have not progressed beyond the answer of that Psalm that the human being is God's creature, honoured with his likeness and appointed to his service in the management of the earth.[77]

The biblical view of the image of God in Man enshrines and protects the essential dignity and worth of all human beings.[78] This is because the image of God metaphor links human beings with the highest possible reference point, outside themselves.

---

[75] Dorothy Nelkin and M. Susan Lindee quoted in Chapman, *op. cit.*, p. 174. To this list of social, historical and moral complexities we could add the intellectual and artistic.

[76] In fairness it could be argued in reply that this is not the aim or ability of science to do, that science is by its own methodology limited to the investigating and finding how things work, not about what kind of things they are or why they exist. Answering questions like these is rather the task of metaphysics, philosophy and theology. However, in the real world, scientists from the different disciplines do make claims about the meaning and purpose of human beings, but in doing so they step outside their proper fields and put on the hats of philosophers and theologians.

[77] Interestingly, the kind of questions people ask when they are engaged with their own humanity, as when they are facing suffering or death, are the questions of metaphysics not science, that have to do with the meaning of life, personal relationships and the way we should live.

[78] David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (London: Collins, 1973), p. 288: "What other view of man can compare with this for splendour, for power to awaken compassion and resist injustice?" Or John F.A. Sawyer, "The Meaning of *btselem elohim* ("In the Image of God") in Genesis I-XI", *Journal of Theological Studies* 25 (1974), p. 426: "This is surely a profound theological doctrine in itself, which, even without further definition, has immense consequences for man's understanding of his place in creation, his obligations to care for the natural resources of God's world, his unique relationship to God, and his sense of responsibility towards himself and his fellow men."

> Human dignity is grounded not so much in the fact that we are essentially unlike the animal world, but above all in the fact that we are somehow like God. It pertains to the essence of humanity to be ordered to God. The concern of *Genesis* is not to reject any connection between humanity and the non-human world but to affirm the special position and function of the human race within the world.[79]

The biblical grounding of human dignity in the gift of the Creator God who has acted in grace in all his treatment of humankind stands in marked contrast to the Enlightenment tradition which treats human dignity as something to be earned as a human achievement.[80] However Christian thinkers define the image conceptually it points ineluctably to the uniqueness of human beings. Attempts have been made by secular thinkers to defend a belief in the sanctity of human persons on grounds other than those of the Christian teaching, but these lack depth and conviction, because the quality of sanctity depends on a view of the human person that involves transcendence. Failure to reckon with the truth of the biblical conception leads invariably to a reductionist view, or to a noble view of the human person that cannot be defended rationally and historically. Thinking about the human being can move upwards to God as the measure of the human, or downwards to animals in a reductionist fall. In the postmodern climate of opinion the human self has been deconstructed away and the human person reduced to a collection of cells, genes and synapses that are held to solve the mystery of the human person in her freedom, individuality and creativity.

Since the image of God describes what human beings essentially are, the obligation to love our neighbour as ourself, intrinsic to the creation

---

[79] Zachary Hayes, *What Are They Saying About Creation*? (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), pp. 63-64.
[80] For this reason the German Lutheran theologian and ethicist Helmut Thielicke spoke of human dignity as an "alien" dignity, received as a gift from God due to his image in us, and not our own possession that we can boast about. See Karen Lebacqz, "Alien Dignity: The Legacy of Helmut Thielicke for Bioethics", in Allen Verhey (ed.), *Religion and Medical Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

covenant, applies across genetic differences, and outlaws every form of unjust discrimination founded on genetic information. The fact is that everyone, even those who might wish to regard themselves and be regarded as "normal" human beings, are genetically defective.

> Yet, geneticists estimate that so-called normal people generally have five to seven lethal genes and carry an even larger number of genes that make them susceptible to developing multifactorial diseases in which genetics plays some role. There is probably no one without at least a few genetic liabilities.[81]

Further, no one can be held responsible for their particular genetic inheritance, since our genetic coding has come randomly in the reproductive process. These facts expose the falsehood of unjust forms of discrimination [82] against persons whose genome shows them susceptible to fatal diseases, risk factors, or other factors at various stages of their human development. As a result insurance companies, employment agencies, mortgage facilitators, and other agencies, are bound ethically to refrain from using genetic information or genetic forecasting as a cause for not employing persons. For the Christian God's love extends across all such divides, in order to establish a human community based on equal human worth. "God loves each human being regardless of our genetic makeup and, therefore, we should love one another according to this model."[83]

Would it ever be possible to destroy the image of God in the human person through genetic engineering, eugenic experiments or transgenic transfers? For this to happen a person's very humanity would have to be altered and not just some of the accidents of human being such as levels of

---

[81] Chapman, *op. cit.,* p. 181.

[82] Obviously certain genomic disorders or prognoses would need to be taken into account for the safety of other persons, as in national security matters or public services (e.g. flying aircraft).

[83] Ted Peters, "Genes, Theology, and Social Ethics: Are We Playing God?", in T. Peters (ed.), *Genetics* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1989), pp. 4-5.

intelligence, colour of eyes, height and so on. Until human personhood itself is threatened we remain within the recognisable boundaries of the truly human. It is conceivable, in time, through the new technologies that underlie gene transfer between species, that such radical changes could be engineered that an individual human being could become more animal than human, or more machine than human.[84] In that case the hallmarks of the human person could disappear, in particular, the ability to act and interact in the freedom of love towards God and human beings. This is the wisdom and necessity of holding the human Jesus as an exemplar of universal humanity, and what it means to be the personalised image of God, without remainder or reduction.

1.2 Humankind's Covenant Responsibilities

Genesis 1:28

God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Exegesis

God, as the supreme King of creation, calls and commissions humankind to fulfil a royal role of their own, under him, in a priestly ordering and subduing of the rest of the creation. The biblical account stands in marked

---

[84] The evidence is not lacking that such a scenario is well under way in the scientific fantasies of some social planners. For example see James Hudson, "What Kinds of People Should We Create?", *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 17, 2 (2000), pp. 131-143, who not only wants to engineer people to live longer or be more intelligent but who considers modifying the psyches of future people so that they will no longer find art or sex meaningful but be controlled by pure rationality along with a guarded altruism. Assuming that such engineering of the human being did become possible we would have to argue that in such a case the human person has been fundamentally altered and the scientists have begun to recreate the human person in man's image so that a new species has come into existence, whose wisdom and nature no longer come from God. On the other hand, it could be argued that it would still be the case that we have come from God, since human beings can only alter what God has given in the first place.

contrast to parallel cosmogonies from neighbouring Near Eastern sources where, for example, in the Babylonian creation myth, men are created by the gods to do the menial work the gods choose not to do, and men are created from the blood of a rebel god who has been slain for insurrection.[85]

The exegetical point of interest here concerns humankind's subduing and ruling over the earth. The two verbs form another hendiadys (cf. verse 26).[86] The first verb (*kabash*), in other contexts, refers to people being subdued as slaves (Neh 5:5; 2 Chron 28:10; Jer 34:11, 16). However another set of references apply to the subduing of the land of promise (Num 32:22, 29; Jos 18:1; 1 Chron 22:18). This suggests organising and putting into due order. This harmonises well with Genesis 1:28 where the object of the divine mandate is the earth. The second verb (*rada*) is frequently used in contexts of royal rule where the king puts down his enemies but in the interests of universal peace (Lev 26:17; Num 24:19; 1 Kings 4:24; Psa 72:8, 110:2; Isa 14:6; Ezek 34:4). Although the language is vigorous the context is that of a golden age before sin, sorrow and cruelty entered into the world.[87] Later Jewish prophecy picks up this theme of a faultless creation for its future hope of the world.[88] Human dominion is patterned on the archetype of the Creator King who rules over everything with benevolent justice.[89]

---

[85] Alfred Gottschalk, "The Image of Man in Genesis and the Ancient Near East", *Maarav*, 7 (1991), pp. 131-140.
[86] Scullion, *op. cit*., p. 21: "The word *radah*, to rule, to dominate, is resumed from verse 26, and is used with *kabash*, to subdue. They form a hendiadys."
[87] So Scullion, *op. cit*., p. 21.
[88] Later Old Testament prophecy depicts the new creation in terms of an original paradise where there is no violence and the animal kingdom lives under humankind in peaceful coexistence (Isa 11:6-9; 65:17-25).
[89] The ideal of the Israelite king was also patterned on the perfect rulership of Yahweh, because the king was seen as a throwback to the ideal Man of creation, as well as becoming the paradigm for the future Messiah (eg. Psalm 72) who would eventually realise the divine ideals for humankind eschatologically. On the God-like rule of humankind over creation Scullion (*op. cit*., p. 21) observes: "God has entrusted his world to men and women; they are to exercise their rule facing that immense order, but with God as their point of reference. There is no rule dissociated from God."

The dominion of humankind over creation has sometimes been used to explain the image but the reverse is true; because humankind already has or is the divine likeness the Creator entrusts dominion to her. Only a creature so formed that there can be personal communication between them and God can face the Herculean task of managing the world as God's personal appointee. Twice humankind is described as the image of God, twice humankind is entrusted with rule over the creation, but in each case image precedes dominion (verses 26 and 28).

Theology

If we accept the royal ideology source for the biblical metaphor[90] then the image of God is a calling as well as a status, it tells us something about how humans should act, live and relate to other living things. "Man in his entirety is the viceroy of the earth. He is to be on earth what Yahweh is to the entire universe. His life is to be a microcosm of the macrocosm of divine life."[91] Or again: "In Hebrew culture image means a 'stand-in', one who 'represents' another who is greater . . . Human beings are thus to function as God's surrogates in the midst of his creation."[92] Man is meant to mirror in his own character, choices, values, acts and rule those of the divine King, to make visible the invisible rule of God on the earth. This is humankind's vocation, to rule over the earth in justice and mercy, giving to each one its proper place and commissioning each one for the good of the whole. The man's naming the animals (Gen 2:19-20) exemplifies this royal rule in knowledge, justice and benevolence.

---

[90] D.J.A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man", *Tyndale Bulletin*, 19 (1968), argues for the view that the dominion is inseparable from the image and that in Ancient Middle Eastern ideology the king was the public figure connected with the image of the god(s).
[91] Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 329.
[92] Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

The subduing and ruling mandate means that the human person individually, and human persons generically, are the mediator of God's kingdom in creation. They are appointed by God to be his servants but they perform this service in relation to the world. The interference of sin and death has not changed this human mandate. The ideal figure of the Messianic priest-king comes closest to this vocation of humankind and was meant to replicate it.[93] The call of God's covenant people to be a kingdom of priests, or royal priests, is one that appears first under the calling of Israel (Exod 19:4-6), then finds its end-time fulfilment in the call of members of the heavenly kingdom of Jesus Christ under the Gospel covenant (Rev 1:6, 5:10). It is important to keep the balance between the two sides of the destiny of humankind, as "priest of the cosmos, God's royal image".[94] Human rule over creation is not absolute but moderated always by service, and both are subsumed under the higher rule of God and for his glory. As God's image in the material cosmos, human persons are created and called to exemplify, for all creation to see and experience, the kindly rule of the God who is. This has always been one of justice and mercy, beneficial to all his creatures.

> For man, created to God's image, received a mandate to subject to himself the earth and all that it contains, and to govern the world with justice and holiness; a mandate to relate himself and the totality of things to Him who was to be acknowledged as the Lord and Creator of all.[95]

In the Person of Jesus Christ the original human ideal in creation is restored and made visible.[96] Just as Jesus idealises the image of God in his personal

---

[93] See Gen 14:18-20; Psa 110:1, 4; Zech 6:12-13; Heb 1:1-4, 7:1-3.

[94] Ware, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

[95] *The Documents of Vatican II*, "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (New York: Guild Press, 1966), par. 34.

[96] This is true in spite of the fact that Jesus was always in his Person the eternal Son of God and was not a separate human person. Christians believe that his human nature was fully personal because of its always having been in-Personal in the Son of God, that is, it never existed independently of the Person of the Son

relations to God, humankind and the rest of creation, so he epitomises the servant role of the human creature through his active and regal ministrations on behalf of humankind and the rest of creation in the service of God.[97] He is the Servant-Lord, the Priest-King Messiah, who offers all his human activity and sufferings to God in humble and reverential service, as he answers the call of the people for divine mercy, truth and forgiveness. At the same time he demonstrates his regnant power over the physical world, including the human, as he glorifies God through acts of healing, liberation and resurrection. In active and passive obedience Jesus did everything for the glory of God his Father, and the benefit of all his human peers. He exemplified the perfect moral vision of justice and love, never hate or *hubris*. Jesus shows us the meaning of the human person in the active service of God and humanity in the world of creatures. He demonstrates repeatedly the social, physical and ethical qualities of the human person. For this reason Paul presents the Self-life of Jesus Christ as the perfect model of all others in Self-giving love in the service of God and humankind.[98]

The role of priest-king fits within the larger legal entity of the covenant of creation. It is at the point of God's divine promises and mandates that the covenantal nature of existence for humankind becomes first of all apparent (verse 28). Covenants entail promises on the part of the primary party to the relationship; services belong to the party to whom the covenant is offered as a formal relationship. So the Creator God enters into covenant with his personal human creature by pronouncing blessings (verse 28),

---

of God, that is, never in an impersonal state. The uniquely constituted Person of Jesus Christ does not prevent him from being like us in every respect apart from participation in our sinfulness (Heb 4:15).
[97] We can think here of Jesus' various miracles to restore men and women through healing or his management of the unruly powers of nature to their proper ends; also his rich repertoire of parables and wisdom teaching about the higher goods of the kingdom of God and eternal life.
[98] Especially see Philippians 2:5-9.

making provisions (verse 29) and guaranteeing life (Gen 2:9). In return his covenant partner, the divine image-bearer, is able to respond with trust, thankfulness and obedience.[99] Essentially the covenant is a community of persons whose relationship is formalised in a number of public assurances on both sides. The social nature of the gift of personhood to humankind has already been argued for. The words of the Creator now give material content to this in the form of a series of mandates of responsibility and opportunity in relation to the human creatures themselves (be fruitful and multiply), the earth (fill the earth and subdue it) and the other living creatures (have dominion over every living thing). Their relation with their Creator-King underlies the covenant and its various mandates.

The covenantal nature of human existence brings mutual engagements of a far-reaching kind. Jesus, for example, teaches that there is always the obligation to save life rather than to destroy it.[100] Or Paul tells his readers that the obligation of loving our neighbour is a universal one that never ends.[101] These are biblical examples of the ways in which a covenantal reading of human existence brings moral direction and ethical illumination to the complex world of personal relations. The covenant of creation means that we are all related as family members with fundamental commitments of care towards each other that override differences of culture, ethnicity and beliefs. The covenant of creation is based on the belief that every human person is a unique member of that family of humankind just because of the gift of God-like personhood. The covenant of creation enshrines an ethic of human equality and dignity towards every human

---

[99] In his analysis of the fallen culture of his day Paul identifies the primary error of humankind as their unwillingness to honour God as God and to be thankful to him for all his blessings (Rom 1:21).
[100] Mark 3:4.
[101] Romans 13:8-10.

person from the beginning of life to its end.[102] The covenant of creation establishes human rights but balances them with human responsibilities, the rights being those of our neighbours rather than our own, the responsibilities being our own rather than those of our neighbours. The covenant of creation means that we are personally the servants of all and the masters of none.

Does the biblical text in Genesis suggest guidelines for human persons in their role of managing the physical world including their own biological inheritance? The text speaks of humankind subduing the earth and ruling over the living creatures. What does this mean? Traditionally these mandates have suggested a stewardship of the earth and its resources but recently an alternative way of defining the human role has come into play, namely, that of being co-creator with God. Is there a difference, and does the difference matter?

Steward

Firstly, the Christian tradition supports the idea of human persons as stewards of the earth, contrary to the criticism that it has been imported into our reading of Genesis 1:26 as a result of modern environmental concerns.[103]

---

[102] Consider the fruitful possibilities of this creation anthropology in the writing of Paul Ramsey, set out in the preface of *The Patient as Person*, in which he writes: "We are born within covenants of life with life. By nature, choice, or need we live with our fellowmen in roles or relations. . . I shall not be ashamed to use as an interpretative principle the Biblical norm of *fidelity to covenant*, with the meaning it gives to *righteousness* between man and man." Likewise Haring, *op. cit.*, p. 5: "Life is entrusted to man's freedom and co-responsibility. He is not an independent lord of his life but a steward under the sovereignty of God. To accept responsibility for one's own life and that of others is a prime expression of covenant morality."

[103] See editorial, *Expository Times*, 111 (June 2000), p. 292.

Secondly, God is the one who creates and appoints the terms of human life and work. The human person is "lord of all things except himself",[104] being always subject to the authority of the Lord God who created and appointed him.

Thirdly, stewardship is a thoroughly biblical concept. Jesus told several parables about human stewards (Matt 25:14-30; Luke 12:35-48, 16:1-8, 19:1-27). Paul himself claimed to be a steward of Christ in the service of others (1 Cor 9:17; Eph 3:2; Col 1:25).

Fourthly, people are accountable for the gifts of God, in the ways they use them (1 Pet 4:10).

The fundamental idea of stewardship is one of responsibility (1 Cor 4:1-2) and emphasises more the priestly role of humankind under God as Creator. The steward in Greek culture was "the highest ranking servant of a wealthy landowner, who was in charge of the entire estate in his master's absence".[105] Jesus repeatedly warns against the danger of stewards exploiting their position of trust by going outside their proper limits. Stewardship has been criticised because it lacks flexibility and the freedom that naturally belongs to human persons. But Jesus' parables of stewardship (Matthew 25; Luke 19) make it clear that servants entrusted with their master's property were expected to invest that capital wisely by using their own ingenuity and imagination, and were later commended and rewarded for doing so. So the biblical steward is someone who enjoys a real measure of freedom but within definite restraints set by his relationship to his

---

104 F. L. Fisher, "Stewardship" in W.A. Elwell (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 1055.

105 Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians. The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p. 88.

employer. The challenge for those who operate biotechnologies is in finding the right degree of freedom and creativity in tandem with moral responsibility guided by *humilitas*.

From a different perspective comes the complaint that the steward idea fails to "challenge the prevailing ethos of our science, which is reductive, and of our technology, which is exploitative".[106] It also suffers from the notion that the steward is someone different from and superior to those with whom he has been entrusted. Consequently, the suggestion comes to prefer the equally biblical notion of the king who was chosen from among the people and ruled in their interests in servant-like ways. This model was perfectly exemplified in Jesus the Messiah-King who through his incarnation "established for all time the principle that lordship entails solidarity and sacrifice".[107] So the ideal Israelite king (set forth in passages such as Psalm 72; Ezekiel 34) is a fairer comparison for understanding the human role in creation management.

Co-creator

Does co-creator overcome the supposed limitations of the human person as the steward of creation? Firstly, co-creator may owe more to scientific sources than biblical ones in that the scientific vision is of humankind creating their own future. Co-creator sits more comfortably with the idea of progress and openness to the future inherent in biological evolution, the prevailing paradigm of human origins and development in Western science. Thus,

> Given that the world – indeed the cosmos – is evolving and exists in a two-fold contingency – it need not exist at all and it need not exist in this particular way – stewardship as a conservative concept seems totally

---

[106] Huw Spanner, "Tyrants, Stewards: or Just Kings?"in Andrew Linzey & Dorothy Yamamoto (eds.), *Animals on the Agenda* (Urbana: Uinversity of Illinois, 1998), p. 222.
[107] *Ibid.,* p. 224.

> unnatural. Much more fruitful is the suggestion . . . that God is a generous creator and that we are called to share in God's creative power. . . To be a steward is to be an actor, a designer, a planner, a co-creator.[108]

An evolutionary view of the world process can influence the reading of the biblical text at this point, since the same writer recognises that while the idea of stewardship is implicit in the creation account, it "connotes a sense of maintaining the status quo. Built into the stewardship concept is a notion of limits."[109] Co-creator might be thought to give more of a green light for engaging freely in the progress of science, without ethical scruples, but it could be argued otherwise that co-creator suggests an alignment with the moral Creator and so with moral principles.

Secondly, the co-creator model is influenced by philosophical-theological beliefs as well as scientific ones, since it normally goes hand in hand with an uncritical acceptance of process theology which constructs its anthropological vision for the human future around the basic notion of freedom and progress inherent in the cosmos. Process theology holds a view of the world process as *creatio continua*, a notion that blurs the difference between creation and providence, and understands creation as an open-ended programme in which humankind shares innovatively, by determining their own evolutionary changes.

Thirdly, co-creatorship can be aligned with the image of God, if, for example, we define the image in terms of creativity.

---

[108] Thomas A. Shannon, "Genetics, Ethics, and Theology: the Roman Catholic Discussion" in T. Peters (ed.), *Genetics. Issues of Social Justice* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998), pp. 169-170.
[109] *Ibid*. So Chapman, *op. cit.,* p. 42: "The stewardship tradition, which is rooted in Scripture, characterizes the vocation of humanity as a servant who has been given the responsibility for the management and service of something belonging to another, in this case the Creator. However, the classical notion of stewardship predates the discovery of evolution and assumes that we live in a static, finished, and hierarchical universe in which stewardship implies respecting the natural order and not seeking to change it. For the stewardship model to be relevant, then, requires considerable updating and reinterpretation."

> [t]he human race is created in God's image. In this context, the divine image in humanity is tied to creativity. God creates. So do we. With surprising frequency, we humans are described by theologians as "co-creators" with God, making our contribution to the evolutionary process. To avoid the arrogance of thinking that we humans are equal to God who created in the first place, we must add the term "created" to make the phrase "created co-creators." This emphasises our dependency upon God while pointing to our human opportunity and responsibility.[110]

Fourthly, co-creator could dovetail with the role of men and women in procreation, in which they co-operate with each other and with God in extending the human family following the promise and command of the Creator. However, procreation is explicitly included in God's mandate in the creation covenant, and while men and women co-operate in this role, they do so under God as part of their priestly vocation.

However, the co-creator role may be open to a number of criticisms. Firstly, from a biblical perspective, original creativity is always referred to God, with human persons seen as faithfully preserving and cultivating the work of God.[111] Peters sees this difficulty but tries to get around it by attaching the qualifier "created" to co-creator, thus aiming at a better balance.[112] But does this go far enough in making clear the priestly role of human persons and their activities?

Secondly, co-creator could suggest that human persons possess such an insight into the benign purposes of God in the natural order that they can intuitively collaborate with them for the noblest ends.

---

[110] Ted Peters, "Genes, Theology, and Social Ethics: Are We Playing God?" in Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
[111] Psalm 8 celebrates the place of humans in creation but always within the overarching kingly rule of God.
[112] Actually the combination "created co-creator" was coined by Philip Hefner.

Thirdly, co-creator suggests equality between Man and God that is inappropriate and untrue. The human person can never become "a kind of co-God" (Barth). Co-creator can emphasise the royal role of humankind in creation at the expense of their priestly role which is meant to moderate the human use of authority over other living things and the earth itself.

Fourthly, this appellation fails to reckon seriously enough with the fact that human persons and their technologies are always in need of redemption from the blinding and corrupting influences of the sinfulness that is part of the global human condition.

For these reasons, the term co-creator runs into difficulties that the traditional term steward does not face to the same extent.[113] It could be claimed that neither metaphor is adequate to all the biblical nuances, since steward does not allow sufficiently for the freedom to invent or the enterprise that the human mandate allows for, while co-creator is too open and does not sufficiently limit human exploitation of the biological environment.[114] However, since the stewardship metaphor can claim biblical credentials, and the co-creator imagery may be more dictated by an evolutionary paradigm, it may be best to stay with the older concept of stewardship, as being truer to a Christian tradition and worldview. The theory of a priestly author of the first creation narrative may at this point be more accurate theologically than from a literary-tradition point of view.

So what does it mean for human beings to subdue the earth and rule over the creation? Firstly, these two mandates may be understood as

---

[113] For the contents of this paragraph we are indebted to Cole-Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.
[114] Chapman, *op. cit.*, p. 44: "[t]he theological concept of co-creation does not generate a clearer delineation of appropriate applications or limitations for genetic engineering than does the stewardship model . . . Neither stewardship nor co-creation is translated into specific precepts or middle axioms that can then provide the basis for ethical analyses and/or policy recommendations."

encouraging human persons to explore the earth and unlock its secrets, with a view to harnessing its powers and resources, for the good of living creatures, including themselves. In the long history of civilisation human beings have learned, though painfully and slowly, how to do this, so that the course of human learning (the sciences) and development (modern technologies), may be held to approximate to the will of the Creator in the creation covenant. "Man receives from God the commissions to work the earth, 2:15, and to master it, 1:28. And this command in our own day includes the mastery of the physical, chemical and atomic powers of the universe."[115]

Secondly, something needs to be said about Lynn White's essay of 1967[116] which engendered a hermeneutic of suspicion in the reading of Genesis 1, one that has saddled Christianity with a major part of the blame for the exploitation of the natural environment, and that has infected the environmental movement with a strong strain of anti-Christian sentiment. James Barr [117] has challenged these accusations on two fronts, firstly, by arguing that the influence of the Bible's teaching about creation from Genesis 1 has not been so far-reaching as many have imagined or claimed on the rise and formation of modern science; secondly, that the creation account of Genesis 1 does not promote an exploitative attitude to the natural environment, rather the reverse. This latter point is the more relevant for present purposes, and accords with the argument mounted above.

> This background of Gen 1:26-28 makes it clear that the verbs commonly translated "subdue" (*kbs*) and "have dominion" (*rdh*) have been understood

---

[115] John Scullion, "Creation and Creature in the Bible" in J. Scullion, A. Hamilton, T. Daly, W. Daniel, *God's Creation and Human Responsibility for the Earth* (Melbourne: Polding Press, 1981), p. 12.
[116] Lyn White, "The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis", *Science* 155, no. 3767 (10 March, 1967), pp. 1203-1207.
[117] James Barr, "Man and Nature – the Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament", *Bulletin of John Rylands Library of Manchester* 55, 1 (1972), pp. 9 – 32.

too crudely by those who say that they both connote violent subjection without implying limits on how humans may treat other creatures. Appeal to how the verbs are used in other contexts, while relevant, does not overrule the force of the present context, which is governed by the "image" relationship. *Kbs* is the stronger of the two, but it is used here only of taming the earth; *rdh* is compatible with just and wise rule. In the context the verbs should not be taken to imply permission for arbitrary or exploitative treatment of creatures.[118]

If this is true for the treatment that human beings mete out to other creatures, how much more should it apply to treatment of human persons themselves.

Following the last point, it should be said that Enlightenment thinkers, such as Immanuel Kant, rather than biblical and orthodox Christians, have misunderstood and overstated the role of humankind in connection with creation.[119] It was Kant who attributed intrinsic worth to human beings but denied it to any other creatures, which, he claimed, derive any moral worth they have from the fact that they may serve human ends from time to time. "But so far as animals are concerned, we have no direct duties. Animals . . . are there merely as means to an end. That end is man."[120] Such a view of human-creature relations is far removed from the biblical and Christian understanding of the priestly role of men and women in creation covenant.

Does ruling over and subduing the earth include the creation of new forms of life or new species? We have seen that ruling over the earth suggests an acceptance of the created world of God's making, as that which is very

---

[118] Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

[119] Likewise Barr, *op. cit.*, p. 30: "But, as far as one must speak of responsibility and guilt, I would say that the great modern exploitation of nature has taken place under the reign of a liberal humanism in which man no longer conceives of himself as being under a creator, and in which therefore his place of dominance in the universe and his right to dispose of nature for his own end is, unlike the situation in the Bible, unlimited."

[120] Quoted in James Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1995), p. 127, originally taken from Kant's *Lectures on Ethics* (1779), translated by Louis Infield, (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 239.

good in itself. We have also learned that subduing applies strictly to the earth, and suggests the management of its resources that is compatible with exploratory and engineering technologies. In neither of these mandates is there the suggestion that human persons are called, expected or authorised to create new living organisms in order to enhance the environment. This would represent a usurping of the Creator role (playing God), and go beyond the covenant vocation of humankind. A sensitive reading of the role of human beings in the context of creation does not lead to the conclusion, nor warrant the view, that humankind may exploit the natural environment, or that the biological world exists for human pleasure alone. On the contrary Genesis 1 places human persons under God in their God-given mandate to manage and develop the earth. In this role humankind is to respect in practice the needs, worth and ends of other living creatures. Positively, this gives strong impetus for Christians to propose and support just and sustainable measures for preserving and healing the environment of living things.

> In the contemporary situation, Christian service must mean working for a more just world and preserving the earth. This call to serve all creation throws a new light on the Genesis call to "be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all living creatures that move on earth" (Gen 1:28). In following Christ's example this "dominion" includes deep respect for the ecological laws which bind creation together.[121]

Human persons are lords of all and servants of all.

> Man often seems to see no other meaning in his natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption. Yet it was the Creator's will that man should communicate with nature as an intelligent and noble "master" and "guardian", not as a heedless "exploiter" and "destroyer"... The essential meaning of this "kingship" and "dominion" of man over the visible world, which the Creator himself gave man for his task, consists in

---

[121] Sean McDonagh, *The Greening of the Church* (Scoreby: Canterbury Press, 1973), p. 161. Though dated these words speak to 21st century environmental concerns and issues.

the priority of ethics over technology, in the primacy of persons over things, and in the superiority of spirit over matter.[122]

There is no doubt that an evolutionary framework for viewing humankind leads to a more open attitude to self-experimentation in genetics, the evolutionary process, by its very nature, being seen as a progressive and open-ended movement of nature. The current human condition will be viewed as provisional, with the expectation of further stages of upward development in the future, principally through eugenic manipulations.[123]

A reader of Genesis 1 may wonder how far the utopian language of some scientific centres squares with the Creator's mandate to serve and preserve the earth (Gen 2:15), and whether such triumphalist rhetoric does not owe more to reductionist explanations of the human person than an honest appraisal of the human world. No one can now rejoice in all the applications or experiments of Western science and its technologies during the modern period, as seen in the light of the ecological crisis, the continuing possibility of nuclear mass destruction or the growing acceptance of therapeutic cloning and embryonic stem-cell research.[124] Acceptance of the biblical principle of priestly service on the part of human persons in their work in the world, that is, viewing human persons within a theological and metaphysical framework, would result in a more cautious and responsible use of biomedical technologies.

---

[122] John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (Melbourne: Advocate Press, 1979), pars. 15 & 16, pp. 27 & 29.

[123] Bernard Haring, *Ethics of Manipulation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 70-71 is surprisingly open to this very prospect and encourages it.

[124] Scullion, *Genesis*, p. 21: "The text says something, at least implicitly, about the modern problem of ecology. The human race, collectively and individually, has a responsibility for the environment. The scientist, the technologist, and the industrialist cannot prescind from the consequences of their work. Because they do prescind, or are restricted by their own tunnel vision, we have the science of ecology which may be described negatively and roughly as the science of getting us out of the mess into which we have been and are being plunged by the avarice of man and the indiscriminate and thoughtless distribution of the products, by-products, and waste products of modern science, industry and technology."

1.3 The Constitution of God's Covenant-Creature

Genesis 2:7

Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Exegesis

The text belongs to a second creation narrative that partly overlaps the first but this time restricting God's creative work to the human being who becomes the whole centre of interest.[125] The language is highly symbolical in using metaphorical language to describe the action of the Creator in fashioning the human being like a craftsman working with his material and by breathing into his face.[126] God is probably not represented as a potter since the medium God uses is not clay but the fine dust from the surface of the ground.[127] The Hebrew word *yeser* is characteristic of God's activity (42 out of 63 examples in the Old Testament), especially when creating human beings.

Theology

The passage witnesses to the uniqueness of the human being over other living creatures. The special act of divine in-breathing, face to face as it were, is what establishes this since the title "living being" has already been applied to other living creatures (Gen 1:20, 21, 24, 28) and they also receive, and in a certain sense possess, the breath of life (Gen 1:30). This

---

[125] Kidner, *op. cit.*, p. 60: "This verse, with profound simplicity, matches, and completes the classic 1:27."
[126] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall. A Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1-3* (London: SCM, 1962), p. 43: ". . . anthropomorphism in thinking about God . . . is no more irrelevant or unsuitable a way of speaking of the being of God than the abstract use of the generic name 'deity'. On the contrary, the fact that we simply cannot conceive of 'God in himself' is perhaps expressed much more plainly in clear anthropomorphism."
[127] Scullion, *op. cit.*, p. 44. Likewise Westermann, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

divine act is one of special intimacy, like a kiss of life and affection that lifts the human in his being above other living things by making him open and oriented to God as his more immediate Partner. The uniqueness of the human being is thus established and gifted by God in his special grace towards him without in any way lessening the qualitative difference between God and the living cosmos. Just as in the first creation account humans were differentiated from the rest of God's living creation by the gift of the divine image so in this second account the special act of God by breathing into the earthling witnesses in the same direction.

Since a divine act of grace establishes the human in his creaturely being it follows that the human being is not capable of being understood by herself or by others, without this primary referent in the Personal transcendent.[128] The mystery of the human being is only explicable in the biblical imagination when his Personal Creator is taken into the picture and made the starting-point for the enquiry, what is man?[129] The human is by nature a religious being who is creaturely and dependent, but whose being is actualised and fulfilled in this relationship of contingency with the God who made humankind to be his intimate and servant. God is the measure of the human because the human exists in the likeness of the former and is wholly dependent on the Creator and answerable to him.[130] Only this constitutional orientation of the human being on God can equip the human

---

[128] John Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1963), p. 48: "Whatever the philosophers have argued about the *summum bonum* was stupid and fruitless, because they confined man within himself, when the need was for us to go outside of ourselves to find happiness. The highest human good is therefore simply union with God. We attain it when we are brought into conformity with his likeness."

[129] Psalm 8 that asks this question (verse 4) answers the question by setting humankind within the creation that proclaims the Lord's name everywhere and over which the Lord has set humankind.

[130] Barth, *op. cit.,* III/2, pp. 345-346: ". . . man really is, is ontically and therefore noetically dependent on the fact that he is not without God. . . man without God is not an object of knowledge. . . Even the error of a theoretical, practical or methodical atheism in his self-knowledge can do nothing to alter the fact that he is not without God. . . Man cannot escape God, because he always derives from Him. . . As he is not without God, he cannot understand himself without God. . . Man exists as he is grounded, constituted and maintained by God."

for being both the covenant partner of God and his earthly representative and steward since both require a personal knowledge, responsibility and intimacy on the part of the creature.

We can refine this point by drawing on the imagery of the divine breathing which elsewhere in Scripture is connected with the creative energy and ordering of the Spirit of God.[131] Human existence is due to the life-giving act and presence of the Spirit of life, the Personal Spirit of God. His energy makes the human creature all that he distinctively is, in ordered being, and maintains the new life, moment by moment, that he has brought into existence in so signal a way.[132]

The impartation of life from outside herself constitutes the human being as personal, a responsive and responsible creature of God who is empowered and called to partner with God in covenant partnership, community and communion. This appears from the immediately following narrative (Gen 2:8-9 and 15-17) that tells how the Creator constructs a garden environment for the human creature as a rendezvous where she can enjoy God's company and be with him in responsible and delightful service, through free obedience to God's commands, in physical surroundings that satisfy all man's senses. All this presupposes some kind of concept of human personhood since the human being has become an individual subject with

---

[131] For example, Gen 6:3 where the Spirit is said to abide in every human being and whose absence in man terminates his earthly life; Psa 33:6 which recalls the creative work of the Spirit and the Word of God in creation; Psa 51:10-11 where the writer appeals to God for his Holy Spirit in order to create him anew in a moral and spiritual way; Psa 104:29-30 where the Spirit, breath and face of God are all connected in the two-way processes of giving life and withdrawing it; John 20:22, perhaps the closest text to ours, where Jesus breathes on his disciples in imparting to them the Holy Spirit and in this initiates them into the new life of his kingdom and empowers them for her mission. So also Christopher Wright, *Knowing the Holy Spirit Through the Old Testament* (Oxford: Monarch Books, 2006), p. 28: "It is of course a figure of speech (since God does not have literal, physical breath). But it is a phrase, which, from other contexts, would certainly indicate the presence of the Spirit of God, who can also be called the breath of God (eg. in Ezekiel 37:9-10, 14)."

[132] Bonhoeffer, *op. cit.*, p. 45: "God breathes his Spirit into the body of man. And this Spirit is life and makes man alive. . . Man as man does not live with God's Spirit. To live *as man* means to live as body in Spirit."

independent judgement and freedom to choose and actualise himself existentially in the world.[133] This is further demonstrated in the way the human being personally interacts with other living beings, below him (animals, Gen 2:19-20), around him (fellow humans, Gen 2:18, 21-25) and above him (God, Gen 3:9-13).[134] This corresponds with the personal nature of the divine Breath whose personal action has already been hinted at in the creation narrative.[135] Whatever the creative act of God means to convey it is the dynamic Breath of God that establishes the human for what he really is, sets him on his feet, stabilises and unifies his whole being and fits him for the service of his Creator in the world.

Later biblical anthropology uses the complementary terms soul and body to describe the structure of man's being.[136] While that particular terminology is missing from this early narrative and it would therefore be anachronistic to find it here (though some writers have used this as an early text for the later anthropology), the nuanced principles of materiality and spirituality, or outwardness and inwardness, may not be so far removed from this passage.[137] The two separate and ordered acts of God, in forming the human from the dust, then breathing into him the breath of life, does alert the reader to a special orientation of the human being over other creatures, that the human may not be understood merely as the dust from which he

---

[133] Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 364: "He is the principle which makes man a subject."

[134] Following the personalist philosophy of Martin Buber we could represent this network of relationships of the human respectively as an I-THOU (man and God), an I-thou (the man and the woman or fellow-human being), an I-thou/it (man and the animals) and an I-it (man and the physical environment).

[135] See Gen 1:1 where the Spirit of God "hovers" over the waters, an intentional action that later Scripture attributes to God in his maternal care for his people (Deut 32:11). So Wright, *op. cit.,* p. 14. On Gen 2:7 Kidner, *op. cit.*, p. 60, remarks: ". . . *breathed* is warmly personal, with the face-to-face intimacy of a kiss and the significance that this was an act of giving as well as making; and self-giving at that. . . *nephesh*, translated *being* (RSV) or *soul* (AV, RV) is often the equivalent of 'life', and often of 'persons' or 'self', according as one emphasises the aliveness of the creature or the creature who is alive."

[136] For example, Eccles 12:7.

[137] Barth, *op. cit.*, IV / 2, pp. 350-351 expresses this duality as man belonging to the material world and the heavenly world, being visible and invisible, outward and inward, and the latter in each case in the midst of the former. He develops this line of thinking by defining man as the soul of his body – wholly and simultaneously both, in ineffaceable difference, inseparable unity, and indestructible order.

has been created. Nothing in the later dual teaching of soul and body conflicts with the description of the first man as inbreathed dust or embodied breath.

At any rate, the uniqueness of the human lies in the God-Man relationship which separates *homo sapiens* from all the other species of creaturely life. Humankind is the creature that is immanent in the world and yet is capable of transcending the world in that he can prescind himself from the world. "Human beings are both *in* nature and *over* it, continuous with it and discontinuous from it."[138] Such is the greatness and the mystery of the human person.

As part of the larger picture of the human being this text affirms the bodily existence of the human person, that the human is never without embodiment, that the whole embodied self is the image of God (Gen 1:26-27).[139] The starting-point for the creation of the human is the dust from which the man is constructed rather than some spark of the divine that is then embodied. The text already constitutes him human before the Lord God breathes his Spirit-life into the man. In no way is human materiality seen as alien, incidental or an inferior part of his being.[140] Unfortunately later Christian thought did not adhere to this principle, embracing instead the Platonic and Cartesian versions of the human being in which the body was regarded separately from the spiritual and rational nature of man

---

[138] Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

[139] John Calvin, *A Commentary on Genesis* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), p. 95: "Thus the chief seat of the Divine image was in his mind and heart . . . yet was there no part of him in which some scintillations of it did not shine forth . . . In the mind perfect intelligence flourished and reigned, uprightness attended to its companion, and all the senses were prepared and moulded for due obedience to reason; and in the body there was a suitable correspondence with this internal order."

[140] Bonhoeffer, *op. cit.*, p. 44: "Man's origin is in a piece of earth. His bond with the earth belongs to his essential being. The 'earth is his mother'; he comes out of her womb. . . It is God's earth out of which man is taken. From it he has his *body*. His body belongs to his essential being. Man's body is not his prison, his shell, his exterior, but man himself. Man does not 'have' a body; he does not 'have' a soul; rather he 'is' body and soul. Man in the beginning is really his body. He is one. He is his body. . . The man who renounces his body renounces his existence before God."

because of its materiality and treated as an attachment to the soul or reason which should be held to be the real man. On the contrary, the whole biblical witness, starting with our text, is to the integrity of human embodiment both in creation and redemption where the Christian hope is for a bodily resurrection following the precedent of Jesus Christ.[141] The text establishes at least the sanctity of the human body on the basis of the embodied nature of the human person.

> By virtue of its substantial union with a spiritual soul, the human body cannot be considered a mere complex of tissues, organs and functions, nor can it be evaluated in the same way as the body of animals; rather it is a constitutive part of the person who manifests and expresses himself through it. . . A first consequence can be deduced from these principles: an intervention on the human body affects not only the tissues, organs and their functions but also involves the person himself on different levels. It involves, therefore, perhaps in an implicit but nonetheless real way, a moral significance and responsibility.[142]

A special act of God explains the actual existence of the first human being in the wholeness of his being and existence. This special act of creation marks out the human person from the beginning of her existential history. Bearing in mind the generic nature and intention of the narrative as representing the first man Adam as a collective personality,[143] the biblical text in its larger canonical context encourages us to think of every human being analogously. Allowing for the special circumstances in which Adam, the first human being, is created immediately by the fiat and action of God, yet his case sets forth the principle of immediacy in the creation of other human beings under the normal circumstances of human generation and

---

[141] Paul's classical discourse in 1 Corinthians 15. Bonhoeffer, *op. cit.*, p. 46: "Adam is created as body, and therefore he is redeemed as body, in Jesus Christ and in the Sacrament."

[142] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Respect for Human Life* (St Pauls Books, n.d.), p. 8. Also John Paul II, quoted *ibid.*, pp. 8-9: "Each human person, in absolutely unique singularity, is constituted not only by his spirit, but by his body as well. Thus, in the body and through the body, one touches the person himself in his concrete reality. To respect the dignity of man consequently amounts to safeguarding this identity of the man *corpore et anima unus*."

[143] See Romans 5:12-21.

conception. Each human being is due to a creative act of the Spirit of God who forms not only the genetic and biological inheritance of each individual but the whole being of every human person.[144] In so far as evolutionary theories may be used to promote the view that human beings are the product of random processes and in no way the result of divine special action, they conflict with the theological anthropology of this text (which is supported elsewhere in Scripture).[145] Even allowing for the mechanism of biological evolution, the Christian believes in an act or moment of special creative energy in which God sovereignly instantiates the human person.[146]

Finally, the text teaches the essential unity of the human being, despite the complexity, uniqueness and diversity of the human as a God-breathed creature. This unity-within-diversity of the human being reflects a similar though greater complexity of plurality-within-unity of the divine Being. This unity-within-diversity or diversity-within-unity is due to the free decision of the Personal Creator to will, out of love and from no absolute necessity, this creature-being as his earthly likeness. The human being's diversity-within-unity, that is, his human constitution as free personal agent, is secured so long as the man actualises and retains the primary orientation of his being on God, but is forfeited the moment he exchanges this orientation for one that centres on himself (as happens in the sequel of Genesis 3)[147] with all the destructive consequences that such a life-choice have meant. Meantime the human being retains a sense of individual selfhood, of unitary being, that distinguishes each one from his neighbour

---

[144] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Homebush: St Pauls, 1994), par. 366: "The Church teaches that every spiritual soul is created immediately by God – it is not 'produced' by the parents – and also that it is immortal."

[145] For example, Psalm 139:13, 15-16; Eccles 12:7; Luke 1:31, 35.

[146] So John Paul II, annual message to the Pontifical Academy of Science, October, 1996.

[147] In Genesis 3 the man and the woman choose for themselves against their Lord and Creator, and suffer the consequences of spiritual alienation, social conflict and environmental damage.

but in this very experience makes human community and association possible and desirable.[148]

Conclusions

In this chapter we have examined the earliest biblical and theological witness to the creation of the human person. The first two chapters of the book of Genesis were chosen because, as well as being the earliest representation of the origins and the nature of humankind, they set in motion the full story of the human person within the larger biblical drama of creation, fall, redemption and new creation. The creation of humankind with divine likeness thus envisages, in the canonical context, the fuller narrative of humankind that peaks in Jesus Christ, and the eschatological arrival of his kingdom that will mean the renewal of the whole creation. Further, because "faith is an existential unity of theory and practice",[149] we have traversed a single trajectory from exegesis of the biblical texts through theological reflection to some ethical applications in the fields of biomedicine and biotechnology.

From this chapter a number of conclusions are drawn.

The human person cannot be properly defined without reference to the divine Creator who created humankind in the divine image or pattern of

---

[148] Barth, *op. cit.*, IV / 2, p. 394: "Here human speech is, as often, wiser than human thought. It is a remarkable thing that, in our use of the decisively important personal pronouns, we do not even remotely imagine that our expressions refer to the existence and nature of two substances or merely to one or other of them. On the contrary, we say with equal emphasis and equal right: 'I think' and 'I see', 'I know' and 'I have toothache', 'I hate' and 'I am operated on', "I have sinned' and 'I am old'. Fundamentally we know very well . . . that all these things, though some are spiritual and others bodily, concern me myself. They are affairs of the one subject I, which is the soul of its body and for this very reason is wholly and at the same time soul and body. For who, when he speaks, ever thinks of dividing himself or another into soul and body, or of claiming to consider himself or another only as soul or only as body?"
[149] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM, 1979), p. 60.

being. The human person is legitimated most fully through this primal dialectic of the Divine and human.

Being God's image the human person exists and acts as an independent self-agent who relates to others in love and justice. These relationships that constitute the human condition are multi-dimensional, with God, other human agents, non-human creatures and the physical world. The human person both is and interacts.

Being the divine likeness on earth the human person has been entrusted with managing the whole creation under the Creator King, as a faithful steward. This stewardly role allows for human creativity through science and technology but always for the glory of God and the benefit of creation.

The human person is a special creation of God, an embodied self brought about by the inbreathing of God's Spirit in a physical body. The human person may not be reduced to any or all of his physical constituents.

This biblical-theological chapter of the thesis has given us a number of analogical ways of thinking about the human person in the larger context of God's creative work and world. The overall study of the human person in this thesis is with a view to illuminating some of the ethical dilemmas that have arisen over biotechnology and its controversial uses in the genesis, manipulation and termination of human life. Without a clear conception of the human person we are not in a position to understand the real issues nor are we able to bring appropriate responses. But in order to address the ethics of biomedical practices we need an ethical theory and method of penetrating these sorts of questions, that can provide clear guidelines through the moral maze of biomedicine, in defence of the human person

and human life. The next chapter of the thesis turns to that question by choosing Natural Law as the moral theory that is best suited to answering these needs for reasons that will be explained. We have chosen one of the recent interpretations of Natural Law theory that centers on the human person, as a way of adapting this method to the special exigencies of the modern world.

2. Natural Law of the Human Person

The biblical-theological study in chapter one established an integrated, nuanced view of the human person as an independent and responsible agent of human action and relationships and as central to the divine ordering of the natural world of God's creation. The special context of interest of the thesis is the biotechnology one that throws up ethical questions of an unprecedented and complex nature that impact on the human person as the subject of them. Since we take this theological view of the human person as normative on the basis of Revelation we now require a matching ethical method that meshes with it in such a way as to honour the integrity, worth and centrality of the human person and to provide a methodological tool for use in the rest of thesis. The ethical method that purports to do this best is Natural Law theory, particularly as that has been revised to suit the late 20th century cultural concerns about the human person. [150] The aim of this chapter is to examine that claim and demonstrate its truth by taking as an example of the newest natural law theory the major writing of Germain Grisez, although there are others working in the same field (most notably

---

[150] This is known as Neo-Thomist Natural Law since (1) it takes its starting-point from Thomas Aquinas (ST II.i.) but (2) develops the Thomist tradition in a more metaphorical way than the traditional and more literal way. This distinction is explained in this chapter.

John Finnis). The chapter follows a logical sequence in, first, seeking a definition of natural law, secondly, in explaining its distinctive advantages as an ethical method of the human person, thirdly, in answering one of the regular objections to natural law theory, thirdly, in adopting a working model and, lastly, drawing the principal lessons of this chapter for the central concern of the thesis.

2.1. What is natural law?

Natural law theory is based on the belief that there are common human concerns and practices that point towards a moral life that is applicable to peoples and individuals everywhere, that they can access by means of rational reflection.[151] Natural law presupposes "a universal capacity of moral judgement that is grounded in the unity of humankind's moral consciousness – however fragmented, obscured, and dependent on so many cultural, anthropological, and social conditions that consciousness may be."[152] The universal basis of natural law can be seen from the fact that both the Greeks and the Romans embraced some form of it, it was integrated into Christian moral philosophy through the likes of Augustine and Aquinas, and in modern times it has played a role in the thinking of movements as diverse as the categorical (universal) imperatives of Immanuel Kant, forms of utilitarianism that advocate more objective views and a rational order in human preferences, and the human rights advocacy

---

[151] Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, I.2, q. 94. art. 2) describes natural law as made up of so many self-evident principles of practical reason, the first principle of which is that the good is to be followed and done, the evil to be avoided. Hence, "all those things to which man has a natural inclination are naturally apprehended by reason as being good" and so belong to natural law. Also William E. May, *An Introduction to Moral Theology* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1994), p. 90: "It is not a mystery, a funny feeling, a fuzzy concept. It is, rather, an ordered set of true propositions of what we are to do if we are to be fully the beings we are meant to be."

[152] Klaus Demmer, *Shaping the Moral Life* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2000), p. 36.

of inviolable rights of men, women and children worldwide. Natural law has been strongly associated with the Roman Catholic moral philosophy tradition within the Christian world and remains central to its way of doing ethics. This is not to deny that Protestant writers also have had their version of natural law[153] but for the sake of this thesis we will confine ourselves to Roman Catholic studies. Historically we may differentiate two strands within the Catholic understanding of natural law although these two schools of interpretation were already foreshadowed in the pre-Christian era. We may combine the pre-Christian along with the Christian train of these two approaches for ease of understanding.

The Stoics and the early Christian writer Ulpian (d.c. AD 228) interpreted the idea of nature in natural law in a strongly physicalist or biological sense. What was in strict accordance with physical processes or structures corresponded to natural law and was morally right; whatever hindered these processes or laws was inherently wrong. By contrast Aristotle, Cicero held the view that what was natural was what was reasonable and in the best interests of the human person considered as a whole entity and not exclusively or narrowly from the point of view of physical processes. These two approaches have been labelled the order of nature and the order of reason respectively.[154]

Within some circles of the Catholic tradition Ulpian's more literalistic views gained acceptance through their influence on Aquinas who partly

---

[153] See, for example, David Little, "Calvin and the Prospects for a Christian Theory of Natural Law" in Gene Outke & Paul Ramsey (eds.), *Norm and Context in Christian Ethics* (London: SCM, 1968), pp. 175-197; John McNeill, "Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers", *Journal of Religion* 26, 3 (July, 1946), pp 168-182; Alan Johnson, "Is There a Biblical Warrant for Natural-Law Theories?", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 25, 2 (June, 1982), pp. 185-199; Stephen Grabill, *Rediscovering the Natural Law in Reformed Theological Ethics*, (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 2006); Scott Rae, *Moral Choices* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), pp. 35-42.
[154] See Richard Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), p. 239

imbibed them, though he did not follow them consistently, his tendency being to follow the use of reason approach of Aristotle whom he deferred to on so many other issues. [155] Ulpian's influence however was confusing since the later moral manualists, such as Suarez and Velasquez in the 17th century, picked up on this way of reading Aquinas's natural law teaching and handed it on, even to the 20th century, where it has resulted in moral prescriptions of a more detailed kind. Aquinas could be said to lean to a more naturalistic line of reasoning where, for example, he illustrates natural law from the human tendency to procreate just like other animals, [156] but he follows the order of reason approach where he describes natural law as our participation in Eternal Reason that makes us rational creatures. [157] This perceived ambiguity in Aquinas, for he never separates the two tendencies, has created a two-fold approach to natural law ever since. [158]

In recent times there has been a concerted effort to move away from the physicalist interpretation of natural law towards a more rational approach centred on the human person. [159] This shift in natural law thinking has

---

[155] The interpretation of Aquinas on this issue is a vexed one that is not easily resolved, proportionalist writers such as Richard McCormick and Charles Curran defending the physicalist interpretation while writers such as Germaine Grisez and William May deny it. We have decided to follow the latter viewpoint in the thesis while acknowledging that a case has been made in some Catholic circles for a physicalist reading of Aquinas.

[156] *Summa Theologica* II. 1. q. 94. See also q. 154, aa. 11, 12.

[157] *S. T*. II. 1. q. 91, art. 2.

[158] It has also given rise to the disagreements between defenders of the older natural law tradition based on metaphysics and the new natural law theory based on human practical reason. Both claim to be faithful to Aquinas, though perhaps the former adhere to the more naturalistic side of Aquinas while the latter have developed his other side. A simple resolution might be to say that Aquinas follows Aristotelian anthropology but also wants to be practical. In discussing this subject Klaus Demmer offers a middle way that balances the two aspects though we have followed Grisez who belongs to the practical reason school, because these thinkers centre the human person in a more immediate way, a method that also commends it to a less metaphysically inclined intellectual culture today. See Robert George, "Natural Law and Human Nature" in Robert George (ed.), *Natural Law Theory. Contemporary Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[159] For example, see Bernard Haring, "Dynamism and Continuity in a Personalistic Approach to Natural Law" in Outke & Ramsey (eds.), *Norm and Context in Christian Ethics* (London: SCM, 1968), pp. 199-218. See also *Gaudium et Spes*, chapters I and II. Also Bernard Haring, *Morality Is For Persons* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1971), in which he reads natural law through the eyes of Personalism and Existentialism. But most notably through the work of Germain Grisez, John Finnis, Joseph Boyle, William May and Patrick Lee.

come about for a number of reasons. First, natural law theory developed in the time of Ptolemaic and Newtonian explanations of the physical universe on the basis of physical laws that could never be broken. This generated a view of existence that was static and closed-off whereas 20th century physics through quantum mechanics and relativity theory, has transformed the way we view the world, from a static system to seeing it as dynamic, organic and open-ended. [160] Secondly, evolutionary views of human development in penetrating the human sciences have brought about a more flexible picture of the human person through the impact of social environment and genetic conditioning. This move towards the human person also reflects a change of mood in western philosophy from impersonal concepts, initially in epistemology but also in political and social theory, to the personal and the relational as a better way of understanding the human being in a scientific age. [161]

Behind these changes lies a deeper revision of "nature" and the "natural" from being a rigid, given entity whose laws we are bound to keep – the model behind physicalist natural law reasoning – to a more plastic, organic body that we are responsible for managing and enhancing. At the same time, nature is no *carte blanche* that humankind may dispose of as we choose since the environmental pollution and waste from the unregulated use of technology and industry lie at the roots of the ecological crisis facing the world. Natural law is saying that there are givens in human nature itself and in the world, that are not arbitrary, that make sense, that have

---

[160] On the inadequacy of a reductionist view of the universe, either the cosmological universe or the anthropological universe, and the need for a metaphysical approach to and explanation of reality, see the writings of Alister McGrath especially his *A Scientific Theology*, volume 3, (London: Clark, 2003), especially, chapter 15 and his *The Twilight of Atheism: the Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World*, London: Rider, 2004), especially Part 2.

[161] As a sample of this literature in connection with the bioethical focus of this thesis and in response to such evolutionary socio-biologists as E.O. Wilson, Richard Dawkins and Stephen Pinker, see Leon Kass, *Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity. The Challenge for Bioethics*, (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002), especially chapter 4.

normative quality, that lead to the wellbeing of humankind when they are honoured in practice but that lead to human destruction when they are ignored or revoked.[162]

Klaus Demmer has highlighted this tension within the use of natural law in light of modern developments in the humanities and the physical sciences with their new thinking about the human person. According to him there is a danger from two extremes, on the one hand, that of becoming so focussed on nature that the dimension of the human and personal are lost, and on the other hand, of so focussing on the human person that nature is denied any intrinsic significance. A nuanced mediating position is what he calls for, one that upholds the biological realm but does not regard it as immediately normative as a guide to morals, a mediating position that also avoids the pitfall of anthropological dualism in separating the higher from the lower in the human being. The facticity of the biological is one reality but so is also the truth about the whole person that transcends it.[163]

In turning the focus on the human person natural law specialists are conscious of the fact that the individual does not exist or function in isolation. Natural law personalism has to do *passim* with the individual living and working within human community in relationships such as those of family, rural community, township or city, school or university, business or leisure centre, wherever, in fact, we tend to live our lives. The human person is a social creature whose individuality is discovered and matured in the fellowship and service of other persons and not through the reductionist practice of individualism. Natural law's vision of the human person also

---

[162] Aquinas (*Summa Theologica* I.2, q. 94. art. 3) affirms the distinction when he differentiates human nature, understood as what is proper to man *qua* man, and what is common to man and other animals. Also Dennis Hollinger, *Choosing the Good. Christian Ethics in a Complex World*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), pp. 73-75

[163] Demmer, *op. cit.,* p. 41.

takes into account the capability of each individual for personal relationship with the transcendent realm of God, as being integral to human fulfilment in the highest sense. The human person is a religious being who discovers herself in the service of One greater than herself, which is the shared message of the great world religions. Thus natural law sees the human person at the centre of a set of concentric circles radiating outwards from that centre into the larger and liberating communities of the human social and the divine-transcendent.[164] This can be expressed as the I-THOU-We triangle. We will be developing this tri-fold perspective on the human person in the next section.

The case of a defective embryo or foetus would illustrate the two faces of natural law that we have been speaking about. Here the natural order of things has delivered something that is imperfect and yet something that has the status of the human and deserves respect and protection. A double duty of a moral kind confronts us here, the duty of respecting what it is that nature has delivered and the duty of intervening to cure the course and the product of the natural. This will mean in practice that we will do whatever is reasonable to preserve the embryo or foetus because they belong to the human family, while also treating what is abnormal and operable about their physical condition. Thus natural law does not mean that we accept uncritically the natural-physical in all its configurations, but that we respond responsibly and rationally to all the demands of the whole case before us.

---

[164] Germain Grisez does not neglect this threefold structure of the human person (as, for example, in his reflexive goods 3 ("justice and friendship, which are aspects of the interpersonal communion of good persons freely choosing to act in harmony with one another") and 4 ("religion or holiness, which is harmony with God, found in the agreement of human individual and communal free choices with God's will"), but he may not sufficiently bring this out in the total expression of his work.

2.2. Why should we choose Natural Law over other theories of morality?

There are many competing ethical systems, each with their own strengths and weaknesses. [165] While it may not be possible to demonstrate beyond all reasonable doubt that one system of ethics is superior to another, it may be possible to demonstrate that one model is as good as another, or that it lacks the difficulties inherent in those others. [166] For the sake of this thesis we want a theory that maximises the human person as a moral criterion, in keeping with the Christian view of humankind (chapter 1). We hope to show that this criterion is sufficiently provided in Natural Law theory of a Christian kind. The following chapter, dealing with the philosophical evidence, will demonstrate this affinity further especially in the hands of Aquinas.

Natural law may or may not start from a religious basis and worldview. Natural law theories were in the field before Christianity – "it is not necessary to believe in any divine source of moral law to believe that a universal moral framework exists. This is true of the Stoics and of present-day secular natural law and natural rights theorists."[167] While religious foundational assumptions may not be necessary to support natural law theories these theories make most sense and receive their strongest advocacy when joined with a religious set of beliefs about a Creator God and a creation order, that is, a Christian worldview. Certainly Christian

---

[165] See, for example, Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry. Encyclopedia, Genealogy, and Tradition*, (London: Duckworth, 1990) and Thomas Nagel, *The View From Nowhere*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), especially chapter IX..

[166] One should bear in mind here that ethics will never possess the kind of precision of the natural sciences which function with mathematical accuracy in describing natural laws. Ethics in practice depends too much on the individual experience and prudential skill of the person who is making the decision in particular cases, and because of the varying situations in which the application of general principles will be made, such as the good of the majority of persons. In this we are adopting the position of Aristotle in his ethical writings and in his saying that ethics is no exact science.

[167] Graham Rumbold, *Ethics in Nursing Practice* (London: Bailliere Tindball, 1999), p. 20. See also Stephen Buckle, "Natural Law" in Peter Singer (ed.), *A Companion to Ethics*, (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), chapter 13.

proponents of natural law, such as the medieval writers and post-Vatican II Catholic theologians, as well as Protestant writers, [168] have found their justification and confirmation of natural law teaching in Scripture as divine Revelation.

The classic passage in Paul's letter to the Romans 2:14-15 ("Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.") which is most frequently quoted, is squarely rooted in the doctrine of a Creator God whose moral order governs the human world of relationships and provides a kind of collective morality, as Paul argues in Romans chapter 1. [169] In the first Romans reference Paul shows that conscience (συνειδησις) functions universally in conjunction with an intuitive awareness of the natural or eternal law of God our Creator, even in fallen human nature. [170] Sometimes human beings comply with the norms of that law, perhaps more often they fail, but always they experience something of its cognitive witness to objective moral truth. [171]

Other Scriptures in both Testaments attest the same presumption of an innate moral consciousness for humankind. So, the Old Testament prophets not only find fault with their own nation Israel but they excoriate the neighbouring nations for what we would call human rights abuses, such

---

[168] There is currently, in certain Protestant circles, a revival of scholarly interest in Natural Law with a view to incorporating it in a Christian ethics more able to address the secular mind. For example, see Michael Murray, "Protestants, Natural Law, and Reproductive Ethics" in Christopher Tollefsen (ed.), *John Paul II's Contribution to Catholic Bioethics*, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2004), pp. 121-129.

[169] Especially verses 18-32.

[170] Mark Mathewson, "Moral Intuitionism and the Law Inscribed on Our Hearts" in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42/4 (December, 1999): 629-643.

[171] In Rom 13:5 Paul makes submission to lawful authorities a matter of conscience as well as self-interest.

as inhumanity in war; [172] Paul's larger moral vision of an eschatological judgement in which the moral worth of each individual's life will be put to the test is inoperable without an innate knowledge and freedom in respect of moral law; [173] the New Testament appeals to a moral order (called Nature / φυσις) that forms part of the human fabric of the world, such as the differences between the sexes, care of the elderly, the goodness of marital relations and avoidance of incestuous ones, that we are bound to respect with appropriate moral responses; [174] Christian codes of conduct, such as those for home-life, [175] mirror those found in pagan ethical writings, thus witnessing a larger than religious view of practical reason.

In this way the Scriptural evidence in support of Natural law is shown to be coherent in linking the eternal moral Being of God as ultimate source with the moral order of humankind through conscience and further with the refinements of moral knowledge that came historically through the special revelation of the old and new covenants, with Israel through Moses and with the new people of God, the Christian Church, through Jesus Christ. [176] Beyond individual texts the whole example of Jesus Christ in the drama of Redemption mirrors for us the truest meaning of what it is to be naturally human. Pre-eminently Jesus Christ shows us the place of love as the leading principle in all our human relationships in the service of God and others. [177] Jesus himself appeals to natural law in the famous form of the Golden Rule (Matt 7:12) which he confesses is the summary of Old

---

[172] Many of the prophetic books contain oracles against the nations where this sort of material is to be found. See Isa 13-23, Jer 46-50, Ezek 25-32, Amos 1-2.

[173] Rom 2:5-11.

[174] Rom 1:26-27, 1 Cor 5:1-2; 11:14-15, 1 Tim 4:3-4; 5:8.

[175] For example, Col 3:18-4:1, Eph 6:1-9, Phil 4:8.

[176] See Deut 4:5-8 and John 1:17. Scripture references to natural law show a singular consistency that is in harmony with an internal principle of natural unfolding and progressive knowledge of the moral will of God through time. Aquinas' defence of Natural Law reflects this biblical unity in diversity (*S.T.* I.2, q. 91).

[177] Matt 22:34-40, John 13:34-35.

Testament divine law. Elsewhere he does the same, as when he defends a cure on the Sabbath Day by calling upon the first principle of natural law, the right to do good and not to do evil, to save life and not destroy it (Mark 3:4). In explaining his position on marriage and divorce Jesus refers back to God's creation order in the beginning when he appointed one man and one woman to be united irrefragably. [178] The link between Jesus Christ and natural law is given its deepest theological rationale when John equates him with the eternal Word who was with God, and is God, and through whom God created the material universe (John 1:1-5). Within this role the Word of God, Jesus Christ, is the light of human beings, who shines within them the inextinguishable light of truth concerning the true God and his will. As Aquinas avers, natural law is human participation in the Eternal Mind of truth and righteousness. [179]

According to the ethics of the Stoics and the philosophy of Aristotle and others, humankind's chief concern should be self-perfection. Accepting and fostering a certain moral order based on such qualities and principles as justice, wisdom, courage, and temperance is part of this self-ordering of the life of the individual, but self-interest through self-fulfilment always remains paramount in the motivation. The Christian concept, while agreeing formally with the goal of self-fulfilment differs from it in relation to the motives that should guide this search. Virtue and self-fulfilment can never be achieved by a selfish concern for a person's own satisfaction. Virtue comes only through a person's openness, first to the supremely Other, that is God, then through commitment to communal solidarity in the learned practices and virtues of self-giving love in the service other persons. The reason, missing in pagan virtue theories, is that other persons

---

[178] Matt 19:3-9 where Jesus joins up Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:24.
[179] *S. T.* I.2, q. 91, art. 2.

are valuable in themselves because they are the proper recipients of our acts of kindness and generosity. This paradox, at the heart of Christian ethics mediated through Jesus' Kingdom ethics, states that we find ourselves by denying ourselves through projecting ourselves freely, for his sake and the Gospel, into the needy world of other persons.[180] Above all, the Paschal Mystery dramatises this truth.[181]

Natural law follows a scientific method by working on the basis of observable data about human persons. Because natural law works from the universal interests and natural inclinations of human persons who are ends in themselves, it can claim to be an objectively grounded theory of ethics, the claims of which transcend the preferences of the individual or the relative mores of particular cultures. Whether we start with belief in a supreme Being or not, the human person is always the locus and focus of moral acts, since it is our relationships with other persons that present us with our moral responsibilities, dilemmas and opportunities for moral growth in character. Further, it is only the human person among living creatures who can reflect on his own acts as possessing moral character, and formulate principles of moral theory. More precisely, it is only the human person who is capable of two indispensable parts of all moral acts, that is, the capability for self-direction and the conscious ability to make choices. We speak of these as intentionality and freedom, those characteristics of action that are peculiar to the human species and that make our actions moral.[182]

---

[180] For example, Matthew 10:37-39, but already this principle is found in Prov 11:24.
[181] Haring, *Morality*, pp. 40-41.
[182] Joseph Selling, "The Human Person" in Bernard Hoose (ed.), *Christian Ethics* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998), pp. 95-96.

Natural law further works with the belief that understanding the function of a thing is the best way to find out what behaviour is most appropriate for it to follow. Thus Aristotle begins his Ethics with the assertion, "Every art and every investigation, and similarly every action and pursuit, is considered to aim at some good."[183] From observation it is clear that our human activities and sciences aim at different goods or goals. But running through them all is a supreme good that is an end in itself and wanted for its own sake beyond all other ends and goods. The assumption here is that human life is essentially teleological in character with the result that human persons deliberately and instinctively live towards an ultimate end which is aimed at for its own intrinsic value and never as a means.[184]

So, what are human persons for, or what makes human persons the kind of beings they are? Aristotle answered this question by positing happiness (ευδαιμονια) as the goal of human activity in life, "the best, the finest, the most pleasurable thing of all",[185] whether we consider the masses or the elite corps of society. Happiness is not perhaps the best translation for Aristotle's concept, since happiness in western hedonistic culture fails to convey the richness of his term. Happiness for us suggests a state of euphoria devoid of personal character and bound to external goods, apprehended as possessions or pleasurable experiences. For Aristotle the reverse is the order, since happiness depends on the kind of person we are and only secondarily on external goods.

Aristotle acknowledges the need to define this goal in terms of excellence or good. This gives rise to the next question, what is human good or excellence and how is it achieved? There is no simple answer to this

---

[183] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, I:1.
[184] *Ibid.,* I: vii.
[185] *Ibid.,* I:viii.

question because human persons are complex, multi-dimensional beings with a whole range of capabilities, interests and values. However, we can come close to a comprehensive answer by suggesting that human persons show a tendency to fulfil themselves through a variety of activities. The telos or end-goal of human activity is a successful human life, which is spelled out by Aristotle in terms of an active life, a virtuous life, adequately supplied with external goods (such as wealth and education) to make it possible, over a lifetime.[186]

When we consider what those activities and interests are that make for such a life we are dependent on human observation, true to human experience, our own and that of others. Empirically we can offer such examples as human friendship including love, justice for all and respect for human life, creative and artistic arts and skills of different kinds, religious faith and worship, responsible care of the earth and enjoyment of living creatures. These sorts of human goods are ends in themselves, although some of them may sometimes become means to larger ends. At the heart of human fulfilment lies a set of relationships that connect us with the transcendent, our fellow human beings and more widely with the physical environment including the world's wild life. Human happiness, rather than becoming the goal itself, results from attending to these sorts of goals, values and ends. Natural law builds on this broad band evidence of human teleology that originates with human persons, as being evidence of the kind of creature the human person is and wants to become. This evidence crosses cultures and periods and points towards a common humanity.

---

[186] *Ibid.*, I:x. Plato argued that truth, reality or wisdom is the goal for which humans strive throughout their lives, especially if they are true philosophers or lovers of wisdom. Their quest will only be attained at death when the soul is finally freed from the soul with its bodily senses and their distractions and contaminations (*Phaedo*, 62E-68B). For this reason Socrates was not unwilling to die, in fact looked forward to the prospect of the next stage of his journey towards truth, when his liberated soul would independently find reality.

Alasdair MacIntyre[187] has drawn attention to the place of a lived narrative in trying to appreciate the meaning of human individuals. Without this interpretative tool our lives lack unity, a beginning and an ending, and our actions appear as disjointed occurrences without a sequence. The human self must be thought of and assessed always as a social self with a history, whether we like it or not. We belong inextricably to a number of communities such as the family or our nation, as well as inheriting some traditions from the past. Modern genetics confirms this view of the inherited past of our social selves through the genetic makeup that we receive indiscriminately from our biological parents. Even reproductive human cloning would make the same point about a contingent self. This particular understanding of the self runs counter to the western belief in the autonomous individual.

Inversely we can argue the same position by showing that when human persons neglect or choose to act against the sorts of goals discussed above, or disallow these activities, the individual person and the community of persons to which they belong, suffer. Human flourishing may be likened to a law that can be broken by going against it in the exercise of human freedom, but which takes its revenge through the loss of a commensurate degree of social and personal happiness and cohesion. The denial of these goals that express the content of the good life may even cause a breakdown of human civility, leading to open hostility and violence. Just as persons will hurt themselves if they defy the law of gravity, by jumping from an upper-storey window, so persons, in isolation or in a group, will injure themselves in their own true interests and personal wellbeing by denying or

---

[187] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981), ch. 15.

going against the law of integral human fulfilment that comes from actively serving others in love and working for the common good.[188]

Natural law builds on the belief that there is a moral capability of perception that is common to human persons. Advocates of natural law hold this to be a strength, in the context of a world culture that is increasingly fragmented and indigenised. Is meaningful moral discourse possible any longer across the divides of an increasingly multi-layered social structure? Natural law offers a kind of moral *lingua franca* that combines some of the essential elements and arguments of other ethical systems such as objective norms, appropriate virtues and final consequences. Even the fundamental disagreements of these rival systems is an argument and evidence of a still more fundamental realm of comprehension that makes their disagreements mutually cognisable. "The adherents of every standpoint in recognising the existence of rival standpoints recognise also, implicitly if not explicitly, that those standpoints are formulated within and in terms of common norms of intelligibility and evaluation."[189]

That system of ethics that takes into account the whole truth about the human person, that is, the human person in the context of those relationalities mentioned above, that make for human flourishing in the individual and community, will in the end be most suited to the task of prescribing for moral rights and wrongs. Particularly in a world of violence and denial of human rights an ethics of the human person is needed that pays attention to the uniqueness of the human agent by making her central

---

[188] Socrates likens immoral (in the broad sense) acts to acts that mutilate, not the body but "this part of us, whatever it may be, in which right and wrong operate". When this part is ruined life is not worth living (*Crito* 47C).
[189] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (London: Duckworth, 1990), p. 5.

to every ethical enquiry. We call on the constructions of Germain Grisez below to make good these contentions for a workable moral personalism.

For a Christian observer natural law theory that has its major focus on the human person, along with the findings that come from that perspective, confirms the leading beliefs and tenets of a worldview based on Scripture and Tradition. While not everything that theological ethics teaches can be found in natural law interpretation, all that a person-centred natural law upholds, will be found in Scripture and Tradition, because these twin sources of religious faith disclose the whole truth about the human person. Within the scope of Revelation and the theological reflection that emanates from it, natural law presents as an ethical source that is grounded in the creation order.[190] Revelation reaches beyond the principles of natural law but does not contradict them due to the unity of divine law, whether considered as the eternal law of God's own moral Being, or natural-creation law, or biblical law, or finally the law of Christ which is love – the starting-point and the endpoint of all moral truth.

2.3. A Possible Objection to Natural Law

There are objections to most ethical theories either in principle or in practice, and natural law is no exception. One objection that might be brought against natural law is that it falls into the naturalistic fallacy by moving too easily or quickly from the natural condition of things to ethical norms that are supposed to be embedded in them. [191] That is, it confuses or

---

[190] See Romans 1 and 2.
[191] G.E. Moore, *Principia Ethica*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1978), p. 45: 'To argue that a thing is good *because* it is 'natural', or bad *because* it is 'unnatural', in those common sense of the term, is therefore certainly fallacious; and yet such arguments are very commonly used.' Moore attributes the term 'naturalistic fallacy' to himself but the inconsistency of drawing ethical duties from physical properties was already pointed out by David Hume in his *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III, Part I, section I (final paragraph) where he famously objects to sudden and unexplained transitions in a writer's argument from *what is* or *is not* to what *ought* or *ought not* to be. The naturalistic fallacy confuses descriptive statements with prescriptive ones based upon them.

merges what "is" the case with what "ought" to be the case. It could even be charged with reducing moral judgements to matters of purely physical evidence although it is clearly not intending to do this. Perhaps the very name "natural" law should alert us to a possible confusion of categories, or sleight of hand in the worst interpretation, because of the high profile given to what is natural in its ethical calculus. For this reason the Aristotelian ethical tradition, to which natural law teaching has been allied, has been faulted as naturalistic and flawed.[192] However natural law can defend itself in a number of ways.[193]

First, Klaus Demmer argues that advocates of a traditional Church-based moral philosophy never thought of themselves as moving from 'is' to 'ought' because they always held to a metaphysical view of human nature. Such a view can recognise, at the analytical and scientific levels, distinctions of a functional or structural kind between the various parts of the human organism, but it finds a higher meaning and unity in the human telos of the person that transcends all systems. As things stand it is the naturalistic tradition that may be open to the charge of working with a deficient view of human nature since a "naturalistic fallacy always presupposes a naturalistic notion of human being."[194] The Scholastic tradition has never worked with anything like that premise, preferring instead to take "a metaphysically grounded anthropology."[195]

---

[192] Stanley Grenz, *The Moral Quest. Foundations of Christian Ethics* (Downers Grove: Apollos, 1997), p. 76: "While fundamentally oriented to a goal, Aristotle's ethic is nevertheless naturalistic. Our human telos is in its entirety already present within us, being the latent potentiality that is ours from the beginning. Like all naturalistic philosophical ethical proposals, his is hard pressed to avoid being dashed on the rocks of the naturalistic fallacy. In the end, Aristotle would have us do the impossible, namely, to move from an 'is' which is totally immanent in our being to the 'ought' that we are ethically required to actualize."

[193] Neo-scholastic proponents of natural law theory have argued against the validity of the naturalistic fallacy, while proponents of the new natural law theory have claimed to have avoided it. See George, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-33, 38-39.

[194] Demmer, *op. cit.,* p. 40.

[195] *Ibid.*

Secondly, we have differentiated between two major schools of thought in the natural law tradition, the physicalist and the metaphysical. In its best expression natural law does not slavishly defend or adopt uncritically the way things are in any crudely literal sense. For example, natural law affirms the rightness of sexual activity as an integral part of what is means to be human but that does not mean the natural law approves every kind of sexual activity. Our natural sexuality is related to human procreation which is one reason why we are bound to exclude homosexuality in practice as a valid expression of that sexuality. Another reason might be the structure of the human family and of marriage, both of which are predicated on the principle that every child needs the balanced nurture of a father and a mother in order to become secure a human person. In this case higher considerations of a metaphysical kind overrule arguments of a more natural kind, in the case of those people who want to argue that because they experience a homosexual inclination therefore it must be right to enact it. So, although natural law does not explain the mystery of why we should not implement certain inclinations that we find natural, it does help us to prioritise among those possible courses of action that are open to us. [196]

Demmer again helps us here by drawing attention to the need for, as well as the difficulty of, a right articulation of the relationship between nature and person. Two extremes confront us here, one is of a personalism that is forgetful of nature, the other is of a naturalism that is forgetful of the person. What is needed is a mediating position between these two that

---

[196] The mystery of inclinations that are natural and open to us, that we ought not to perform, requires a doctrine of original sin of some kind to explain and justify. At the same time we should observe that natural law far from exhausts the rich theology of marriage that Revelation finds in it by way of support. Thus Revelation orients our acts of marriage primarily towards God, an intentionality that a sacramental view of marriage signifies and seals. Nor does natural law bring out the covenantal background of the marital union found in the spiritual oneness between the Lord and his people, a relational union in turn symbolically imaged on the community of the Divine Persons in their eternal union of Love.

would be theoretically convincing and provide solutions for living a responsible moral life.

> The relevance of the biological dimension is in no way suspended; it certainly provides important hints in the formulation of moral judgement. Thus, the impression of an anthropological dualism is excluded from the outset. Of course, the biological nature provides essential elements that must be thought out. Recognition of its relevance for ethics does not mean that is immediately normative; to assume that would entail a naturalistic fallacy.[197]

On Demmer's reckoning nature and person are mutually informing and must be kept so in whatever way we define the relationship. Only by adopting a metaphysical definition of natural law in which the biological is neither totally ignored nor totally dominant, can we escape the charge of a naturalistic fallacy or of a denatured humanism.

Thirdly, all we may be saying in natural law theory is that the human person is a complex entity, that the person will not allow herself to be reduced to a number of physical or material facts. Psychological, biological or genetic facts by themselves, or even taken together, cannot and do not say everything there is to say about the human person. Natural law addresses and tries to account for the mystery of the human person which says that we are more than our genes, that the whole is greater than any or all of our parts. The human person is the only creature that forms plans and works rationally towards them, that reflects critically about her own actions and passes a judgement on the moral worth of those acts, that needs to find an explanation for existence, and chooses to live by a set of values. This is universal experience based on observation and points to the conclusion that the human person is qualitatively different from all other living creatures.

---

[197] *Op. cit.,* p. 41.

The very title "natural" law could suggest an uncritical, even slavish, dependence on the way things are. The above discussion has shown that not all natural law theorists would understand "natural" in an uncritical sense. The most recent movement in natural law theory that affirms the centrality and dignity of the human person as a way of finding moral guidance in the complexities of the modern world, shows that the total human condition needs to be borne in mind when attempting to make moral sense of the world.[198] From this viewpoint the human person is *sui generis* as a basis for forming moral judgements, and "natural" now comes to stand for what promotes human wellbeing *in toto,* which means the whole person in the context of various kinds of communities.[199]

Natural law, based on the mystery and complexity of the human person, is therefore opposed to every form of positivism that would seek to define the human person from within herself and without reference to any higher calling, law or Being, than those that the human individual can find within herself. Natural law opposes the reductionism of such philosophies that limit the human person's self-definition to the visible, measurable and quantifiable data of human experience. The scientific method that measures physical entities on the basis of mathematical regularities is insufficient for capturing the complexity of the human person. A merit of Kant's critical philosophy was that while aiming to make room for science it also acknowledged the uniqueness of the human subject through our

---

[198] Raymond Gaita, *Good and Evil* (London: Macmillan Press, 1991), ch. 10; *The Philosopher's Dog* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2002), pp. 197-214, argues consistently on behalf of the preciousness of the individual human person, a preciousness of moral evaluation that we attach to nothing else in nature to the same extent.

[199] MacIntyre, *Virtue*, pp. 54-56 has effectively responded to the "No 'ought' conclusions from 'is' premises" argument, by making the case for recognising the presence of functional concepts as well as factual ones in premises that lead to evaluative conclusions.

powers of willing, reasoning, appreciating objects of beauty and imagining the eternal.

Human values, that constitute so much a part of the human condition and psyche, do not reduce to facts of a biological or psychological nature. Values such as faith, hope, love, beauty and courage point to a larger province of the human, values that often shine most brightly where physical and situational circumstances appear to be working against a person or persons in their external comforts. This argues for the independent existence of those values, at the same time suggesting that they lie at the heart of what it means to be a human person. The human being is the creature that often matures as a person through suffering that threatens, and may even destroy, the outward securities of the familiar and cherished, such as home, family or health. The story of Job illustrates this admirably, a reference point for secular thinkers as well as religious teachers, since Job's experience is a universally human and personal one.

The best defence against the charge of the naturalistic fallacy may therefore come back to the integrity and uniqueness of the human person as a guide to morals. Since natural or instinctive drives are unreliable guides to morals, consideration of what preserves or enhances persons in their dignity and wholeness, would be a surer guide to choose to act by. For example, free love appeals to the basic drive of sexuality and it promises a degree of pleasure, but such consensual acts of temporary encounter with another or other persons, hardly do justice to the total needs and final interests of the persons participating. That is, such acts detract from persons in their wholeness and hinder their spiritual and moral development towards relationships of fidelity, self-giving love, and security in a community of persons where each is working for the welfare of the

other. In the practice of free love persons inevitably make use of other persons as objects of their own gratification, rather than of respecting the boundaries of that other person's autonomy and dignity. For this reason, such acts and attitudes are morally wrong even though they may be physically natural.

2.4. Adopting a Model of Natural Law

For the purposes of this chapter we will make use of one of the most exhaustive treatments of current natural law thinking in the work of Germain Grisez as set out in his three volume work *The Way of the Lord Jesus*.[200] Grisez takes up the person-centred approach of more recent natural law thinking by showing no interest in moral goodness extrinsic to human persons. He has published his reasoning in three stages or levels corresponding to the three volumes of his work. The first volume will interest us here since it is there that he outlines and illustrates his foundational principles and way of operating natural law.

In adopting Grisez as our model we will first examine the primary commitments of his ethical position, that is, his commitment to the human person and his commitment to the first principle of morality. Then we will select those elements in his systematic treatment that address particular ethical issues raised by recent and prospective biotechnologies. In doing so we will take account of the tri-dimensional or three-tiered structure of Grisez' ethics. In particular we will give attention to (1) the intelligible human goods that engender integral human fulfilment; (2) those modes of

---

[200] Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, volume 1 (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983). For a defence of Grisez's work, along with that of Finnis, Boyle, May and Lee, on natural law, as distinct from a more traditional, neo-scholastic and ontological stance, see Robert George, "Natural Law and Human Nature" in George, *op. cit.* We have chosen Grisez over Finnis, the other prolific writer on natural law, because 1. Grisez is a moral philosopher over Finnis who is a lawyer and 2. Grisez has developed the theoretical structure of his thought more than Finnis who tends to works with actual cases.

responsibility that specify the first principle; (3) those virtues and vices that are embedded in or accompany the modes. Finally, we will draw up some ethical norms from Grisez' treatment using them as a moral guide to concrete moral action in relation to bioethical dilemmas.

Commitment to Human Persons

In keeping with more recent trends in Roman Catholic thinking about natural law[201] Grisez opts for a human person-centred approach. In doing so he satisfies three trends in modern thought and shows the relevance of this method. First, he complies with the long-standing Catholic commitment to the human being as the primary creature of God and his chosen partner in covenant, a partnership that becomes eternally consolidated in the Incarnation of God in the human person of Jesus. Secondly, Grisez has addressed the person-centred culture of the later 20th century, following the gross abuse of human rights and freedom during WWII, and thereby creates a hearing for his larger Christian objectives that he contends are founded on the total truth of human reality. Thirdly, Grisez has learned from the human-centred philosophy of writers like Michael Polanyi who have shown that an impersonal, purely factual epistemology is neither desirable nor possible since the human subject is always a part of the knowing process.

Although Grisez is committed to the human person this does not mean that he is trapped within an immanentistic or relativistic field of reference. This choice of the human person as the centre-point of his ethical commitment is premised on the belief that the human person is a universal and objective reality of some proportions, that we can philosophise about and define in

---

[201] See May, *op cit*., pp. 68-90, for a description and analysis of the work of Grisez and his collaborators. Also James G. Hanink in Allen Verhey & Stephen E. Lammers (eds.), *Theological Voices in Medical Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), pp. 157-177.

terms of universal human goods and goals. Nothing so separates Grisez' type of person-centeredness more starkly from the typical postmodern brand that revels in fragmenting, destabilising and even dissolving the human self as the centre of anything, than this commitment to universal human nature and experience. The postmodern experiment is at its weakest and most self-defeating here since Postmodernism's own arguments lead to the conclusion that we cannot exist in any meaningful way, communicate with others or entertain any hope of a cultural future without a substantial, conscious and transcendent self to work from.[202]

Commitment to the First Principle of Morality

Grisez' first principle of practical reasoning, that "the good is to be done and pursued; the bad is to be avoided", is taken from Aquinas as has already been noted. Grisez rightly observes that this is a statement of purpose, not a description of good or evil. "'Good' here means not only what is morally good but whatever can be understood as intelligibly worthwhile, while 'bad' refers to whatever can be understood as a privation of intelligible goods."[203] By starting with this self-evident principle for all human action natural law establishes a broad platform for judging between what may be done (the first, general stage of practical reasoning) and what ought to be done (its second, completing phase). This in itself is a valuable distinction that informs moral action. The implication is that there are bad actions that may be done just as there are good actions that may not be done. But being able to do them does not in itself justify them from every point of view.

---

[202] See Mark Milne, "Postmodernism and the Death of Transcendence" unpublished Master of Philosophy thesis, Melbourne University, 2002.
[203] *Op. cit*, p. 179.

Since good here need not be narrowly defined in moral terms the criterion that should decide practical decision-making is the well-being (the good) of human persons, what leads to human flourishing in a total sense. What this idea of human good entails requires to be, and will be, filled out by the specific goods, modes of responsibility and virtues that give it substance.

The self-evident truth of the first principle[204] in terms of human good as a guide to action does not and cannot stand alone (being more descriptive than prescriptive, or prescriptive in the most general terms) and for this reason we need to advance to further interpretation and explanation of this first principle in practice.[205] For example, human flourishing may be considered as the elimination of crippling diseases like Alzheimer's from the human gene pool although it means the destruction of human embryos as part of the technique. By itself the first principle cannot help us to decide between these options and so other natural human inclinations, along with their appropriate natural law precepts, need to be taken into consideration.

Yet the first general principle of natural law in itself renders a valuable service in witnessing to the presence of larger human considerations than purely physical ones that genetic science adverts to. Natural law links up the scientific issues to the broader and more ultimate social and spiritual questions that press upon us whenever the human person is at the centre of scientific experimentation. In a culture that has become inured to relying on the scientific explanations and their related technologies, an ethical theory that does not negate the science itself but challenges its absolutist,

---

[204] The self-evident and non-inferential nature of the basic propositions of Grisez's theory is essential to its defence. See George, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-37.

[205] *Op. cit*, p. 179: "This is a directive for action, not a description of good and evil. . . it does not settle what is good and bad morally."

utopian and reductionist tendencies, is both necessary and valuable. Natural law renders the positive service of helping to keep science honest and human by grounding its instrumental methods in authentically human propositions, principles and goals. Natural law should prevent biomedical technologies from operating in isolation from the fragile but life-giving web of human relationships and responsibilities that encapsulate us existentially and from which we dare not prescind, in any of our work or play, if we value our essential humanity.[206]

The Basic Human Goods

Grisez sets up this further information and direction that we need through the use of seven basic human goods that explicate the good nominated in the first principle – good is to be done and pursued. What are we to understand by that good? Grisez analyses the good into seven generic goods that, in his opinion, constitute the fullness of human wellbeing – what he calls "human full-being".[207]

In Christian terms the wellbeing for human persons that Grisez envisages is close to, if not identical with, the Old Testament concept of "shalom" which amounts to total human security under the protective rule of God leading to personal and social prosperity, consisting in harmonious relations between individuals and their religious and physical environment.[208] This utopian vision is one that only the advent of Christ in the Kingdom of God will deliver into the hands of human beings but prior to that time we may work for its instantiation by addressing the woes and injustices of the world to bring about a better human environment for future generations. The Christian in a special way is constrained towards this

---

[206] *Ibid.*, p. 184: "the total human vocation goes beyond measurable goods."
[207] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[208] *Ibid.*, ch. 5, Q. F.

programme of moral betterment through personal self-improvement in the ways suggested by Grisez.

Grisez's seven basic human goods are (1) self-integration which means the harmony of all our parts as a person in making freely chosen acts; (2) practical reasonableness, which is a state of harmony between our moral reflection, free choices and their carrying out; (3) justice and friendship, which have to do with our interpersonal relationships as we deliberately choose to live in harmony with others; (4) religion, which stands for harmony with God through our acting in accordance with his will, individually and communally. All these goods ("reflexive" since they are both reasons for choosing and are in part defined by choosing) fulfil human persons existentially (so also "existential" goods) by being grounded in free choices that we actively make for our own and others' welfare (so also "moral" goods).

Grisez's other three basic human goods differ from these four in not being defined in terms of choosing. They are "substantive" or "non-reflexive" in being able to stand alone as moral action guides. These are (5) life, which includes health, self-preservation, the safety of others, and procreation of life; (6) knowledge, which equates with truth in its various forms, along with the appreciation of beauty and excellence; (7) skilled performance, which is a source of enrichment to work or play, culturally considered.

Grisez' presentation[209] of these basic integrating goods of human persons is very compact with the result that he incorporates in some of them a range of subsidiary goods that could stand in their own right. Thus he could have made truth and beauty integral human goods in their own right, or marriage

---

[209] *Op. cit.*, ch. 5, Q. D, p. 124.

and family apart from friendship and justice. This would not detract from his method of analysis although it could be argued that multiplying the goods beyond a manageable number makes them unwieldy in practice. However the human person is a highly complex organism and who is to say that truth, beauty and excellence are not equal in the scale of human values to principles of justice and knowledge. With this modification Grisez' scheme would be seen to cater more than it appears to do in its present form, particularly in reference to the second layer of substantive goods, that is, the aesthetic and metaphysical aspects of the human person that are so essential for integral fulfilment at an individual and communal level.

These basic human goods, particularly the reflexive or choosing goods, come from our being social and religious creatures as persons capable of and craving for harmonious relations of every kind.[210] They assume the operative states of life and health, of knowledge and truth, of play and performance. From this complex and dynamic matrix moral integrity emerges as being central to the human enterprise and quest for fulfilment on these various levels. Moral goodness comes about through making practical choices that engage simultaneously with self, neighbour and God in such a way as to open up the potential for personal growth residing in each of these fundamental relationships. Whatever promotes the quality of personal life in these terms is good, whatever retards it is bad. So in deciding moral good and evil a person must operate always with the whole person in the full range of human personal interests, potentialities and responsibilities. The basic human goods are thus the basic reasons for human action.

---

[210] In this sense Grisez' theory is dependent on human nature though not on a prior understating of human nature and the place of humankind in the natural order, and thus not a deduction of ethics from metaphysics.

Grisez' method puts into our hands a normative measure for assessing the validity and adequacy of arguments that are frequently put forward in the name of biomedical progress. For example, the argument that a person's quality of life will be enhanced by the application of this or that technology ignores the full range of human goods in measuring what quality of life really means. Moral goodness, or harmonious relations in ourselves, with others and with God, contributes in an essential way to the enhancement of all of a person's powers and potentialities, thereby making way for the enjoyment or acceptance of life, knowledge and skilled performance.

All too often the argument is advanced that quality of human life resides outside of these integral human goods, in being able to make a significant contribution to the welfare of society, or being able to communicate rationally with friends and relations, or in enjoying a degree of pain-free health. When this happens a diminishment of the human condition takes place. Grisez' natural law theory alerts us to the fact that it is the quality of our relationships and the kind of persons that we are, by means of personal character traits and values, that determines, more than anything in our external circumstances, what is a life worth living and keeping. Jesus frequently draws attention to this fact that human fullness lies beyond material wellbeing alone. [211] This is the deeper human dimension that is so often muted or overlooked entirely in the rhetoric of public media statements about biomedical goods.

Grisez' theory further provides its practitioners with a certain and necessary calculus for deciding between human goods when such a choice is necessary. Grisez' analysis leads to a secondary set of values which he distinguishes as sentient goods since they have to with good or pleasurable

---

[211] For example, the parable of the successful farmer in Luke 12:13-21.

feelings, and bad or unpleasant feelings. Good or bad feelings as a result of our actions may nor may not always be a guide to the intrinsic moral worth of these acts. This distinction arises from our being intelligent and sentient beings, at the same time, whose behaviour is guided normally by both emotion and will, towards both sensible pleasure and intelligible fulfilment.

Normally our thinking, choosing and feeling will harmonise. However, cases will arise where our thinking and choosing may conflict with our feeling. Our intelligent beliefs and chosen goals may be achievable only at the expense of pleasurable emotions, just as they may involve foreseen submission to unpleasant sensations. The maxim to follow in the event of conflicting situations is for intelligible goods to be graded over sentient goods. In other words, being good and choosing good are more important than feeling good where moral choices are in the balance.

For example, a person would be wise to submit to the distressing discovery, through appropriate testing, that they had the gene that produces the protein that results in melanoma cancer, in order to receive the drug treatment that will prevent or cure that illness. Here the intelligible good of life and health is being placed ahead of personal inconvenience and unhappiness. Life and health are self-evident human goods that do not need to be argued for since they stand by themselves as normative guides to responsible action. We cannot go beyond them in our natural quest for human full-being as well as valuing them as pathways to other human goods.

If Grisez' system is open to any structural criticism it could be that he does not sufficiently integrate the three-fold set of relationships that the human

person exists within.[212] That is the existential relations between the individual person, the community and God, a network of solidarities that the biblical-theological study brought out clearly within the doctrine of creation.[213]

The Modes of Responsibility

According to Grisez there are eight modes of responsibility that further specify the first principle of moral action and correspond to the basic human goods that constitute human fullbeing. Together they harmonise with and assist the will towards integrated human wellbeing as a guide to moral action. These modes are "intermediate principles which stand midway between the first principle and the completely specific norms which direct choices".[214] They function as safeguards against any moral choices or actions that would be detrimental to a willing towards integral human fulfilment. As their name suggests they are forms of response to demanding situations in which personal choices need to be made to pursue the good or to avoid the bad. The Beatitudes of Jesus have a certain correspondence to them in Christian terms in being ethical dispositions that underlie moral behaviours in relationships.[215]

Further on the modes, all of them have been expressed in a negative way that draws attention to what ought not to be chosen or done in pursuing the intelligible goods. [216] Grisez alludes to this but contends that his aim is in

---

[212] May, *op. cit.*, p. 105 mentions other criticisms and offers his responses to these and further references.
[213] In volume 2 of his *magnum opus* Grisez has added marriage as one of the basic human goods, an addition that certainly strengthens the social awareness and obligations of the individual person.
[214] *Op. cit.*, p. 189.
[215] *Ibid.,* ch. 26.
[216] So we could set forth the modes as follows: 1. act with enthusiasm for intelligible human goods; 2. aim for a fellowship of persons within which to aim for the human goods; 3. aim for the human good as end before the good emotions it may generate; 4. aim at an intelligible human good in spite of the pain involved; 5. we should aim at human goods wherever possible with impartiality towards persons; 6. aim for human goods in a realistic rather than a superficial way of proceeding; 7. aim at human goods with sincerity; 8. aim at human goods with a single will to human fulfillment.

actual fact a positive one.   But this being so would it not have strengthened his case by expressing these modes in more positive terms so as to be more clarifying about their true aim which is the fulfilment of human good through integration? As they stand several of the modes are quite cumbersome in the way they are expressed and not altogether clear respecting their practical application. Another way to help the student over this misimpression would be to state the positives of the case before the negatives are mentioned.   So, the first mode would make a stronger impression if it were worded as follows: One should act with enthusiasm for intelligible goods and not be deterred by felt inertia. As it stands the first mode articulates only half the desired disposition for effective action. In Christian terms one is reminded here of the psychological and moral difference made by the Law's "thou shalt not" and the Gospel's "thou shalt".

As for those virtues and vices that are embedded in the modes of responsibility, Grisez has picked up the classical tradition consisting of the four cardinal virtues: wisdom, courage, justice and self-control. At this point Grisez' scheme overlaps with secular ethics and proves its value in sharing the common ground with humanist ethics. These four cardinal virtues form the heartland of his virtue ethic, being numbers three, four, five and six in his system.

In what follows we have selected from the eight modes those that impact directly on ethical concerns that have arisen in connection with genetic engineering.

The 4th Mode of Responsibility and its Virtue Courage

Grisez states his fourth mode of responsibility as the requirement not to "choose to act out of an emotional aversion except as part of one's avoidance of some intelligible evil other than the inner tension experienced in enduring that aversion". This mode of responsibility is violated where people act irrationally and irresponsibly out of fear of pain or repugnance. Thus, a higher good such as better health or longer life are sacrificed for a more immediate course of action that eliminates or eases the stress of working towards the greater good. Grisez reckons that the missing virtues here are courage, perseverance and tenacity, that have surrendered to the weightier vices of cowardice and quitting too easily.

Genetic engineering involves at least two parties, those who administer the genetic therapies and those who receive them. The case of the fourth mode of responsibility applies particularly to those who may receive genetic treatment. It is now known that many cancers include a genetic link but the cancerous allele runs in families, with the result that genetic registers of families are highly desirable for effective prognosis and prophylaxis. This requires the cooperation of family members other than the one who is afflicted with the illness. Family members may not always be willing to submit to the necessary testing out of fear of discovering that they too are susceptible to the illness or actually have contracted it.

Here is where the fourth mode of responsibility does come into play, where courage and tenacity should prevail over the natural fear of unwelcome information about one's personal genetic history. The will to integrative human fulfilment in this case means embracing the greater good of the family of both present and future generations through providing the personal information that will complete the picture of familial health tendencies and dangers. Integrative human fulfilment in this instance for

the individual means accepting that the sooner the presence of cancer is discovered as already existing, or as likely to occur, the better the chances become of finding and receiving appropriate treatments for all.

The 5th Mode of Responsibility and its Virtue Fairness

The fifth mode states that one should not proceed towards any intelligible human good by showing preference for one over another unless this course of action is required by the intelligible good itself. In order to achieve this in practice it is essential that people show themselves fair and just by giving due rights to all, irrespective of class, gender, worldviews, or values. The fifth mode does concede that preference by itself may not be a bad thing if it is required by the intelligible good of integral human fulfilment. In all other cases partiality shown towards one person or group of persons over others obstructs and destroys the smooth running of community based on trust, hope and justice. In other words, "one who acts with partiality settles for an unnecessarily limited fulfilment of certain people"[217] instead of taking community-broad considerations into account.

Francis Fukuyama[218] has voiced a deep concern, shared by others in the secular establishment, that the democratic principle of egalitarianism, rooted in human dignity, may be lost in practice, due to the advantages gained by those able to afford the latest genetic technologies and drugs or because of special privileges. Such an outcome would be prejudicial in the interests of one class of persons over the rest of society, resulting in these pharmaceutical products and genetic therapies being denied to some of the most needy persons in our community. This would involve a breach of the fifth mode of responsibility which would require that the worthwhile

---

[217] *Ibid.,* p. 212.

[218] Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: the Political Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*, (Profile Books, 2002).

developments in genetic technology should be made available to all alike.
[219] The moral issue here is justice in the distribution of the social benefits
of the biotechnological industry and the avoidance of systemic inequities.

In our western democracies where the cult of the individual has taken such
deep hold in popular practice, the fifth mode of responsibility makes a
strong challenge to attitudes, practices and systems within the
biotechnological industrial complex that kowtows to partisan interests or
the excessive autonomy of the individual. The fifth mode of responsibility
is a summons to the whole industrial establishment to ensure that just
practices and safeguards are put in place, and honoured in practice, that
lead to the enrichment and alleviation of all sufferers from genetic
disorders.

The 6th Mode of Responsibility and its Virtue Practical Wisdom
Grisez' sixth mode of responsibility has to do with opting for easier and
quicker answers to problems or goals instead of waiting for a more
satisfying remedies based on sound reasoning and more mature experience.
He cites the case of a sick man who decides to go for treatment that brings
immediate relief for his condition, instead of waiting longer and enduring
more discomfort, for a total cure. This same principle lends itself to a
number of possible scenarios in the world of genetic engineering.

For example, scientists researching in this field may rush to announce
miracle cures for painful and lethal illnesses on the basis of inadequate

---

[219] Realistically this may not happen for some time after the drugs or procedures become available, as
was the case with earlier advances in pharmaceutical products and medical treatments but, hopefully, the
poorer and more needy members of society will eventually be better off biologically than they were
before. See *Beyond Therapy. Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness. A Report by the President's
Council on Bioethics*, (New York: Regan Books, 2003), pp. 281-283. The Christian basis for this ideal is
grounded in the moral worth of every human being.

research. As a rule testing should be done extensively on animal species, preferably over a number of years, before consideration is given to human subjects or publicised as a cure for human ailments. However, the competition, between research centres around the world and between leading scientists working in the same field, can become so intense that the usual safeguards and thoroughness in the measures taken and in the research conducted, are short-circuited for the sake of companies or scientists being able to announce that they are the first to break a code or discover a cure.[220] The sixth mode of responsibility warns against such unprofessional haste and unethical practices.

The 8th Mode of Responsibility and its Virtue Reverence
Grisez' final mode of responsibility points to the necessity of not injuring or hindering one intelligible good in the process of achieving another. This violation may mean bringing about by deliberate choice something humanly bad. He cites the example of a scientist falsifying his data by overstating the promises of his initial research, so as to gain funding to continue his work. He calls this disposition pragmatism because the person who denies this mode sacrifices the moral principle of integral human good in order to achieve a selfish goal. By contrast, reverence means respecting human conventions that guard the sanctity of life, truth and justice in human relations and work.

Utilitarianism is the dominant ethical model in most of medical research including genetic engineering. This justifies goals, achievements and promises in scientific work by the results they have attained or promise. Utilitarianism is the most common form of pragmatism in which the end

---

[220] Think of the recent case of Professor Hwang Woo-Suk in South Korea who fabricated data so as to be able to claim that he had created tailor-made embryonic stem cells that would one day be able to cure severe spinal cord injuries.

justifies the means. Two examples will help to enliven the relevance of the eighth mode of responsibility in much genetic engineering. Transgenics is proceeding at a great rate in which genetic material is transferred from humans to animals and vice-versa. Mostly this transfer technique has been of human genetic material to animals resulting in chimeras in some cases, such as "onco-mouse". The levels of pain or discomfort imposed on these experimental animals is said to be justified by the promise of results that will hasten human cures for cancer and other genetically-linked diseases. The virtue embedded in the eighth mode demands respect for the life and wellbeing of animals since integral human fulfilment cannot be realised at the expense of the deliberate suffering of the animal neighbours that share with us in the ecological chain of life. Further, the infliction of pain on others, animal or human, has a dehumanising effect on the perpetrators and leads in turn to a decline in the personal and ethical quality of life in society.

Returning to the case of reproductive human cloning, we can say that the will to integral human fulfilment is missing from this operation because no intelligible good of persons is envisaged by this procedure. Negatively, the production of human clones will act against integral human fulfilment since the clones themselves will be human but parentless, and almost certainly discriminated against. Their natural right of belonging to the human community will have been stolen from them even before they arrive amongst it while the society that has denied them that right will itself be forever changed by losing its reproductive innocence. Human reproductive cloning is a threshold that, once crossed, can never be retraced.

Conclusions

The attractiveness and credibility of Germain Grisez' natural law theory consists in its person-centeredness, the fact that the basic human goods are aspects of persons and not abstractions apart from persons. In this it differs from other standard moral theories where moral principles, for example, make their claims irrespective of the interests or consequences for persons. Still other theories that share some of the consideration for persons of natural law (for example, feminist ethics) yet fail to take into consideration the full range of human goods that make for integrated human fulfilment. Natural law theory of this kind is the natural ethical partner for a theology of the human person that is grounded in creation and looks to the dispensation of grace of the new covenant in Jesus Christ for the ultimate fulfilment of the principles, potentialities and powers invested in the first creation. Natural law teaching provides the groundwork of Christian ethics since moral good belongs to the larger framework of human good as integral human fulfilment. What is morally good for persons is so because it helps them to put into practice in an integral and integrating way all those obligations that belong to the network of human relationships – to others, God, self and life.

The strength of natural law lies finally in the rich conception that it holds of the human person as the dynamic centre from which and to which other considerations and judgements of an ethical kind can be referred. The human goods express this wealth of characterisation that defines the inner and outer life of human beings, as they fulfil their natural inclinations by living within community and working for the common good. This multi-layered, conceptual centre is the edge that natural law has over its rivals as a broad-based theory of ethics that aims in all things for the welfare and maturation of human persons.

By focussing on the supreme value of persons natural law provides strong grounds for proposing that certain procedures in biomedicine are wrong because they threaten or destroy the welfare of persons, individually or collectively, in the short-term on in the longer term. The powers of new technologies in such fields as genetic engineering are such, and the moral questions that they raise so complex and urgent for answers, that the medical sciences cannot be expected to provide those answers alone. In order to begin to suggest possible solutions to those complexities other disciplines such as philosophy, theology, ethics and even folk wisdom need to be invoked in an inter-disciplinary way that leads to widespread consensus in policy-making and law. For reasons already suggested natural law provides the sort of broad approach to human moral issues that the current need for consensus calls for.

Having established what natural law ethics stands for and how suited it is in defending the natural rights of the human person, under all circumstances, [221] the thesis now aims to submit its findings so far to the rigour of philosophical review and reflection. We do this in the belief that there is a unitary view of truth that informs the three complementary fields of theology, ethics and philosophy, in whatever order we may take them. In submitting the tenets of the Christian view of the human being, derived from the biblical-theological study of Genesis, to the testing of philosophical critique it is essential that a variety of philosophical viewpoints and methods be applied. In order to make the philosophical chapter more transparent, therefore, we have chosen one leading thinker from each of the four major periods of western philosophy. Their

---

[221] We have in mind here such rights as those to life, freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of assembly, fair trial, which all coincide well with human flourishing and integral human fulfilment both as individual persons and in a fellowship of persons.

respective connections to the central question of the human subject will be explained at each new section of the chapter.

3. The Human Person in Philosophical Perspective

The Christian view of the human person which finds its normative formulation from Holy Scripture and for which we have found a compatible, ethical partner in Neo-Thomist Natural Law theory, remains to be tested against philosophical constructions of the human being. Given the length and breadth of the Western philosophical tradition selection is unavoidable here, but on what basis will we make our selection? Obviously we must choose those who have enquired deeply and reflected honestly on the nature of humanity. Further, we want a variety of viewpoints that will thoroughly test the biblical findings. Finally, we will benefit from hearing the articulate views of ancient and modern philosophers on our subject, and so not confine ourselves to a single era or fashion. The four philosophers chosen span the four discrete phases of Western philosophy from the Classical to the Postmodern and give expression to a cross section of views that will aid our investigation. Aristotle speaks for the beginnings of philosophy in the pre-Christian era, Aquinas for the synthesis of pagan and Christian thought in the Middle Ages, Hume for the critical philosophy of the Enlightenment that marks the beginning of secular times, and Levinas in the later 20th century and the period of Postmodernism.

The aim of this chapter is to discover how far and by what cognitive method the conclusions of the first chapter of the thesis may be challenged, modified or complemented using the critical tools of philosophy. If it is the case that "faith and reason are the two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth" [222] then we may expect to discover somewhere in this quest for truth among the philosophers discoveries that

---

[222] John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, (Strathfield, NSW: St Pauls Publications, 1998), p. 9.

will supplement the outline of human reality provided from biblical Revelation. Others we may have to reject. The starting-point of this philosophical review is Aristotle for reasons that will be made clear.

3.1 Aristotle

Aristotle's interest in the human person comes out of his metaphysics which, as the name indicates, investigates the nature of being itself that underlies all the other sciences. It is particularly in *De Anima* that he presents his understanding of the human being, by using such concepts and paired categories as soul and body, substance and accidents, potentiality and actuality, form and matter, the senses and the intellect. *De Anima* is a psychological and epistemological study of how it is that human beings acquire and retain knowledge of outward events and objects. In this section we will restrict our study to Aristotle's form-matter scheme for a number of reasons. First, this view is sufficiently different from that of Plato whose dualistic explanation has heavily influenced Christian theology on the subject. Secondly, Aristotle's model sits comfortably with the more holistic view of the Bible and so offers a philosophical grounding for it. Thirdly, we will take up the other leading principle of Aristotle's theory, that of substance, when we come to Thomas Aquinas.

The Christian Tradition early on developed its vision of the human in pursuing a dualistic rather than a monistic view of the human being.[223] This was due to the early influence of Plato, through Neo-Platonism, on Christian writers in the Patristic period. They developed a legacy of theological opinion that has come down to the present day. In this view body and spirit are differentiated in a dissonant way, unlike the biblical

---

[223] This dualism was developed further by Descartes in isolating the mind from the body as the real person. Christian apologetes like Richard Swinburne today defend that legacy in an attempt to defend the spiritual view of man.

teaching which recognises the duality of the human person yet manages to address the whole human being as a single entity.[224] In this matter the Christian tradition did not reflect accurately the biblical integrationist view of the person, instead borrowing from the dominant philosophy of the day, Neo-Platonism, for polemical purposes. In this chapter our enquiry will be whether Aristotle follows such a dissonant dualism or proffers his own articulation, and if so, what that consists in, and to what extent the Aristotelian version may throw light on the mystery of the human person.

Aristotle was the first to offer an analysis of the human being that was recognisably scientific, by being based on observation and critical reflection rather than fancy. The leading virtue of Aristotle's construction is the way he integrates the human being with the human body by means of his form-matter distinction. Aristotle achieves this feat by treating the form of matter as its organising principle that is inherent in the matter, rather like the way the sculpture that is to be formed is ideally resident in the original block of stone, before the sculptor brings forth the creative potential of the stone. Form is what determines the changes that matter undergoes as well as the ultimate shape and function that matter attains to. According to Aristotle nature does nothing in vain because there is an inherent plan or design in all natural things, both inanimate and animate, including human beings, in fact, most notably in human beings, whose organisation shows the greatest diversity and sophistication of all organisms. This is Aristotle's theory of entelechy according to which every living creature carries its own plan and pathway to perfection within itself.

---

[224] Gen 2:7 already suggests this duality but as part of a larger unity. This has coined the expression of the human being as a psycho-somatic unity. It is true that death brings the separation of soul and body but this is because death is an unnatural divine judgment on the human being as a result of sin. The Christian hope overcomes this judgment through Jesus Christ suffering the death sentence for humankind which results in the resurrection of the body and the restoration of the whole person.

For Aristotle then form is soul or the life-principle that actualises itself, before promoting the potentiality of the living matter through to its final goal. On this view all nature or natural things are teleologically determined, the soul being both the primary cause of the matter's taking the shape it does, and the final cause for which it develops and functions within the hierarchy of living things. Just as in the case of the soul, as inherent form or organising principle, so the final cause of a thing is not imposed by the scientist on nature but rather observed by him in nature. For Aristotle the natural is self-starting and self-generating but all because it is more than pure matter which could not achieve its own animation, evolution or purpose. For these higher attributes matter requires an inner life-force that directs and fructifies it throughout its particular journey from birth to decay, then death.

Aristotle thus gives priority to the purpose, function or telic question of an organism before studying its separate parts. For this reason *De Anima* has been called an exercise in meta-biology. The whole entity is always greater than the sum of its parts, and the whole can only be known from the function of the organism within the natural hierarchy. So Aristotle does not allow that scientific investigation of particular bodies or species can be undertaken in a scientific way without taking into account the reason for which this body exists and acts. It is the whole being of the organism that explains the separate parts and gives meaning to them in its totality. This holistic, telic view of the organism under study makes for the starting point rather the endpoint of that study. This means that Aristotle takes a metaphysical approach to knowledge of the natural world, including the human species, in a way that is essential for his system and its methodology as a whole. Science examines and measures

the constituent parts but only a metaphysical outlook can identify the whole organism and its overall purpose.[225]

This approach by Aristotle has invaluable lessons for modern questions and decisions about, say, the human embryo. Following Aristotle we reject the assumptions of the positivistic, functionalist approach that defines the embryo in terms of what it can and cannot do, when compared with a fully-developed specimen of a human person. When so compared the embryo cannot reason nor communicate intelligently, nor does it have a sense of its own identity over a period of time. Yet when allowed to follow its own natural growth and principle of organisation, and when observed over a reasonable period of time (more than the first two weeks of its life, the legal cut-off point for experimentation), each embryo will display some activities and powers. The only reasonable conclusion that we can draw is that the embryo already carries the map of its own pathway, or book of instructions about its own development, with a view to becoming an individual and full-grown human being. Genetically we now understand that this is true as well as how it happens, but the science only helps to bear out the wisdom and foresight of Aristotle's metaphysical approach. The human embryo becomes a fully mature human person because it has been programmed from the beginning as a human person.[226] Only as we view and treat it as an individual person from the beginning of its existence, and throughout the course of its lifetime, will we be able to grant it the respect and protection that it inherently deserves.

---

[225] Aristotle in Metaphysics Zeta 17 argues that the whole makes a different thing in its own right from the separable parts. The example he uses is the difference between the separate letters of the alphabet and some of these letters when they are combined to form a syllable. He comments, "this further different thing is the substance of each thing, in that it is the primary cause of being for it".

[226] Helpful here is John Ozolins, "Human Embryos as Persons", *Ethics Education*, vol. 8, 3 (2002), pp. 2-6, esp. pp. 2-3. See also his earlier article, "Protecting the Human Embryo", *Ethics Education*, vol. 8, 2 (2002), pp. 11-13.

Aristotle's theory of living things has been called hylomorphism because he integrates form (μορφη) with matter (υλη), because rather than attaching form to matter he finds it within matter. Form as life-principle breaks out of matter as the inner spring of its vitality, movement and goal-directed existence, to render it capable of what it becomes within the tree of life. In this way matter is actually self-explanatory, not needing any additional theory or appendage, either spiritual or material, to characterise it.

So Aristotle ingeniously achieves an inner integration of his two constituents of matter and form, without jeopardising their integrity or necessity. His interpretation of the body as a vital organism means that he is always conscious of the embodied status of human beings. In this scheme the body never suffers loss of status in face of the higher principle of soul, unlike the Cartesian analysis where it suffers from being a separate and less essential component.

In all this Aristotle's scheme stands in stark contrast to his teacher Plato who held to a strongly dualistic scheme in which the soul and body coexist but as two disparate elements. "[b]ody and soul are two different things, and the soul immaterial, imperceptible, and immortal, while the body is material, perceptible, and mortal".[227] This distinction that later writers (most notably Descartes) would pick up in western philosophy, is tied in with Plato's epistemology in which each individual enters life with a prior knowledge of the eternal Forms. By remembering those Forms each person gains true knowledge of herself and of the world. The world of the

---

[227] Terence Irwin, *A History of Western Philosophy: I Classical Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 99.

senses, generated by our bodies, hinders this redemptive knowledge of the Forms by distracting human beings with what is ephemeral and tangential to their true happiness and welfare. There thus arises an intense conflict of interests within the same person, between the objects of natural desire such as food, sex, or rest, and the ideal interests and aspirations of the mind, such as knowledge of the Good, virtue and immortality.[228]

All such dualism Aristotle strongly rejects and corrects. He rejects the dualism of soul and body as firmly as modern philosophers reject the dualism of Descartes. A person, or a dog, is not one thing inside another, a spirit imprisoned in a body or a "ghost in the machine", but a special kind of complex unity. Nor are the soul and the body separate parts of a person, or of an animal.[229]

Although Aristotle maintains that the soul, like the body, is a substance, this does not mean that the soul has physical properties. The soul is the immaterial essence of the body without which it cannot remain what it is nor become what it is programmed to be. The body without soul would be a body only homonymously. The soul as form of the body is "a principle and kind of cause".[230] Aristotle combines these points when he writes,

> ... soul is that by which primarily we live and perceive and think . . .
> substance is spoken of in three ways, as form, as matter, and as the
> composite . . . and since the composite is in this case the ensouled thing, it
> is not that the body is the actuality of the soul but that the soul is the
> actuality of some body. And for this reason they have supposed well who
> have believed that the soul is neither without body nor a kind of body. For it
> is not a body but belongs to a body, and for this reason is present in a body

---

[228] It is particularly in his *Phaedo* that Plato elucidates his body-mind dualism.
[229] J.L. Ackrill, *Aristotle the Philosopher* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 56.
[230] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Zeta 17. He further explains that the form is that by virtue of which matter is in the state that it is.

> and a body of the appropriate kind . . . it is the nature of the entelechy of each thing to be in what is potentially it and in its own matter.[231]

The question arises, however, whether Aristotle's soul or principle of form amounts to the same thing as the Christian notion of "soul"? *Prima facie* the Philosopher seems to have achieved by his form-matter scheme the mysterious integration of body and soul that the biblical teaching reflects. The biblical view also aims to integrate the body-soul relationship in a monistic unity so as to preserve at all times the singularity of the human being. But on closer inspection it appears that Aristotle remains a materialist at heart, committed to the primacy and sufficiency of matter. In the words of Cohen, "Aristotle's conception of the soul is biological" and "[F]or Aristotle psychology is a matter of physics, that is, of the general theory of nature".[232] Certainly Aristotle recognises the intellectual capacities of the human form but he nowhere even approximates the richly personal and communicative concept of the image of God. When Aristotle looks around for popular examples to illustrate his form-matter teaching he selects impersonal architectural or instrumental cases such as tables and statues. The Aristotelian form lacks personal qualities although it displays certain rational qualities inasmuch as it "directs" the life process in specific cases, not unlike the evolutionary force that helps a species to "select" those properties and mechanisms that are most suited to its own survival.

In terms of modern science Aristotle's theory of forms lines up most closely with the double helix of DNA that "orders" the biological specifics that characterise human persons in general, as well as those of one individual

---

[231] Aristotle, *De Anima*, II.2, *414a.*
[232] S. Marc Cohen, "Hylomorphism and Functionalism" in Martin Nussbaum & Amelie Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's <u>De Anima</u>* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 58, 60.

over another, even within the same biological family.[233] For Aristotle, as for modern scientists, human life is largely matter-based in a way that we can access through the Human Genome Project and its printout of species-based DNA. Like Aristotle's theory of form the particular course of development in the case of each living organism is largely dictated from within itself, through the genetic blueprint that underlies the material organism in its growth to full functionality.

Conclusions

In conclusion, we can make some observations about Aristotle's understanding of his form-matter scheme in relation to the quest for a fuller definition of the human person.

There is nothing religious or metaphysically transcendent about Aristotle's theory of form in spite of the way that later writers, like Aquinas, chose to draw a parallel between the form-matter system of Aristotle and the soul-body scheme of Christian faith. Matter is self-explanatory, it needs no doctrine of creation or a Creator to explain its existence, and Aristotle gives it none. This uncreated nature of form corresponds with Aristotle's belief that it is conceptually and cognitively basic, that is, it belongs to the pure essence of a thing. Form is self-directed in a thoroughly natural and self-determined way. There is no need for any external cause to explain the existence, history and particular body-shape or function of matter. It is driven from within.

The form coexists with and in matter, but without any personal, let alone quasi-spiritual, quality of its own. These belong to the whole human being

---

[233] Karl Popper suggested that Aristotle's essences were irrational souls that anticipated the modern theory of the genes because they determined the actions of the organism and direct it towards its own goal and perfection.

as a person, not to either form or matter independently. The form may demonstrate certain rational-like traits, in the way it directs the matter to take the shape and to attain the end that it does, but form nowhere attains personal properties such as reason, will, love, or freedom. In other words in referring to the form of matter Aristotle consistently speaks in the third person since form is an "it" and not a "thou" or a self, and possesses no consciousness of its own.[234]

Just as Aristotle's substance principle lacks the divine Breath of the biblical account, so it lacks the essential property of relation which is so much part of the biblical presentation of the human being as a being in relation to other kinds. For Aristotle relation is one of the categories of being but not essential to its essence. That is, relation is rather like an accident of the substance of form, and so dispensable when looking for the definition of the essence of a thing. Substance too is a category but more essential than relation or the other categories. Substance thus exists in isolation in Aristotle's account, a fact that recent philosophers of Aristotle agree needs to be corrected by subsuming relation under essence as a part of the substance of a thing.[235]

Aristotle insists that only where form and matter co-exist in an actual substance are we in a position to understand the quiddity of anything. This means that the separable parts of a thing do not provide enough information to give us an understanding of what a thing is in itself or what it is for. This knowledge can only be gained from an integrative view of

---

[234] There is nothing on consciousness in Aristotle that would draw him into the modern debate about mind with consciousness at the centre.
[235] See M.L. O'Hara (ed.), *Substances and Things: Aristotle's Doctrine of Substance in Recent Essays* (Washington: University Press of America, 1982); also D.M. MacKinnon, "Aristotle's Conception of Substance" in R. Bambrough (ed.), *New Essays on Plato and Aristotle* (New York: Humanities Press, 1965), pp. 97-119.

the entity in its totality. The whole is greater than its parts. While Aristotle distinguishes in his metaphysics the form from matter he refuses to say that either of these parts is equivalent to the whole. This holistic viewpoint fits in well with a theological view of the human person that looks beyond the biological dimensions to a larger reality that takes priority.[236]

3.2 Thomas Aquinas

We turn next to Thomas Aquinas whom we have chosen for a number of reasons. First, he is a Christian philosopher whose value in many disciplines is being increasingly noted, particularly in the fields of our interest, that is, metaphysics and ethics. Secondly, Aquinas is a natural follow-on study from Aristotle since Aquinas aimed to match Aristotelian explanations and methods to Christian ones, without compromising the latter. Thirdly, Aquinas' work has extensively influenced Christian theology, including anthropology and ethics, up to the present day. Aquinas' interest in the human person arose in a natural way from the Christian Tradition, mediated by Augustine, that centred in the Persons of the Trinity and on the complex Person of Jesus Christ. The test for Aquinas was to do justice to the rich and original concept of the person as found in Holy Scripture and the Christian Tradition while making use of the tools and findings of Aristotelian logic and metaphysics.

All-important to an apprehension of Aquinas' idea of the person is his concept of substance because it is a key part of his metaphysical philosophy of being. Not only may we consider existing things in their act of being (the existentialist perspective or the 'that-ness of anything), from

---

[236] Traditionally science examines and explains the parts, while metaphysics and theology consider the whole.

an empirical point of view, but we may at the same time consider them for what they are in their being (the essentialist perspective or the 'what-ness' of anything), from a conceptual point of view. Aquinas does claim to know things in an empirical way, that is, on the basis of experience and practical observation by means of the bodily senses, but he goes beyond this method so as to consider things in themselves by reflecting about them in their totality and purpose, that is, in their very being.

Aquinas sees things as part of a universal relation or chain of Being (*analogia entis*) which he then analyses further into different genera and species of being. Of Being in general the human person is a species with his own distinctive powers that separate him from other forms of being in the universe of Being that includes God,[237] angels, animals and plants. Proceeding in this way Aquinas shows his debt to the metaphysical philosophy of Aristotle whose works were rediscovered and in new translations in Aquinas' day.[238]

The creeds and councils of the Christian Church, within the first five centuries, made use of the ontological categories of "substance" and "nature" taken from the Classical metaphysical tradition when trying to explicate the profound concept of person. This need arose because of the complex revelations of a Triune God who had become human in Jesus Christ and was also active in the world as the Holy Spirit. Thus the Church was faced with the double task of defining both who God is and who Jesus Christ is. Clearly God is a Personal God when judged by the biblical witness but what does it mean to say that God is a Person or personal?

---

[237] Aquinas did consider God to be a unique Being because unlike all other living things he is Self-sufficient, independent and Self-originated from all eternity.
[238] The works of Aristotle went through several revivals, one of these taking place in Europe from the 12th to the 17th centuries.

Augustine famously replied that it was better to say something like "persons/*personae*" when speaking about the Christian God than to remain silent.[239]

Following the patristic practice of using philosophy as a handmaid to theology[240] the medieval theologians arrived at their own definition of the human person that borrowed from Aristotelian categories in harmony with Christian beliefs as Augustine had transmitted them. This philosophical articulation was mediated to Aquinas and the later generations of Christian apologists by the work of Boethius (480-524CE) who defined the human person as "an individual substance of a rational nature" (*individua substantia naturae rationalis*). So enamoured was Aquinas of this definition that he deploys it as a grid through which to apprehend divine and human persons alike.[241] He can do this because of his belief in the *analogia entis* or scale of Being, whereby all Being is one and all differences are relative among individual forms of Being, including God.[242]

Aquinas explains the contents of this definition of the human person, and how he reads it, when he writes that

> . . . by describing it as a substance we exclude accidents from the notion of person, for no accident can be a person, and by adding individual we exclude genera and species in the genus of substance, since they cannot be called person: and by adding of rational nature we exclude inanimate bodies, plants and dumb animals which are not persons.[243]

From this interpretation several aspects of the human person stand out – 1. that the person cannot be reduced to another kind of being; 2. that a person

---

[239] Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Book V, chapter IX.
[240] Cyril of Alexandria, *The Miscellanies*, Book I, chapter V.
[241] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I. Q. 2, art. 1.
[242] *Ibid.*, I. Q. 29; III. Q. 16, art. 12.
[243] Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God* (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1934), Q.9, A.2.

is singular in number; 3. that rationality is the essential characteristic of the person. The person is an individual being, not any kind of being, but a human being which the possession of a rational nature defines. The nature never exists independently of the substance and the substance never exists beyond its nature. The human person is reducible neither to the substance alone nor to the nature alone. The human person is the irreducible entity that results from the union of substance and nature in a single being.

The substance is what makes the particular being what it essentially is because the substance does not change. If the substance were to change it would prove that it was not a person existing independently of other substances but an accident that was dependent on a substance and not essential to the definition of the substance. The substance is complete in itself and does not require anything else to make it what it is. Aquinas argues that the human person is a complete entity existing in himself (though not from itself since God creates and sustains the soul of the body) and does not change, though certain characteristics of the individual may change over time, such as the colour of hair or the facial features. Aquinas thus believes in a continuous self that enables individuals to unite the separate elements of experience into a single narrative that spans a lifetime from childhood to old age.

The nature of a thing is what defines the substance, by describing its most outstanding property that separates it from other kinds of beings. "Considered as a centre of activity, substance is called 'nature', just as it is called 'essence' when considered as definable."[244] Because they are rational in their nature human beings "have dominion over their own actions, and which are not only made to act, like others, but which can act

---

[244] F.C. Copleston, *Aquinas* (London: Penguin Books, 1955), p. 84.

of themselves".[245] Elsewhere Aquinas expresses this in terms of the free agency of human beings who act for ends that accord with their intellectual nature in contrast to other beings that lack understanding and so need to be acted on if they are to achieve their natural end.[246] For Aquinas, being a person means being an individual entity that can make autonomous choices of a rational kind, that is, without extrinsic force. Aquinas' definition of the human person is therefore synonymous with intelligence and freewill.

In all this Aquinas is presenting a metaphysical view of the human being that goes beyond biology to the idea of the person as a totality that communicates himself in an integrated way, through individual acts that are rational and free. Matter does not enter into the definition although it is not inconsistent with the idea of substance since Aquinas never separates incorporeal essence from corporeal existence, while he distinguishes them. Therefore the soul is neither an ideal Form (in the Platonic sense) that exists independently of the material body nor a substratum that is somehow concealed behind the visible attributes of a particular being.   Aquinas positions himself against all such dualisms. Instead, body and soul co-exist in a natural and harmonious union in which the human person is "neither a soul using a body, nor a soul in a body; the person was a soul-body composite in which the matter of the body was 'formed' or organised by the soul".[247]

Elsewhere Aquinas differentiates the essence of a thing which is the substance from its existence or accidents and in doing is able to pre-empt the later objection put forward in empirical philosophy that we are not able to prove the continuity of the individual person through time and change

---

245 *Op. cit.*, I. Q. 29, art. 1. See the whole article on the Definition of Person.
246 Thomas Aquinas, *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith* (New York: Image Books, 1960), chs. 1-3.
247 Terence Nichols, *The Sacred Cosmos* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003), p. 134.

because there is no way of locating the presence of a self by observation (see next chapter). Meanwhile we see how Aquinas is able to avoid that dilemma, although he does not claim to be able to observe the personal self directly any more than Hume does (see next chapter), but he does what Hume may not do on his principles, that is, observe the self indirectly through its observable acts. This is because of the inseparable union that Aquinas defends, between the essence of a thing and its existence in time and space, so that the one is present in and with the other. So, where Hume separates the unobservable self from the conscious perceptions of the mind Aquinas unites them, inasmuch as the immaterial substance communicates its presence through bodily emotions, desires and ideas. This is because for Aquinas *operatio sequitur esse*, with the result that physical activity manifests the being of a thing, and proves that being is really present.

But how do we know that the human being is made up of essence and existence, and how do we discover the essence of a human being? As we have shown Aquinas' view of the person is based on metaphysical reasoning that depends on deduction and logical inference, starting with the astonishing fact of the sheer existence of the human being. From Being Aquinas arrives at the notion of essence which is the aggregate of properties, devoid of accidental qualities, that makes a being what it is in its fundamental nature. So, what is man, metaphysically considered? Humanity is distinguished from other living things by "the intellectual principle which we call the mind or the intellect"[248] whereby man is able to exercise control over his own actions reflectively and to choose to perform his actions freely or of himself.[249] Thus human being is definable by

---

[248] *Op. cit.*, I. Q.75, art.2.
[249] *Op. cit.,* I. Q. 29.art.1.

rational and volitional properties that constitute his essence, or what he fundamentally is.

By this same distinction, without separating the essential being and its existentiality, Aquinas is further able to accommodate changes in living entities, without sacrificing their inviolable essence. The changes they undergo are real enough and they belong to the substance as the subject of those changes, but throughout those changes the substance remains true to itself in being and nature. In this way Aquinas is saved from Hume's scepticism about the status or existence of the self which has given rise to what is known in modern philosophy as the bundle theory of the self.[250] This theory describes the belief in a single self that is thought of as the centre of consciousness, as an illusion, instead proposing that what we commonly call the self amounts to no more than a bundle of sensations that bear no internal relation to each other. For inexplicable reasons we may construct a self to explain the way we unify these random impressions of the mind as though they did emanate from and group around a central self.[251] Aquinas further helps us avoid the later dualistic thinking of John Locke who so separated the underlying substratum of the soul from conscious impressions and accidents in everyday life that the one may not be known from the other. Aquinas' theory has several advantages over these alternative theories of the person, first, in positing the real existence of a human self as the more logical explanation for the universal belief in practice of a continuous subject, and, secondly, as a result in being able to hold together the diverse elements of a lifetime of experiences.

---

[250] Simon Blackburn, *Think* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), chapter 4, especially pp. 135 – 138.
[251] See "bundle theory of the mind or self" in Simon Blackburn, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Aquinas' view of the human person is further supported by the Aristotelian principles of actuality and potentiality which form part of his teleological metaphysics. Together these two principles explain the purpose for which every entity is alive and why it moves to fulfil its chief end. From prime matter which is the original potentiality, arises the substance which is the original actuality, that determines the remaining potentiality of the substance or thing. Along with other living things, but at a higher level of being, the human person is an individual substance whose rational nature reveals the real purpose of *homo sapiens*, and that is the use of the mind to interpret and enjoy the chief human goods of existence. For Aristotle the pagan this was happiness, discovered through living the good life of contemplation, that included virtue; for Aquinas the Christian, this means the good life of happiness discovered through knowing, loving and glorifying God as the supreme Good. The main point here is that life and existence are purposeful and that our purpose for living is to be discovered through our nature which consists in our powers of intelligence. We reach our potential through an understanding of our nature, and by choosing intentionally to realise this in practice by choosing the good. To the question, What is this thing for?, Aquinas, by using the actuality/potentiality coordinates, was able to give the answer, an answer that was based on observing the distinctive ways in which this particular thing acts, which will always be in accordance with its nature. From this Aquinas comes to a finding about its quiddity. The one exception to this distinction between actuality and potentiality is God, since, as the perfect Being, potentiality is always already realised as actuality.

Aquinas' accepted definition of the human person is sufficiently nuanced to indicate that the human being is ontologically conditioned in such a way that we cannot reduce him to the level of matter. The rational nature

differentiates the human being, in the way of acting, from other living beings around us.[252] The rational nature further frees the human person from his own inner world and the immediate realities around him, by opening up the endless promise of the future and contemplation of a larger world of reality. Aquinas explains this propensity of the human being towards higher ends by a teleological understanding of the person that is implicit in his rationality. Through the rational nature the human being is capable of larger and higher intentions, interests and ends, most noticeably transcendent ones that lead to ultimate Being which is God. The human person is conscious of contingent being because of which he depends on higher Being, not only for sustenance and life but for happiness and immortality. At the same time *homo sapiens* performs acts in common with the lower species, such as mating, eating, sleeping and socialising with his own kind.[253]

Conclusions

Aquinas does not address directly the modern question of the identity of the self, but he may come close to this through his comments on Aristotle's distinction between the potential and actual intellect.[254] Aquinas calls the latter an agent intellect since it has the powers of a free individual who actualises the images and information that the passive intellect hands to it, by making the essences of sensible things intelligible. Hume was to be baffled by the unifying tendency of the mind in relation to the innumerable and changing images of sensible things that it received. Aquinas

---

[252] This is called speciesism by philosopher Peter Singer which is the charge of a form of discrimination, against animals. Although there is some evidence for rudimentary forms of cognition and/or "language" among species like dolphins and chimpanzees, there is no evidence that these animals are capable of culture or religious faith that are rational activities of a highly symbolic kind, on the part of human beings. The differences are greater than whatever similarities there may be between humankind and other creatures.

[253] See Aquinas, *Truth*, especially chs. 16-25.

[254] Aristotle, *De Anima*, IV. 1.

overcomes this dilemma by attributing both the receiving function of the passive intellect and the abstracting function of the agent intellect, to the individual person as the subject of these functions. In his own words "the formal principle" of these activities "is one in being with the individual man".[255] Aquinas therefore does not distinguish a self from the individual substance that thinks and chooses, and so he avoids the later disjunction between the self and myself, whose self it is. We learn from Aquinas that the human person consists in a material being with a spiritual or rational nature that causes him to seek his true end of happiness in the rational and spiritual realm rather than the material, and in so doing shows himself to be more than material.

However, by adopting the Boethian definition of the human person as part of his general philosophy of Being Aquinas has restricted himself in two respects: first, to the individual person and, secondly, to the characteristic activities of reasoning and choosing. In doing so Aquinas has omitted some of the defining characteristics of the human person, such as a gregarious nature and craving for loving relationships. What is missing from the definition as it stands is any clear reference to the human person as an individual with a social nature, whose relational nature is the means to human flourishing as an individual and in the aggregate.[256]

But perhaps the chief benefit of Aquinas' exegesis of the human person is the way in which he establishes his independent and actual subsistence.

---

[255] Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima* (Notre Dame: Dumb Ox Books, 1994), p. 220.
[256] F. LeRon Schults, *Reforming Theological Anthropology. After the Philosophical Turn to Relationality* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 16, ft. 6, points out how Aquinas' reliance on Aristotle's distinction between substance and accidence prevented him, like Aristotle, from making relation essential to substance. As a result Aquinas struggles when discussing the relations of the Persons of the Trinity and omits relation from his exposition of the human person. This was compounded by Aquinas' acceptance of Aristotle's prioritising of reason in defining the kind of animal the human being is, over and above social categories.

> The nature of the human intellect is not only incorporeal but it is also a substance, that is, something subsistent. . . the principle of intellectual operation which we call the soul is a principle both incorporeal and subsistent. . . therefore, that human soul, which is called the intellect or the mind, is something incorporeal and subsistent.[257]

This is no small gain in a world where the human person is subject to many reductionist arguments or where the self is held to be something that is subject to variation, reinvention or dissolution. Aquinas' presentation offers us a metaphysical foundation for believing in the existence of the human person as an actual entity, and for defending the essential and existential unity of every human individual from the beginning to the end of her human existence.

3.3 David Hume

David Hume came to the problem of the human person as a child of the Enlightenment with its rejection of all authorities outside of the human being, the human mind and human experience, as the reliable sources for testing all truth claims, in whatever field of knowledge. Hume wants to revise all data and claims to knowledge, including belief in a human soul or self, in light of the scientific method of testing by observation and rational enquiry. Naturally Hume found it difficult, by this means, to continue belief in the spiritual nature of the human being since the human self did not make itself amenable to such testing. The notion of a subsisting self, as the hidden centre of the human being, the source of self-consciousness and the reason why we organise our experiences holistically, therefore presents Hume with a special challenge. Our interest here will be to discover from Hume whether the scientific method that he commits to, delivers a reliable knowledge of the human person, or whether his meager conclusions

---

[257] Aquinas, *Summa*, I. Q. 75. art. 2.

encourage us to seek for other routes to sound knowledge of the human being.

In tackling the problem of the human self Hume freely admits the difficulty of the task facing us when he says:

> It is certain there is no question in philosophy more abstruse than that concerning identity, and the nature of the uniting principle, which constitutes a person. So far from being able by our senses merely to determine this question, we must have recourse to the most profound metaphysics to give a satisfactory answer to it.[258]

Is Hume saying here that his empirical method that relies so much on the evidence of the senses cannot solve this problem of the self and personal identity? Support is given to this conclusion in the light of the later concessions in his appendix (see more below) to the Treatise in which he admits defeat on the problem of explaining why people universally assume the existence of a conscious self as the uniting principle of our miscellaneous sensations and ideas. This was the one part of Hume's philosophy that he himself confessed dissatisfaction with, a fact that should alert us to the possible inadequacy of its purported solution. Further, Hume's reference to the need for "the most profound metaphysics" in the above quotation should not mislead us into believing that he was ready to abandon his empirical philosophy. He cannot mean metaphysics in its classical notation since he repudiates that way of doing philosophy as abstract and fantastical, having no ground in experience. By the most profound metaphysics we must understand Hume to mean the most profound reflection, using metaphysics in a loose sense that is compatible with an empirical method of thinking. So, the issue of the human person is not easily resolved on the strength of sense data but must be mulled over

---

[258]   David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, volume 1 (London: J.M. Dent, 1959), p. 184.

further and even then may not be resolvable. The most that we can say, because this is all that we can observe, is that the human mind is a bundle of perceptions beyond which we cannot go in seeking some hidden self.[259] ". . . what we call a mind, is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed with a perfect simplicity and identity."[260]

Hume denies any observable continuity between the perceptions that the mind receives and the identification of a mind or self that receives them, because the mind can never perceive the actual relations between objects. All the mind can perceive is the sequence of events between objects as, for example, between two balls on a billiard table. One follows the other across the table but it is the imagination that leads us to think that there is a causal relation between their movements when one hits the other and the second ball rolls into a pocket. Every perception is a new one and so we cannot, except by false reasoning imposed by the imagination and perhaps memory, conclude that these perceptions are united in any substantial way or that even their objects in the field of vision are the same and identical since whenever we look at these objects after an interval we are viewing them again, as it were, for a first time.[261]

When it comes to the self, mind or soul (Hume uses these terms more or less synonymously) Hume is therefore consistent with himself when he argues that we cannot know about this because the self offers us no direct experience of itself. Famously he said that

---

[259] See Blackburn, *Think*, pp. 120 – 148.
[260] Hume, *op. cit*., p. 200.
[261] *Ibid.,* pp. 182-210.

> For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception.[262]

For the same reason Hume doubted the existence of the Christian God because God is not an object of observation. The only thing that we are conscious of are perceptions of objects that give rise to mental images or ideas about them in the mind. What is true of himself as one individual Hume assumes (rather gratuitously since he argues against universal truths, as in science, that are based on the observations of objects that regularly appear; all we ever have to deal with are particular objects of experience) must be true of all others and so he concludes that "I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions".[263]

The following objections or clarifications may be raised against Hume's explanation of the self and its identity:

Hume assumes that for the soul really to exist it must exist like other objects of knowledge through direct perception. "I never can catch myself" he says as though the self were some natural object of normal observation. In this he is being true to his empirical method and so cannot be faulted because of that. What he does not consider and cannot on the premises of his epistemological theory, is the possibility of a variety of means of knowing objects and facts. Many of the objects of our knowledge come to us in this way. For example, there are truths in mathematics, whether we accept an intuitionist or a constructivist model of mathematical reasoning, that have nothing to do with sense experience but which people universally accept as true. In postmodern epistemology such a source of knowledge as

---

[262] *Ibid.,* p. 239.
[263] *Ibid.*, p. 239.

intuition would be accepted as legitimate. A coherence theory of knowledge would posit truth where the arguments or evidences for a particular belief or system of beliefs are not contradictory but fit together. This matter of the various ways we acquire knowledge is perhaps a separate discussion but the point is worth making in the larger context of modern epistemology.[264]

Then again, perceptions and sensations do not think, they are simply what they are, impersonal impressions of external objects of experience. For experience to exist, which is based on reflection and memory so that we are able to compare objects and draw conclusions about them, something more than the objects and impressions on which they are based, must exist. Sensations by themselves cannot sustain nor explain a mental life that engages in acts of comparison, imagination, creativity and choice. By saying "I always stumble on some perception or other" Hume is himself making this distinction between the observing subject of those impressions and the perceptions themselves. This distinction can only be satisfied by postulating the permanent and real existence of a personal subject who receives and observes the perceptions and orders them.

Later Hume argues that mankind is "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions" but once again the onus is on him to explain the concept of a bundle or collection in the absence of a rational self that organises these impressions by such activities as remembering, imagining, creating and interpreting them. The very idea of a bundle or collection carries with it the idea of a unifying principle or the power of discrimination that makes these concepts meaningful. By speaking of a

---

[264] Hume's empirical epistemology in some respects made way for logical positivism in the 20th century which was also shown to be inadequate and to some extent self-contradictory.

bundle or collection Hume already concedes a principle of organisation that depends on an organising centre that separates these perceptions from other phenomena. In fact the life of the mind is not a loose bundle of sensations endlessly following one another but rather sets of bundles that the mind organises into discreet groups or associations of ideas and images as the basis of our understanding of the world and of our relating to other persons. Hume would explain this as a freak of the imagination that overrides reason by supposing that some of these perceptions are related in some way that allows us to group them. But we are left with the problem of explaining how this mass of sensations is managed into orderly and meaningful units that make social and intelligent life possible.[265]

Likewise Hume claims that these perceptions "succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement". For Hume to make an observation of this kind about the contents and the quality of his mental perceptions logically might suggest the presence of a rational subject who differentiates the perceptions in this way by allocating certain properties to them. Without this reference point it appears difficult to account for the fact that these perceptions are received as perceptions. Some thinking thing in the form of a personal subject or a group consciousness of some kind is necessary to make them intelligible in human experience.

Hume argues against the idea of a self on the principle that every impression gives rise to one idea but the self is supposed to be the reference of our many and rapidly changing impressions. For an impression to give rise to the idea of the self it would have to remain constant throughout a

---

[265] Immanuel Kant later addressed this problem in his transcendental categories that the mind imposes on the raw data of the senses.

person's life since this is hypothetically the quality of the self. Since no such impression exists, according to Hume, neither can the idea of the self be proven. Or, again, Hume argues from observation that our impressions are constantly changing and so cannot ever get an impression of the self, let alone one of a permanent and unchanging self. On Hume's view of things there are single ideas or entities and there is a succession of such ideas or perceptions that include dreams, images, feelings and anything else of the kind that makes up the private world of the mind. This conviction lies at the centre of Hume's scepticism with regard to a substantial self or centre of consciousness that organises our stream of conscious perceptions.[266] If we are to answer Hume's scepticism then we must be able to answer him at this point by showing, for example, that change and permanence may exist simultaneously within the same entity. An example from everyday observation would be the way trees alter their foliage or drop branches in the course of a year. The four seasons can produce four very different images of the same tree in an annual cycle. Yet the tree is more than the number of its branches and more than any one or even four of its seasonal changes. In the same way the idea of the self unifies the stages and changes of a human life cycle from infancy through adulthood to old age, and even death for we treat a person's corpse with the respect that we feel towards the person as memorial services for departed people show. Logical consistency, if nothing else, should include the beginning of human life as well as the ending under the belief in the human person.

Hume is puzzled by the universal tendency to associate and, to his way of thinking, to confuse change and identity. Hume, in the appendix to the first part of the Treatise, admits that he is at a loss to explain why people and even philosophers make this category error. This impasse suggests that

---

[266] Hume, *op. cit.*, Book I, Part IV, Section VI.

either Hume's argument is itself based on a mistake at some point, or that his method of enquiry is faulty by being unable to explain all the facts consistent with his own principles. We might accept that some people make the kind of mistake Hume has in mind some of the time, but here is a case where all of the people all of the time make the same mistake in the ordinary commerce of life. The burden of evidence points to the fact that Hume may be the one mistaken especially since the consistent and practical application of his theory would lead to the breakdown of social life altogether inasmuch as the life of individuals would have no focal centre for separate identity as a basis for social communication. If it is true that change marks a new identity and that the same person cannot exist through the endless changes that the mind experiences then each of us would have to discover and introduce ourselves each day as a new person or change our name each day since human life would always be in process of becoming, never having achieved a being. Obviously this is practically absurd and contrary to experience itself.

If we accept that rapid and constant change is the characteristic of our mental life it follows that there must be someone rather than something that experiences this change since objects do not change consciously and Hume is conscious of changing emotions and perceptions. An existing self can make the experience of change intelligible, especially if that personal subject is himself capable of the changes that Hume describes as a series of sensations and perceptions. Further, change assumes the permanent existence of the subject of those changes without whose existence all talk of change would be meaningless. Separate perceptions cannot change since they all exist in the singular number and are complete ideas on Hume's theory. Something other than the separate perceptions must therefore exist for his argument about change to be intelligible and that

something we would argue is a self that is conscious of change as well as the separate perceptions. So the individual self exists in its own right and independently of those changes that characterise its mental life.

When Hume claims that he sees only perceptions and impressions of different kinds whenever he looks into "himself" an alternative explanation might be that what he is actually observing is himself in those very acts of perceiving in being impressed by outside objects. We have already asserted that difference and change may exist within the same object without contradiction. Likewise those different kinds of perceptions may be the mind's natural way of being the mind in its interaction with the world of other minds and objects. If it is true that the self is the medium of its own perceptions in much the same way as the eye is the medium of its own seeing, then this no more argues for the non-existence of our eyes than the acts of mental perception may raise serious doubts about the actual existence of the self. Just as in classical religious belief we hold that the soul acts through the body without being identical with the body, so we may think of the self as acting through the brain's electrical and chemical processes that produce mental impressions and images, without being identical with them.

Hume is faced with a dilemma since he needs himself to stumble (his word) on his impressions and perceptions in such a way that he can observe them, and yet maintain the argument that they do not presuppose a self in any substantial sense. Or, to put this in other words, just at the moment when he claims to have eliminated the idea of a self by disclaiming its existence in himself the self appears in his very act of searching for a self and denying its presence. "Here, then, is *someone* who claims to be unable to find anything but a datum stripped of selfhood; *someone* who penetrates

within himself, seeks and declares to have found nothing."[267] Only someone who is a self could know what to look for in searching for a self, even while declaring it a fiction. On the other hand, all this may show only that there is the greatest difficulty in escaping talk about the self at the popular level.[268] This difficulty or the popular discourse on which it is founded do not by themselves amount to a proof in support of the self in reality.

Two premises inform Hume's objection to anything more than a bundle theory of the mind or self. These are first, that that to which perceptions refer cannot itself be a perception and secondly, that no perception remains the same throughout life. But Hume nowhere proves the validity of these premises. In response to these two premises may we not just as well and preferably argue that first, that what our perceptions refer to may be just as real as the perceptions themselves and that secondly, even although perceptions change the fact that they leave impressions and lead to ideas points to something in us that does not change; otherwise would these impressions not fail to register themselves as impressions?

Hume's inability to explain the connection between the perceptions of the mind is, according to Hume himself, the major flaw in his theory. Without a theory of the self as a subject that is more than our mental perceptions it is impossible for Hume to explain how our perceptions belong to the same mind ("my" mind or "your" mind). Yet in all our actual knowing we make this distinction between 'my' experience of knowing and the knowing that other persons have. There is some relation between our perceptions that ties them together in a sequence or a bundle however different they may be

---

[267]   Paul Riceour, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University Press, 1994), p. 128.
[268]   A point made by John Ozolins in private discussion.

in their content, and makes them the property of the individual person uniquely. I can have no knowledge of another person's impressions unless they inform me about them (and even this would give second-hand impressions) but I recognise my own in an intuitive way. Hume has no explanation of this in the absence of a real self.

Conclusions

Finally, we should notice that Hume does not deny that the self or soul may exist; only that he is unable to resolve the matter on the principles of his own philosophy. He even allows that another person may have a different notion of himself from Hume "so that he may be in the right as well as I".[269] But this is an unsatisfactory situation that leaves us with no sure knowledge of the self. Hume is caught in a dilemma of holding two distinct principles neither of which he can deny but which he cannot reconcile either. These are that "all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences" and that "the mind never perceives any real connection among distinct existences".[270] Without the idea of a continuous self Hume finds himself in the awkward position of needing a substitute, but without success. As a result he takes the sceptic's way out by admitting that "this difficulty is too hard for my understanding". By doing so he admits the limitations of his own arguments and concedes the possibility of the truth of his opponents' ones, that is, that the human self is a substantial reality. Since Hume's arguments neither prove nor disprove the existence of the self we must look elsewhere for a more satisfactory explanation of the human tendency to unite our perceptions.

---

[269] Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 239.
[270] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, n.d.), p. 319.

3.4 Emmanuel Levinas

Levinas possessed a Jewish background and came through WWII as a prisoner of war. These two sources of knowledge and experience inclined Levinas naturally to deep and prolonged reflection on the nature of the human being, what we owe to one another, and how the individual person may be protected from abuse and annihilation. He returns to the metaphysical tradition to answer this question, but he reconstructs that tradition by new language forms that bypass the abstract contemplation of being in general and reach out by expressing the mysterious, ethical and deeply personal encounter of one individual with another as the transcendent Other. In doing so Levinas enunciates a richly nuanced interpretation of the human person that is currently being explored and assessed.[271] The interest of this section is in Levinas' preoccupation with the individual in his ethical exchange with the Other, and how this particular perspective may illumine the quest for a stable, personal self.

In what is arguably Levinas' most important work because it was his last substantial text, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, he constructs a new paradigm of being that transcends the traditional choice between being and not-being, by breaking away from the classical categories of essence and quiddity[272] For substance concepts he substitutes spatial ones such as proximity, infinity, transcendence, interiority/exteriority, elevation - concepts that function in a metaphorical way in his attempt to express the

---

[271] For example, see Simon Critchley & Robert Bernasconi (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); T.C. Eskenazi, G.A. Phillips, D. Jobling (eds.), *Levinas and Biblical Studies*, Semeia Series 43 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003); Adriaan Pepperzak (ed.), *Ethics As First Philosophy* (New York: Rutledge, 1995); Catherine Chalier, *What Ought I To Do? Morality in Kant and Levinas* (London: Cornell University Press, 2002).

[272] Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981), p. 16: "The *otherwise than being* which, to be sure, is understand in a being, differs absolutely from essence, has no genus in common with essence, and is said only in the breathlessness that pronounces the extra-ordinary word *beyond*. . . The way of thinking proposed here does not fail to recognize being or treat it, ridiculously and pretentiously, with disdain as the fall from a higher order or disorder." See also Alphonso Lingis in his translator's introduction to the above work, p. xvi.

unfathomable mystery of the human being. So rather than work with the classical distinction between existence and essence, or being and becoming, Levinas conflates them, declaring in the process that this is the novelty of 20th century ontology. "Ontology, 'authentic' ontology, coincides with the facticity of temporal existence. To understand being as being is to exist in this world. . . The whole man is ontology. . . being in general is inseparable from its *disclosedness*."[273]

Fundamentally, the individual is a moral being whose identity as such resides in his obligation to the other person, experienced as face to face encounter of the two. This is what Levinas calls ethics as first philosophy, because the moral demand of the other person upon my self exists prior to any ontology of the person that we may wish to formulate, by means of formal logic. "I think that the true humanity of man begins in this recognition [ie. of the priority of an irreducible alterity], before any cognition of being, before onto-logy."[274]

The content of this demand is one of absolute and irresistible concern for the wellbeing of the other person, as if it was my very own. This is the principle of substitution that lies at the heart of Levinas' treatment of the ethical dimension of being. We might imagine that this is Levinas' way of stating the universal Golden Rule that requires us to render the very same treatment to others that we would wish them to render to us in similar circumstances. But Levinas goes even beyond that principle of equal rights, by denying any rights to himself as the subject of this moral

---

[273] *Entre Nous*, p. 2. Levinas prefers a metaphysics of relation to one of substance because he associates the latter with the objectifying method of reason alone.

[274] Jill Robbins (ed.), *Is It Righteous To Be? Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 106. The way Levinas here breaks up the word onto-logy is indicative of his suspicion of the dominance of logos or reason in finding the truth of human existence in the western tradition.

demand, affirming instead the absolute nature of the ethical responsibility that grips me on behalf of the other. So categorical is this demand that Levinas describes it as a state of captivity, or being made a hostage to the other. So great is that demand that there can never be a hope of ever discharging its debt.

The classical question was about personal existence, Who or what am I?, a question asked independently of any moral considerations that might arise in connection with the self. For Levinas the moral demand of the other in his existential state is the primary philosophical question, which translates as, What should I be or do for the other? Levinas appropriately calls this other-centeredness "alterity" and grants to it a transcendental quality of autonomy that goes beyond reason, and constitutes the main pillar of his ontology. So for Levinas the new ontology is a metaphysics of moral relation and responsibility rather than a metaphysics of being qua being.[275]

The other person is another self, equal to myself, who appeals to me and whom I address in himself as a "thou", based on trust and love, and not as an object or "it" that I can dispose of as a means to an end, without feeling guilty.[276] The treatment of other persons as objects and as means to other persons' ends is the very thing that Levinas had observed through the social experiments of Nazism, when human persons were made disposable. Because Levinas is searching for a philosophy that will prevent the repetition of such abuses of persons, he makes the ethical quality and intention of human relationships ahead of other considerations in measuring human being. To achieve this end subjects and objects need to

---

[275] We can detect the Jewish influence on Levinas at this point in his strong concern for the other person as a kind of sublimation of the self, inasmuch as the individual exists in himself only in the service of his neighbour.

[276] In the background here lies the thought of Jewish philosopher Martin Buber in works such as *I and Thou* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937) and *Between Man and Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1978).

be carefully and clearly differentiated. The human being may never become an object of abstract knowledge alone ("the philosophy of the neuter"), which is what I make my neighbour when I depend on representational knowledge alone to measure his incommensurable humanity.

Levinas turns ethics, in its inter-subjective exchange, into a kind of language of persons when he distinguishes between what he calls the *said* and the *saying*. The former corresponds to the already present responsibility for the other that pre-empts anything that we may put into formal words in conversation. Ethical responsibility for my neighbour is a primitive, unspoken language or foreword to the spoken word that is ancillary to it. This is part of what Levinas calls "the otherwise than being" that coincides with ethics. This ethical language that precedes all conscious being, opens into Levinas' understanding of transcendence, a state of being that paradoxically passes over to something that is other than being, beyond essence, a spiritual realm, (though not in a religious sense), where our true humanity resides. So often human speech is no more than the passing of information from one person to another, as a "modality of cognition". But antecedently to actual speech, communication consists in "the risky uncovering of oneself, in sincerity, the breaking up of inwardness and the abandon of all shelter, exposure to traumas, vulnerability",[277] as I accept responsibility for the other.

"The face to face of language" involves a mutual commanding by one person of the other person that, rather than a subordinating of the one to the other, springs from a primary virtue of respect, and results in mutual affirmation of the one by the other. This commandment is the expectation

---

[277] Levinas, *Otherwise*, p. 48.

of a work of mercy and justice to be performed by me on behalf of the other. So this commandment entails no humiliation because it is the commandment, not of impersonal law, but of personal being, whose commanding opens the way to a work of reciprocal care. Through this demand for a work of costly mercy we recognise one another as persons of infinite value, a sentiment that comes with the intuitive recognition of the essential humanity of the other person as the Other. For Levinas the human person is called upon, invoked, and not simply described or handled like equipment.

This ethical obligation that precedes all universal categories is predicated on the assumption that the human being is essentially a relational creature whose individual nature can only actualise itself through engagement with other persons. The presence of the other person both threatens my own existence and liberates me, because only by surrendering to the ethical dilemma that his presence presents, do I discover my own humanity in serving the other's. As part of his articulation Levinas faults the Cartesian method of abstracting the self from its surroundings, while hoping for certainty about the real existence of everything, including the self. For Levinas the Cartesian method of abstraction, that has informed so much of the personal culture of modernity, is a muddle-headed one that can never ground human relations or lead to a state of wellbeing among individuals and nations.

For this reason Levinas is critical of the totalising assumptions and practices of much of modern life, where a person's uniqueness is sacrificed to a system of laws based on equality and justice for all.[278] This is because these laws can never fulfil the obligations of responsibility towards persons

---

[278] For this reason Levinas wrote relatively little about the State and public affairs.

that only a face-to-face meeting can effect. Levinas rejects the classifying of human beings as a species, which is a faceless entity, that can evoke no sense of personal obligation and compassion. Instead, every meeting with the other takes place in unrepeatable circumstances that push me to a verdict on behalf of the other, in a moment of revelation that our dual encounter evokes. The physical other becomes the transcendental Other, within the context of this meeting that breaks through ordinary time and leaves neither of us unchanged. The meeting of my self with the other is a kind of epiphany, a revelation of truth about the nature of the human person and the ethical bonds of humanity between us. In that encounter my self, as moral subject, is awakened to the other's uniqueness as someone who suffers guilt, fear and mortality, and for whom I must take responsibility, as though these traumas were my own. Repeatedly Levinas pits the generalised concept of humanity against the singular "I" of the individual person whose ineffable quality is disclosed through meeting. "The singularity of the *I* or the *thou* does not resemble the singularity of a sense datum. The particularity of the *I* – its personality – is not just its individuation in space and time."[279]

The human face is a key concept in Levinas' developed philosophy ("the true essence of man is presented in his face") [280] because it is above all the face that gives presence to the mystery of the human Other, a metaphysical entity that defies logical explanation ("the face to face is a final and irreducible relation").[281] The face of each person is something more than

---

[279] Levinas, *Entre Nous*, p. 26.
[280] Levinas, *Totality*, p. 290.
[281] *Ibid.*, p. 291. In his symbolism of the face Levinas is drawing on his rich biblical and Jewish background where the face is a highly developed image for the favourable and personal presence of both God and other humans. To see the face of the other is to live in harmonious enjoyment of the company and goodwill of that person, and in the case of God, to live under his shalom or blessing in the whole of life. The loss of God's face is, on the contrary, to experience his active displeasure, as when God turns his face away.

his physiognomy; it is the symbol or icon of the real self that hides beyond his bodily presence. So, in a queue of people the nape of the person in front of me may be enough to trigger within me the awful demand on behalf of that person. The face is less the location of the other's real presence than the point where my neighbour's alterity leaves its trace. By this notion of "trace" Levinas means that the transcendence of the other, rather than lingering in one place, passes by in a moment of intersecting, in which I recognise him for who she essential is, through unconditional obligation towards him. This power of spiritual awakening that Levinas attributes to the face of the other suggests that for Levinas, though he nowhere explains why, the human face is without equal among the bodily parts in its ability to open up the hidden depths of the human person. The face of the other is the basis of ethics because it is "the corporeal emblem of the other's otherness".[282]

For Levinas, then, the human person is an inter-subjective self who discovers himself and constitutes himself repeatedly through the acceptance of personal responsibility that the face to face meeting with the other activates in the mystery of the Other. This transcendence of the other whom I address as another, rises above all attributes because attribution would reduce him to a concept, a being in common with other beings. This transcendence is captured through the face ("transcendence is what turns its face towards us").[283] In everyday living my ego tends to surround itself with an aura of self-righteousness, but stripped bare of its security and arrogance by the face of my neighbour, my ego is awakened to its true identity as someone who exists for neighbour and not for self.

---

[282] Bernhard Waldenfels, "Levinas and the Face of the Other" in Simon Critchley & Robert Bernasconi (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 63.
[283] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

In the real world of human beings people are inwardly at war with one another in the defence of their own interests. In contrast, Levinas propounds an ethics of responsibility that sets limits to the ego's "pride and the dominating imperialism characteristic of it".[284] Confronting the face of the other restrains illicit encroachments on my neighbour's life and possessions, and, more importantly, opens doors for constructive dialogue, inspired by mutual respect and even compassion. This is because the face of the other speaks directly of co-humanity, supra-embodiment, and a transcendental moment that shares in infinity. An ethic of practical love lies concealed within the ontology that the face of the other discloses, though Levinas disavows love as natural benevolence, preferring instead to speak of love without greed.[285] In this encounter I am taken hostage by the other for diaconal service of substituting myself for the other's self, in a suffering that expiates the other's wrongs.[286] From this obligation of service no one escapes, because the uniqueness of every individual who encounters me requires it.

For Levinas every person finds his true self through hearing and obeying the summons to obligation towards his neighbour. Authentic existence comes from within responsible relationships; otherwise the self remains an abstraction, without a subjective existence of its own. In referring to the substitutionary exchange that lies at the heart of social intercourse Levinas comments that

> Here the unicity of the ego first acquires a meaning – where it is no longer a question of the ego, but of me. The subject which is not an ego, but which I am, cannot be generalised, is not a subject in general; we have moved from the ego to

[284] *Ibid.*, p. 110.
[285] *Ibid.*
[286] Emmanuel Levinas, *God, Death and Time* (California: Stanford University Press, 2000), pp. 161-162.

me who am me and no one else. Here, the identity of the subject comes from the impossibility of escaping responsibility, from the taking charge of the other.[287]

In this psychological analysis and reflection Levinas distinguishes, without separating, the ego from the self. In his view the ego is the public, undifferentiated being of the individual, while the self is the real individual, in his irreducible and primordial humanity, that cannot be gainsaid by any system.

Conclusions

We have developed Levinas' theory of the human person in some detail because of the wealth of his conception, through which he is able to weave existential meeting together with a radical ethics of responsibility. Throughout Levinas confirms his belief in the personal nature of the human being. He expresses this negatively, by distancing himself from the metaphysical tradition of western philosophy which he equates with "reification itself", by which he means presumably the reduction of the individual person to an object,[288] within an impersonal, generalising concept of being in itself. Positively, Levinas' whole philosophy pivots on the belief that human beings are open to moments of transcendent discovery of who they really are as ethical creatures.

Having established the personalist nature of Levinas' anthropology the question arises whether the individual person exists prior to or apart from the encounter with the other? *Prima facie* Levinas' presentation might suggest that the human person has no material or stable existence outside of the social interaction with the other person. But without such a prior existence of the person no such connection is possible in the transcendent

---

[287] Levinas, *Otherwise*, pp. 13-14.
[288] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

and moral realms. The face of the other awakens what is latent within me, as an existent being in myself. Or again, the trace that Levinas refers to as being left in the moment of the passing of the other as Other, requires the actual existence of a transcendent order, beyond being and as the expression of being.

Yet Levinas disclaims belief in a substantial self in the way Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas do, because he believe that such a classification reduces the uniqueness of the individual person to the level of an object, within the general genus of Man. Levinas wants to break away from such a classification in which the self has no real freedom and is disallowed pure subjectivity.

> The task is to conceive of the possibility of a break out of essence. . . It will then be necessary to show that the exception of the 'other than being', beyond not-being, signifies subjectivity or humanity, the oneself which repels the annexations by essence. The ego is an incomparable unicity; it is outside of the community of genus and form, and does not find any rest in itself either, unquiet, not coinciding with itself . . . a unicity that has no site . . . a unicity withdrawing from essence – such is man.[289]

Levinas is claiming here that the real humanity which is the self, cannot be contained within a system that counts it part of a larger whole of existence (totality), but, at the same time, the self does not exist as a substance in an Aristotelian sense.

Because Levinas dispenses with traditional metaphysics he avoids the normal categories of essence and substance preferring instead spatial words and concepts that convey the idea of distance and so of difference between entities. This allows him to speak about the Otherness of the other

---

[289] Levinas, *Otherwise*, p. 8.

individual and his uniqueness as a person in relationship with me. In all this Levinas is favouring an ontology of responsibility over one of rationality (as in traditional metaphysics). Yet his notion of otherness is a way of individualising both myself and the other, since without it there could be no other who confronts me.

It is from within the duality created by two persons meeting that the point of self-discovery and self-fulfilment, for both myself and my neighbour, emanates. Levinas speaks of this as an "awakening" which both indicates a real beginning but also a prior existence in some latent sense of the spiritual self within or behind the public ego. Apart from such a prior existence no awakening to moral obligation between two persons could logically take place. Here we might recall Aristotle's distinction between potentiality and actuality within the individual being, as a point of comparison with Levinas' argument. The individual self or person realises its potential by taking moral responsibility for the other as an ultimate demand in the encounter context.

Levinas claims that ethics takes priority over ontology as the first philosophy ("a debt preceding the loan"), but how logical is this? Normally, ontology precedes ethics in the order of study, as being precedes action, but Levinas has eschewed formal logic as a tool for grasping the truth of the personal self. Yet we have seen how an Aristotelian potentiality/actuality axis could provide an epistemological vehicle for the paradox that is at the heart of Levinas' ethical philosophy. Levinas' first philosophy is in reality an alternative philosophy of being that he derives from his prior belief in the ethical nature of man. In order to establish its credibility Levinas places his ethical imperative, of obligation for the well-being of the other person, within the human ego as a latent law, and not as

an external command that lacks persuasive authority. For Levinas ethics and ontology are one and the same.

In answer to the question, Does the face of the other mediate a self or soul as the centre of human consciousness? (he refers to "the outdated notion of the soul"), Levinas appears to be ambiguous. On the one hand, he equates the self with the embodied presence of the other person, with her otherness and demands.

> Vulnerability, exposure to outrage, to wounding, passivity more passive than all patience, passivity of the accusative form, trauma of accusation suffered by a hostage to the point of persecution, implicating the identity of the hostage who substitutes himself for the others: all this is the self.[290]

This way of expressing the situation suggests an immanent self, but, on the other hand, Levinas can describe the situation of the self in a transcendent way that places the self outside normal time and space, as when he argues that

> The human subject – me – called on the brink of tears and laughter to responsibility, is not an avatar of nature or a moment of the concept, or an articulation of "being's presence to us" or parousia. It is not a question of assuring the ontological dignity of man, as though essence sufficed for dignity, but of contesting the philosophical privilege of being, of inquiring after what is beyond and on its hither side.[291]

Perhaps there is an unresolvable tension here in Levinas' presentation that he was unaware of or content to live with. On the other hand, it may be that Levinas felt that he could only convey the larger than life reality of the human being by the kind of paradox that reflects, but does not capture, the God-like freedom and dignity that every person possesses.

---

[290] *Ibid.*, p.15.
[291] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Levinas' attitude to the human person is heavily individualistic in that he locates the point of self-discovery strictly in the meeting between two individuals. When Levinas contemplates a three-some he moves onto a different plane where additional factors, such as public laws and community interests, interfere with the intimacy of the face-to-face meeting of two persons. Love without concupiscence occurs only in the exchange that takes place between two, because the demands of the other require the undivided attention of the self that seeks to fulfil that law. Levinas does attempt to address the larger issues of community relations and responsibilities but his ethics of the human person affirms his commitment to the individual person as the primary counter of his purview. Levinas does highlight the social nature of the human person but only insofar as the individual encounters and relates to the singular other.

In describing the ethical nature of the human person in encounter Levinas lays himself open to the charge of overstatement, in describing the neighbour's demand as an absolute obligation, an exigency beyond equity, "an accusation preceding the fault, borne against oneself despite one's innocence",[292] as something that makes me responsible for what took place before I was born. Substitution means for Levinas that I offer myself in the place of my neighbour, in order to atone through my suffering, for and with him. The Golden Rule of Jesus urges each one of us to treat our neighbour's situation as we would our own, in the way of acting to meet the actual needs of his situation. But Levinas approaches the issue of the duty of care for neighbour in a redemptive way by suggesting that by entering into the sufferings and moral faults of my neighbour I can atone for them. But is substitution in this sense a moral principle at all for

---

[292] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

139

ordinary human beings? Is substitution in this sense not a burden beyond the limits of moral character? Is it ethical to call anyone to account for the crimes of another?[293] Levinas' interest in the other amounts to an obsession that carries him beyond the limits of what is reasonable and just in the way of ethical obligation.[294]

Levinas favours spatial terms and metaphors for representing human nature but he does attribute temporal existence to the human self through the embodied existence and meeting of another self. For example, he declares that ". . . in the prehistory" of the ego posited for itself speaks a responsibility. The self is through and through a hostage, older than the ego, prior to principles."[295] Levinas wants to free the self from the categories of substance philosophy which are spatio-temporal in nature, but he has difficulty doing this whenever he argues for the primacy (itself a time order idea) of the self over the ego and all formal principles. The self is primordial in being intrinsically conditioned to alterity and responsibility for the other, but if this is so then Levinas infers a real and permanent existence of the self, despite his transcendence language. If responsibility for the other is endemic to the self, and precedes any action on behalf of the other, then the self must already exist in itself and be in possession of a kind of infra-structure of its own. This is confirmed in that Levinas repeatedly describes this responsibility, not as a deliberate choice but as a word of command that emerges autonomously from within the self. Here

---

[293] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, # 45. 2, using the same encounter phenomenology as Levinas acknowledges the obligation of mutual assistance between the I and the Thou but refuses to make them interchangeable in any absolute sense, otherwise the other makes claims and entertains expectations that God alone can fulfil.

[294] When asked about this in *Entre Nous* (p. 203) Levinas agreed that the ethical *I* being made responsible to everyone for everything was neither agreeable nor pleasant but it was good in an ultimate value and unassailable sense. He conceded that this view was derisible in advanced society.

[295] Levinas, *Otherwise*, p. 117.

the self takes on the quality of "passivity" before the more ultimate reality of the ineffable and indefinable.[296]

Above all, the human person in the view of Levinas is a relational self that belongs irreducibly to a transcendent order that is ineffable and indefinable. Levinas does not explain where this qualitative order derives from or what it amounts to. Levinas admits that he has borrowed the traditional language of religion at this point (e.g. ineffable, holiness, infinite) but chooses to empty it of religious significance. Nevertheless, the symbolical nature of religious language does expose Levinas' theory of the human person to the scrutiny that a larger metaphysics might bring to it. By refusing the categories of traditional metaphysics Levinas runs the risk of failing to be able to account adequately for the elements in his overall construction that lack rational verifiability. It may be, after all, that traditional metaphysics of the Aristotelian-Thomistic kind, provide a more substantial grounding for a belief in and commitment to the truth of the human person, both at the level of ontology and of ethics.

Levinas' theory of the human person shows both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of his presentation would be his passionate defence of the individual person as being the most precious entity for moral consideration; his belief in the relational nature of the individual person as the key to the meaning of the human being; his affirmation of a quality of transcendence in the human person that is experienced in the moment of facial encounter, that sets the human person apart in an ontological way; his advocacy of an ethics of the human person that will promote and defend the rights of individual persons in a hostile world; his demand for neighbour love that lies at the heart of his ethical philosophy. The weaknesses of Levinas'

---

[296] Some of the above is taken from *Otherwise than Being*, pp. 109 – 113.

141

construction appear in the absence of a rational metaphysics that would ground a conception of the human person as a substantial entity in any sense; his failure to incorporate into his theory the relationality of the human person that goes beyond the limits of two individuals.

Conclusions to Chapter 3

The above four philosophers, from across the history of western thought on the subject of the human person, have provided a miscellany of views and methods for reducing the enigma of the human person. Not unexpectedly, each one has his own strengths and weaknesses. No one of the four establishes a complete case for his particular view, particularly when the criteria of chapters one and two are brought to bear. From these chapters we concluded that the human being belongs to a larger order of being than his physical one, and that the human being is ordered to a natural, moral law. But, although the four philosophers differ and none establishes a complete case, this does not mean that they are to be evaluated all on the same level. Considered one by one the following observations may be in order.

Negatively, David Hume illustrates the limits and difficulties that belong to a purely empirical analysis of the human person, and positively points up the need for a larger frame of reference from which to consider the human person. His continued scepticism leaves us in an unsatisfactory position. Emmanuel Levinas, while rightly affirming the relational and moral nature of the individual human being, fails to make a coherent case for believing in the actual ontological existence of the human person. This lacuna results from his revised interpretation of traditional metaphysics with the result that his field of vision has been narrowed in an irremediable way. Aristotle succeeds in integrating the human person as informed or ensouled matter,

and views the human being within the larger field of being in general, but his treatment lacks the personalism that the actual human being deserves. This came about because of Aristotle's non-personal theory of being in general.

Thomas Aquinas combines the ontology of the human person as a substantial entity, with a belief in the personal essence of the human being. He achieves this synthesis through matching a rational metaphysics with a Christian worldview and, in doing so, provides the most adequate account of the human person among the four perspectives. Aquinas' presentation of the human person as an actual entity, possessing intelligence and freedom, and comprising more than material presence, squares with human intuition and experience by which people know themselves as individual agents who reason things out and make decisions for which they are responsible. Aquinas' view also does justice to the biblical account of human creation where human beings share in the personal life of God, are responsible agents of the Creator, and are created and sustained by his Spirit in an upward direction. Aquinas' view further provides a strong defence against all forms of reductionism that claim that the human person can be wholly accounted for by biological and quantifiable methods.

Having tested the philosophical possibilities for understanding the human person we have concluded that a reasonable case can be made for believing in the human person as a real existent with relational propensities upwards to God and horizontally to other human beings. Modern biotechnology has opened up in unimagined ways detailed knowledge of how human life begins and develops in the womb or in the laboratory. Assuming the truth of our conclusion about the actual existence of the individual human person this advance in biological and genetic knowledge thrusts to the fore the

question when the human person comes into existence. Being able to answer this question is an urgent matter since ethical issues attach to it that affect the handling of human embryos during the first days of their existence. The last chapter of the thesis will try to resolve this final question about the human person and bring closure to the study.

4. The Genesis of the Human Person

At the start of the thesis we posed the problem of the human person after which the first chapter of the thesis considered the biblical witness to the truth of the human person within the framework of creation in the image of God. In chapter two we reflected on natural law theory that centres on the human person as the unifying human good, a theory that confirms the biblical truth of humanity. In chapter three we examined critically a number of philosophical anthropologies, with a view to testing the religious view of the human person by rational arguments. In this final chapter we round off our study by addressing the question of the origin of the human person in the light of scientific evidence and metaphysical argument.

In doing this we will start from farthest out and work inwards to the view of human personhood that coincides with the whole human being from conception onwards. First there are those who equate the human person with certain capacities or qualities such as sentience or self-consciousness. Those who have not developed these properties, or lost them, are less than full persons, that is, pre-persons or post-persons. On this view being a person is not the same as being human but something that most people attain in the course of their lives. Secondly, there are those who narrow the gap between being human and being a person by tracing personhood back

to the earliest stages of human life. At some point in pre-natal development (opinions vary about this) the foetus or embryo gains the status of a personal being which brings with it the protection of the law. On this view becoming a person only happens gradually or at least at some stage later than conception. Thirdly, there are those who equate being a member of the human family with being a full human person and hold that everyone is a person from the very beginning of their individual existence at conception and onwards, in normal cases. This is the view that we defend in this chapter.

Since bioethics is an interdisciplinary activity we expect to rely on embryology to provide the scientific information that should help to guide our philosophical reflection. Philosophy takes account of all the empirical data before trying to interpret those facts in relation to their intrinsic meaning and their place within the larger continuum of reality. Only when we have done this philosophical work are we in a position to decide what embryos are and how we should treat them.[297] Scientists themselves admit that scientific knowledge by itself cannot decide the status of the embryo or what obligations we may have towards it.[298] Nevertheless the relevance of biological information for philosophical reasoning is shown in the cases of Aristotle and Aquinas, both of whom argued for delayed animation in the human foetus, because of the primitive embryological explanations

---

[297] Norman Ford, *When Did I Begin? (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 181: "Those who do not favour a metaphysical approach to reality in general tend to draw the line (ie. between science and metaphysics) at the stage of development when the emergence of rationally self-conscious acts enables us to relate to the human individual in a personal way. . . Those who give more importance to a metaphysical approach to reality tend to draw the line much earlier in human development."

[298] Karen Dawson in Singer, Kuhse, Buckle, Dawson & Kasimba (eds.), *Embryo Experimentation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), fails to reckon with the philosophical side of the debate about the moral status of the human embryo when she writes, pp. 43-44: "Arguments in support of fertilisation as the time at which full moral status is acquired either rely solely on features of the fertilisation process, or some of its aspects in combination with an emphasis on the potential of the newly formed entity." In spite of this she does admit that "scientific facts alone cannot provide the answer to the debate on the moral status of the prenate. The final outcome is an ethical judgement". This fails to reckon with the fact that ethical judgements are themselves grounded in philosophical arguments.

available to them in their day.[299]   Modern embryology has greatly

increased our knowledge by giving detailed and reliable information about

the developing embryo once syngamy (the fusion of the two pronuclei of

the male and female gametes) has taken place. A sound theory of the

origin of human, personal life will not logically conflict with this

information of embryology.

4.1 The functional/properties view of the human person

The Enlightenment philosopher John Locke was the one who most clearly

defined the human person in terms of certain capacities that a human being

might possess. He contends that a person stands for "a thinking intelligent

being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the

same thinking thing, in different times and places".[300] Further on he

elaborates this by saying that it is consciousness of oneself that is essential

to being a person because in all our thinking we are conscious of ourself as

the subject of all our actions – "in this alone consists personal identity, i.e.

the sameness of a rational being".[301]

Later writers such as Joseph Fletcher developed the lead given by Locke to

expand on the prerequisites for personhood. Fletcher listed fifteen positive

and five negative qualities in his inventory of humanness.[302] Fletcher

---

[299] This has to be qualified in the case of Aquinas who argued that for Jesus Christ ontological existence as a human individual began at conception (*Summa Theologica,* III. Q.33, art. 2) as the Church has ever afterwards confessed in the Creed, "I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary". Theologically this is a significant exception in the reasoning of Aquinas since Jesus figures in Redemption as our human Representative who recapitulates our human existence at every stage. The logic of the Incarnation, commencing as it did with the human conception of the Son of God, is a strong theological argument for the same starting-point in the case of every other human being.
[300] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: Collins, 1975), p. 211.
[301] *Ibid.*, p. 212.
[302] Joseph Fletcher, *Morals and Medicine* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), ch. 1. The qualities are: minimal intelligence, self-awareness, self-control, a sense of time, a sense of futurity, a sense of the past, a capacity to relate to others, concern for others, communication, control of existence, curiosity, change and changeability, balance of rationality and feeling, idiosyncrasy, neo-cortical function, not being anti-artificial, not being essentially parental, not being essentially sexual, not being a bundle of rights, not being a worshipper.

distinguishes between being human and being a person, a status that he withholds from certain forms of human life such as the brain-dead or the embryo.[303] "There are, as physicians know so well, some human beings who either will never become, or have ceased to be, persons."[304] More recently Michael Tooley has written from the same functional school of thought.[305] He argues against belief in the personhood of all human beings on the ground that properties like consciousness and sentience should define personhood. He believes that until we have a greater consensus about this moral injustices will follow such as discounting certain higher animals as persons, maintaining at great cost the life of anencephalic infants or attaching some degree of personal status on human embryos, foetuses and new borns. Tooley argues the need for a new moral theory of human personhood in the light of advanced scientific knowledge.

These writers differ in the ways in which they account for and understand the human person but they share a core belief that personhood is not something that belongs intrinsically to every human being. Instead personhood is established by certain psychological, cultural and social properties, with the result that in the absence of these measurable qualities personal status cannot be ascribed. Personal status must be earned or acquired, never assumed. What can be said in critical response to this way of viewing the human person?[306]

First, the arbitrariness of the functional distinction between persons and non-persons is striking. There is no self-evidence to suggest that some human beings may be classified as persons while others are not. There is

---

[303] This distinction is now standard among writers of this kind.
[304] Fletcher, *op cit*., p. 11.
[305] Michael Tooley, "Personhood" in Singer & Kuhse (eds.), *A Companion to Bioethics* (Blackwell, 1998).
[306] See further Ford, *When Did I Begin?,* ch. 3.

even less evidence to support the hypothesis that social aptitude, personal consciousness or some other human trait can be the measure of personhood. Intuitively we hold that personhood is something intrinsic to the human being that an individual can no more lose than his own existence. Personhood is metaphysical in nature and cannot be measured in any kind of scientific way as through sociological, psychological or physical tests. The arbitrariness of the functionalist view of personhood is a major flaw in the theory.

Secondly, such a view of the person removes the element of mystery and wonder from the human being that is the starting point of a metaphysical philosophy. The functionalist view is a reductionist and clinical one that depends on the quantifying methods of the physical sciences more than the total reality of the human being. The result is a thin view of the human person. A deeper view of the human person is required, one that includes the knowledge we get from the humanities, for example, one that measures her by the totality of the thing itself rather than by its capabilities. The very term "personhood" suggests the clinical nature of the modern discussion about the human being. "Personhood" can then be compared to citizenship of a country or membership in a club, something that an individual may or may not possess, can obtain or give up, depending on circumstances or the decision-making of others.

Thirdly, the functionalist view runs counter to intuition on the subject since most people instinctively hold that a person's life is a single entity in spite of being made up of many and conflicting episodes. Even the empiricist David Hume recognised the fact, without being able to explain it, that human beings naturally unify their conscious experiences around a self that they believe remains the same throughout a person's lifetime. There is

148

something practically and logically convincing about this assumption of a non-empirical self that empowers us to make sense of our experiences by unifying them around a subject self.[307]

Fourthly, the reductionist view of the person opens the door to such anti-social practices as embryo experimentation at the beginning of life and euthanasia at its end. Where these practices gain legal protection, as has happened in some countries, then the most vulnerable persons in our societies become exposed to abuse, pain and death itself all because of a reduced view of the person becoming prevalent and culturally respectable. The question of the moral status of the human embryo that rests in turn on the question of its ontological genesis, is one that produces consequences that literally can be matters of life or death.

Fifthly, those philosophers who advocate a functionalist understanding of what constitutes a person disagree among themselves about the particular qualities that are essential for personhood. Obviously there is a great difference here between John Locke's view of the person which virtually reduces to the possession of self-consciousness and that of Joseph Fletcher who numbers up to twenty characteristics that can identify the presence of a person. Philosophers of this school admit that this disagreement is a weakness in attempting to make out a case for the human person.[308]

---

[307] Ford, *When Did I Begin?*, p. 66: "The average citizen, no less than the philosopher, can recognize and identify a human individual, a human person. Any acceptable definition of a human person must accord with the common-sense understanding of ordinary people. . . The illiterate and the erudite are all equally human and all are aware of this fact."

[308] Tooley, *op. cit*., p. 11: "A second controversial issue concerns the boundaries of personhood. For while there is widespread agreement that certain combinations of psychological properties – such as those that one finds in normal adult members of our own species – suffice to make something a person, there is considerable disagreement among philosophers both concerning which of those properties are the morally significant ones, and concerning which properties constitute a *minimum* basis for personhood."

Sixthly, the functionalist view blurs the distinctions between human persons and animals by relativising what constitutes a person and where the boundaries lie. These philosophers argue that there are degrees of personhood, or that acquiring personhood is a process. The consequence of this is that not all human beings will have the same moral status, and higher animals with rudimentary properties of the kind we normally associate with being a person will come into the class of persons, alongside some lower human beings.[309] But all this argument really proves is that some human beings, lacking certain functions, have no more status than animals that show the same functional capabilities. While we should not forget the similarities that exist between human beings and other animals, such as group loyalty or affection for one's offspring, there do exist distinctively human activities like imagining the infinite, creating a culture, and self-reflection, that even impaired human beings can engage in but which lie outside the scope of the highest animals.[310]

Seventhly, there is something inconsistent about claiming that only certain qualities make for a person, but at the same time denying that such an entity as a person can exist in his own right. Felt experiences or ratiocinations of the mind require a personal centre of consciousness and choice to order them into a coherent pattern and turn them to profitable outcomes. We can explain the difference between the two by using a subject-accident distinction borrowed from the Aristotelian tool-kit. Then we can account for sentience or self-identification as accidents of the personal subject, who may lose these powers and traits but remain the same, irreducible self throughout the changes to personal life and

---

[309] Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 191993), ch. 3.
[310] For a thorough list of such distinctively human activities and capabilities that are all connected with the supremely human endowment of intelligence see John Doyle, "Reflections on Persons in Petri Dishes", *The Linacre Quarterly* 64-65 (November, 1997), pp. 63-65.

happiness. On this account, the functionalist theory majors on the accidents which are the subject of change or outright loss, while missing the central subject of all those powers and traits of personality. Unless we can account for the way we respond to objects and events some other way, the positing of a personal self who constitutes the essence of human being, and organises and interprets our experiences into some kind of order and meaning, remains a viable hypothesis. Only on this basis can we learn wisdom and gain happiness as integrated human beings.

Eighthly, the functionalist position is open to the charge of dualism by separating human existence in being from the possession of personhood at some period of one's life, perhaps to lose it again later. This way of viewing things is not so dissimilar to Plato's way of seeing the way the soul was related to the body. Either could exist independently of the other. Their coexistence was more a matter of convenience and chance than a matter of choice and good fortune. Good may come out of the coexistence but it is not the most natural or desirable association of disparate elements. Just as Plato inferred the pre-existence of the soul over matter, functionalist philosophers posit the pre-existence of the material as prior to the emergence of the person.

In conclusion, the functionalist view of the human person may be able to tell us what some of the characteristic qualities and capabilities of human persons are but these qualities do not tell us what the human person is in herself, what the human being is for, or when a person begins. Personhood is something one *is* not something that a person *has* or does not have. Being a person is something more than possessing certain properties whether physical, psychological or social. Functions are powers that

belong to the person but do not belong to what he essentially is.[311] The question of the presence or absence of humanness in, say, a human embryo, is an ontological one that requires metaphysical arguments to resolve it. This is because personhood is a concept that posits the presence of a being that transcends empirical reality.

4.2 Gradualist/delayed animation views of the human person

There are two basic reasons put forward against the personal status of the human embryo. These are that the human embryo is (1) not a human person at all and/or that the human embryo is only (2) a potential or pre-person. In mounting their defence against the full humanity of the embryo philosophers frequently appeal to the possibility of twinning which may take place within the first fourteen days after conception and which, in their view, disproves the personal status of the embryo. We will now devote some time to this objection.

Identical twins are embryos that have virtually the same genetic coding [312] and that derive from the same zygote and can be considered as natural clones of one another. Those who permit embryo experimentation up to or beyond the first fourteen days base their judgement on this phenomenon since the possibility of twinning appears to render impossible the existence of a prior individual human being. Thus Singer argues that "when we have an embryo prior to this point, we cannot be sure if what we are looking at is the precursor of one or two individuals". For this reason he later claims that the belief that individual existence precedes twinning is absurd

---

[311] Tooley, *op. cit.*, p. 11, cites the case of an individual who loses the upper part of the brain, the part we need and use to live a conscious, mental and responsible life, in support of his case for deciding on the presence of a person by the conscious exercise of certain properties or capacities. But the loss of even a crucial part of a person's anatomy does not destroy that individual's personhood, only her ability to express herself or to know herself as a person.
[312] We say "virtually" because twins are never strictly identical but follow their own respective pathways of genetic replication.

speculation that results from confusing a cluster of cells with an individual.[313]

There are two possible explanations of the phenomenon of monozygotic twinning. One is that the original zygote generates another identical or cloned cell that now coexists with it as a brother or sister. In support of this belief we can appeal to other species where reproduction takes place by asexual means such as cloning, as in flatworms, where the original individual continues to exist after generating its double. The same would be true in human cloning if it ever happens. On this explanation the zygote generates an exact copy of itself, its alter ego, at a point in time slightly later than fertilisation. This would mean that for the vast majority of embryos and half of identical twins, individuality begins at fertilisation. Only in the case of a very small minority (the half of identical twins) will individuality have begun later than fertilisation, and then only within a few hours or days of its "parent". But even in that case animation will coincide with the moment of first existence of the twin embryo.[314]

The alternative explanation is that the original zygote generates two new cells in its place thus ceasing to exist itself. However, if the latter case is true then no cellular detritus is visible following this change, a fact that could favour the former explanation of twinning. Even those who do not take the view that fertilisation marks the beginning of personhood nevertheless concede that the former is a valid explanation of individual

---

[313] Singer, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

[314] According to Juan Velez, "Immediate Animation: Thomistic Principles Applied to Norman Ford's Objections" in *Ethics and Medicine* 21, 1 (2005), p. 20, from a religious standpoint, "one should postulate that during twinning a second human soul is created by God. The development of two embryos suggests that two distinct souls have actually begun to exist in successive moments. In twinning there is, in the first place, an individual A with a human soul. Then one or more totipotent cells from this individual separate and form individual B that is animated by another human soul".

origin and is theoretically possible.[315] Those who oppose the belief that the conceptus is already an individual person always opt for the second explanation of the two offered above for the process of twinning, since it presents greater difficulties than the first view for those who believe in immediate animation.

But whichever explanation of the phenomenon of twinning is chosen it does not in itself undermine the argument that an ontological individual has always existed whether twinning takes place or not. Twinning is a biological change and development that does not by itself decide philosophical truths. The argument based on twinning for belief in delayed animation is another version of the functional or capacity view of the human person dealt with above, only in this case the ability or non-ability to produce twins has become the criterion of personhood rather than sentience or self-consciousness. To express this point slightly differently, the fact that the original cell reproduces itself asexually (we are taking the second option about twinning given above) is no argument against the original and continuous existence of the progenitor cells and the individual entity to which they belong, as parallel cases of cloning show.[316]

---

[315] Ford, *When Did I Begin?*, pp. 120-121.

[316] See Nicholas Tonti-Filippini, "A Critical Note" in *The Linacre Quarterly* 56-57 (1989), pp. 42-43, where he examines the three possible ways of cloning a human person and comes to the conclusion (p. 47) that "if that individual who began as that original cell should be capable of forming an identical twin, then that possibility is no more metaphysically significant to its individuality than any individual's ability to parent by sexual or asexual means". For more recent debates about the science and ethics of manipulation of embryos by means of the technique of oocyte assisted reprogramming and altered nuclear cell transfer see William Hurlbut, "Altered Nuclear Transfer as Morally Acceptable Means" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5 / 1 (spring, 2005): 145-151; Paul Hoehner, "Altered Nuclear Transfer: Probing the Nature of Being Human" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5 / 2 (Summer, 2005): 261-269; W. Malcolm Byrnes, "Why Human 'Altered Nuclear Transfer' is unethical" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5 / 2 (summer, 2005): 271-279; Edward Fulton, "A Defence of Oocyte-Assisted Reprogramming" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 4 / 3 (autumn, 2005): 465-468.

Peter Singer introduces the notion of degrees of potentiality into the debate about the early embryo.[317] He supports this from the statistical evidence that the rate of probability of achieving a live birth increases as the embryo moves through the various stages of implantation, foetal development and the last trimester of pregnancy. As part of his argument Singer reaches back to the egg and sperm while they are still separate, yet considers them as a pair. His argument is a purely statistical one that amounts to saying that since the embryo is more likely to perish in its earlier stages, and possesses a greater chance of surviving as time goes on, any talk of it being a person would be better postponed to later stages of the argument. This is the gradualist argument that matches any legal rights of the embryo to its relative development and the sophistication of its human appearance during gestation.[318]

In response we can say that potentiality in an organism such as the embryo may be considered under two different meanings, either a potentiality to become something that in principle an entity already is, and the potentiality to produce something that is a different entity from the thing itself. If we take the first understanding of potentiality and apply it to the early embryo then we may hold that the embryo not only has the potential for personhood but because of this meaning of potentiality should be treated as a person from the beginning of its existence and be granted the full protection of the law. Potentiality in the sense of becoming carries the belief in continuity of being between what a thing is and what it becomes. The reason why the early embryo becomes a recognisable person in the adult sense is due to the

---

[317] Singer, *op. cit.,* pp. 157-162.
[318] For a refutation of the gradualist position see Robert Evans, "The Moral Status of the Embryo" in John Kilner, Paige Cunningham, David Hager (eds.), *The Reproductive Revolution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 60-76.

fact that it already exists as an individual person. The embryo becomes what it is; it cannot become what it is not.

The other meaning of potentiality carries the lesser idea of producing something else. We might distinguish the unfertilised ovum and the sperm before it penetrates the egg, from the zygote or fertilised egg. Singer argues that the difference between these three entities is only one of degree in that they all possess the potential to become a newborn baby, though in varying degrees of likelihood. But there is a category difference here in that the separated ovum and sperm have potential in a different sense from that of the fertilised egg. The latter is an organism with the full potential to develop all the recognisable powers and properties of a mature adult person under normal circumstances where it is allowed to develop naturally without interference. The zygote already possesses within itself the programming to become a fully developed adult human being. The separate egg and sperm have no such potential in themselves since they will always remain what they are unless they are fused naturally or artificially.[319] So long as they remain apart they only have the potential to contribute to the production of a different kind of entity that will possess within itself what they lack – the potential and the actuality of becoming a human person.[320]

In classical philosophy potentiality and act go together as cause and effect. The one cannot exist without the other. Act is the evidence that potentiality is already present and working. In the process of becoming what an

---

[319] In Aristotelian terms they are more like accidents than substances that have the power of subsistence in themselves.

[320] The argument here has been taken from Stephen Buckle, "Arguing from Potential", *Bioethics* 2 (1990), pp. 227 – 253. It is further developed by Evans, *op. cit*., pp. 64 – 65. See also Nicanor Austriaco, "On Static Eggs and Dynamic Embryos: A System Perspective" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 2 / 4 (winter 2002): 659-683.

organism is programmed to be, potentiality will not be fully realised all at once but by stages of growth and diversification. A developing organism continues to be an admixture of potentiality and act. Likewise the early embryo is both in act and in potency as it divides and multiplies from one cell to the multi-cellular blastocyst. Singer's definition of potentiality bears the second sense above of something that may possibly develop. On this understanding possibility is something prior to potentiality and exists and operates independently of act. As a result the growing embryo does not have to be identified with an actual human being or given any individual status at all.

Other writers of a Thomist bent have appealed to Aristotelian principles in defence of their belief in a delay of the animation of the embryo. They may be technically correct, inasmuch as Aristotle and Aquinas did hold to such a view, but the same writers can be shown to be logically inconsistent since both these philosophers also believed that the soul was the animating principle of the body's organisation and that without it the body is dead. According to both philosophers the human being is an embodied substance in which the soul is the form of the body. The reason for this inconsistency was due to the primitive and speculative embryology that Aristotle and Aquinas both worked from. Update the embryology by taking into account, for example, the genetic completeness of the zygote so that it has the potential from day one to become a full adult person, and the form-matter scheme makes a lot of sense of the scientific data.

More particularly Aristotle believed in the gradual animation of the human embryo following an evolutionary curve that began with a vegetative soul that then developed into an animal soul that finally evolved into a human, rational soul. His basis for taking this line of reasoning was his belief that

the fully developed rational soul required a symmetrical amount of matter for its formation in the matter of the bodily mass. Yet Aristotle also believed that the rational soul was the form of the matter of the body, the innate life-principle that caused it to move from potentiality to actuality, that determined from the outset the direction of its natural growth to maturity, that determined its "whatness". This being so, the soul must be required from the outset as the animating and organising principle of the gametes in their first union in fertilisation and in all subsequent cellular divisions to adulthood. The theory of delayed animation introduces a contradiction into this process that evidences a dualistic anthropology that separates the soul and the body and denies their mutual inter-dependency within an organic unity, especially the dependence of the body on the soul.[321]

Continuing along an Aristotelian line of reasoning we could contend that the imputation of soul-ness at a point later in time than fertilisation, as when the embryo develops its biological systems, for example the primitive streak, after two weeks, fails to distinguish substance from accidents in a living entity. Changes of quantity, as in the natural growth of the embryo, or changes of quality, as in the development of faculties, are not the same as substantial change, as when the embryo is first of all generated at fertilisation or when it disintegrates at death. This means that such capabilities as consciousness or communication, whenever they may develop, are secondary to the primary fact of independent subsistence

---

[321] Velez, *op. cit.,* p. 19. Ironically Norman Ford brings this charge of dualism against those who believe ensoulment coincides with fertilisation since, on his interpretation of this event, the soul already exists independently of the body it enters. But this objection can be overcome if we imagine the soul merging with the gametes in syngamy and so informing the embryo from the very beginning of its existence as a single cell, as Velez argues, p. 21.

which grounds all the subsequent acts and powers of the developing embryo.[322]

A more consistent ontology would argue that the soul informs the body of the zygote from syngamy, that the zygote owes its initial movements and all subsequent growth to the soul that already informs it and acts from within it.[323] A double premise is at work here, one being that it is a soul that animates and directs matter in a teleological way to realise its natural potential since matter by itself cannot achieve this end. The other premise consists in the belief that just as the body requires the soul for its animation so the soul requires matter for its own functionality in realising its proper end as the inner principle of life in organisms.[324] The soul is not a separate species but subsists only in the body. Consequently the language of "ensoulment" itself may be prejudicial and misleading because it implies an already existing soul that then intrudes on the body of matter as an extraneous force.

Norman Ford identifies the appearance of the primitive streak during the second week after fertilisation as the demarcation point before which there is no soul and after which a person exists. His reasoning for this is that a

---

[322] Thomas Nelson, "Is the Human Zygote a Person?", *The Linacre Quarterly* 72, 4 (2005), p. 282: "Substance is the stable ground upon which accidental change occurs." The substance/accident distinction helps to answer some of the difficult cases of genetic abnormalities such as triploidy or Down Syndrome although the case of transgenic animals or hybrids raises more complex issues here (as in Dawson, *op. cit*., pp. 44-46).

[323] There is something of an analogy from Christology here in relation to the human nature of Christ in the Incarnation. The human nature of Christ never existed independently of the Divine Person who adopted it as the Man Jesus Christ. At conception the human zygote that was Jesus already inhered in the Divine Person of the Son of God. The human nature of Christ was never im-personal but always in-personal in nature. In the same way the human embryo is never un-souled but always in-souled in its being.
There is a further observation made by some that all the arguments advanced in support of the presence of soul from syngamy onwards, may also apply during the process that precedes syngamy from the time one sperm successfully penetrates the ovum.

[324] So Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I. Q.90. art. 4: "Now the soul, as a part of human nature, has its natural perfection only as united to the body. Therefore it would have been unfitting for the soul to be created without the body."

living body with some identifiable features is required for the reception of a human form.[325] In doing so he is following Aristotle again who believed that a rational soul as distinct from a vegetative or sentient soul needed proportionate matter before it could inhere. But in response it can be argued that our knowledge of modern genetics helps us to believe that the zygote is sufficiently equipped with its 46 chromosomes to play the part of proportionate matter without further delay. Further, the appearance of the primitive streak is inexplicable without taking into account the previous period of embryonic formation during the first week or more of development. The embryo's genetic continuum relativises all later demarcation lines like the primitive streak. Why should not the previous stage of the formation of the bilaminar disc, and before that the formation of the blastocyst, be just as decidedly the dividing line between pre-personal and personal existence? We have already shown how arbitrary is the fourteen days argument in relation to the possibility of twinning. The fact is there is no obvious dividing line of a "before" and "after" for the infusion of personal identity. Fertilisation itself, when a new genotype appears, constitutes the most logical point for arguing for the beginning of individual personal life.[326]

It might be thought that the unique genetic makeup (genome) of the embryo argues for its individuality as a human person from the beginning. But the fact that monozygotic twins are virtually genetically identical and yet constitute two separate individuals disproves that assumption. This means that genetic identity cannot be the same as ontological identity. But

---

[325] Ford, *When Did I Begin?*, pp. 170-177.
[326] So L.G. German, "The Beginning of Human Life", *The Linacre Quarterly* 64-65 (May, 1997), pp. 94-95. This is perhaps the place to mention the unusual occurrence of hydatidiform moles, whether partial or complete, as a potential argument against the view of fertilisation being advanced in the thesis above. In these cases fertilisation is so malformed that it can be said not to have occurred viably at all. See further Nicanor Austiaco, "Are Teratomas Embryos or Non-embryos?" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5 / 4 (winter, 2005): 697-706.

it does not follow that a human being, possessing a human genome, is not a person. After all, "the genome of the embryo is a significant part of the internal organisation which ensures that it will normally develop towards a human adult".[327] If the capacity for organisation is taken as a criterion of personhood then the early embryo is a candidate for this status. Philosophically, even identical twins are separate entities living in separate bodies and so cannot be metaphysically identical in the same way that they might be considered genomically identical. In this case the philosophical argument does not rest squarely on the science, nor does it need to.

Basically, as in other things, Aquinas adopted and taught Aristotle's view that animation does not and cannot take place immediately but must be delayed. His reasons for this position were due to his fundamental belief that the human soul requires a sufficient quantity and quality of matter for it to infuse. This is not available immediately because of the primitive state of the first matter of the embryo so a graded series of souls occurs, first the vegetative (as in plants) corresponding to the earliest period of embryological formation; this is followed by a sensitive soul (as in animals) that makes way for the rational soul that distinguishes the *human* embryo which has now become a foetus at 40 days for a male and 90 days for a female. In this theory the state and stage of the soul is proportional to the state and development of the embryo.

This was a primitive embryology lacking reliable information about the embryo in its initial stages that modern embryology has provided us with. This changes everything because we know that the zygote is already in a state of actuality by which it promotes and effects its own cellular growth

---

[327] Anthony Fisher, "Individuogenesis and a Recent Book by Fr. Norman Ford", *Anthropotes* 7, 2 (1991), p. 222.

from day one. Yet Aquinas held that there is a soul present from fertilisation, the vegetative one. He also believed that it was the actualising power of the male semen that was active from the outset in generating both the vegetative and the sensitive souls. Yet Aquinas' physiological explanation lacks symmetry when he holds, not that the intellectual soul evolves from the first two, but that it is created by God *ex nihilo*. Since on Aquinas' view the rational soul contains the vegetative and the sensitive souls within it, there seems no logical reason why the rational soul should not be created by God from the beginning of the biological existence of the embryo. Biologically the embryo is differentiated from the beginning of its existence from the egg and the sperm that have united to produce it, the gametes disappearing in the formation of this new entity. From the beginning the embryo instigates and directs its own development through a series of cell divisions, thereby displaying its own genius for development from within rather than without. It is this autonomous drive from within that points to the presence of a rational soul as the organising principle of the embryo and its first principle.

This is not to conclude that everything in Aquinas' account of animation is to be discarded in the light of modern scientific knowledge of the embryo and its early development. On the contrary, the philosophical premises of Aquinas' theory such as his belief in the metaphysical nature of the human soul, its hylomorphic duality, and the potency-actuality scheme still offer a viable way of reading the scientific evidence.[328] Aquinas admits that the embryo has vital functions that are visible and that these come from the soul, only for him this is the initial form of the soul as nutritional. But the principle is conceded that if the embryo is to live and move at all it must be

---

[328] So Velez, *op. cit.,* p. 13. See also the work of such writers as Stephen Heaney, John Haldane, Benedict Ashley, Albert Moraczewski, Patrick Lee and Anthony Fisher.

animated by a soul informed in it. There is no logical reason from the beginning why this could not be the intellectual soul once we overcome Aquinas' objections based on the state of the body needing to match the state of the soul.[329]

4.3 Views of the human person as synonymous with the human being

The view argued for here is the realist one that we become the persons that we are in adulthood because we are those persons already at the zygotic stage of our existence, when our individuality begins.[330] That means that the human embryo already possesses the status of a person though not yet displaying the powers of a person.

An argument from the social context of the coming into being of the embryo

We have already argued for the relational quality of the human person in earlier chapters of this thesis, particularly those dealing with creation and natural law. The philosophical ethics of Emmanuel Levinas in a special way focussed on the relational underpinnings of ethics whereby the face of the other person confronts me with an absolute demand for compassion and suffering towards her as a person like me and equal to me. We may now expand on this approach by drawing attention to a number of relational and personal aspects of the human embryo from the very beginnings of its existence in the world.

The very existence of a human embryo is due to inter-personal factors through the sexual love of male and female persons in marriage. Since sexual intercourse entails the man and the woman committing themselves

---

[329] Aquinas, *op. cit.*, I. Q. 118, art. 2.
[330] Teresa Iglesias, "What kind of being is the human embryo", *Ethics and Medicine* 2, 1 (1986), pp. 2-7; Nicanor Austiaco, "Immediate Hominisation from the Systems Perspective" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 4 / 4 (winter, 2004): 719-738.

to one another in an act of mutual love and self-giving the act of intercourse that is intentionally open to conceiving children is more than a biological one. It is an act of social intercourse of the most intimate and enduring kind since it gives expression to our innate need for and tendency to personal acts of love. The sexual act of conjugal love is a thoroughly personal one that expresses the most profound *communio personarum* through bodily contact and union.[331] It is the wonder of conjugal love between a man and a woman that they have the privilege and power to concreate another of their own kind, that is, another human person made in their human likeness, not only in genetic or bodily terms but in their wholeness as persons. On the principle that like begets like we may fairly conclude that the product of their mutual loving act is not a thing but a person, another of themselves, though unique in his/her individuality; persons beget persons.

As persons we express ourselves in both active and passive ways. The assumption of reductionist definitions of the human person is that unless we are capable of expressing ourselves actively through such activities as self-recognition over a period of time or through social inter-action with other people, we do not measure up to the requirements of personhood.[332] However, there is an assumption here that the genuine person will always express himself pro-actively in noticeable ways. But we are no less persons when we respond in passive ways to circumstances or to other people despite the absence of visible signs of active life. This can happen, for example, whenever we listen carefully to the counsels or conversation

---

[331] For more on this see William May, "What is a Human Person and Who Counts as a Human Person? A Crucial Question or Bioethics", with further references and arguments, at http//www.christendom-awake.org.

[332] This view is based on the philosophy of John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, (London: Fontana, 1975), p. 211, where he defines the human person as "a thinking intelligent being, has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places".

of another person or when we entrust ourselves into the hands of other people who will operate on us in some medical procedure, even to the extent of allowing ourselves to be anesthetised. The early human embryo shows the same two-fold responsiveness to circumstances by being in a state of total dependence on the care and protection of other persons on the one hand, but being active in a regulated way through its mitotic divisions into a more and more complex organism, on the other.[333]

This leads to the further observation that from virtually the beginning of its independent existence the human embryo engages in a kind of "dialogue" with its environment in the womb of the mother from whom it derives nourishment and protection throughout its gestational growth. Like every dialogue the communication is two-way but it is initiated by the embryo. Even before implantation occurs (within the first seven days after fertilisation)[334] the embryo has already begun to send out signals to its mother host in the form of hormonal changes that help the host womb to prepare for the implantation of the embryo in the uterine wall with all the mutual exchanges that event will set up for the nine month journey from embryo to newborn baby. This communication at the very earliest stages of embryonic development and at a basically biological level[335] can yet be understood as the opening of the conversation of inter-personal communication that will one day unite mother and child in the full exchanges of family life together.[336] At least, this explanation is most

---

[333] I owe this line of reasoning to John Ozolins, Head of the School of Philosophy, ACU, in private discussion.

[334] See Ford, *When Did I Begin?*, Appendix I.

[335] The application of the idea of "conversation" or "dialogue" to biological processes is nothing new. Modern genetics has brought to light the four letter code or alphabet that spells out the orders for producing or reproducing the enzymes and other proteins which become the building-blocks of the human body. Scientists also speak of messages and messengers as part of this same scenario of meaningful communication. We can view the single cell as a virtual centre of directive intelligence.

[336] Bernard Haring, *Free and Faithful in Christ*, volume 3 (Homebush: St Paul Publications, 1981), p. 7: "Thus, on this level, there is already a dialogical principle expressed in an increasingly miraculous communication between mother and child."

agreeable with the view that the growth of the embryo from the beginning is due to the actualising presence of the *anima* or soul principle.

An argument from Due Respect

Even those who reject the arguments for and the evidence put forward in support of the belief in the immediate animation for the fertilised egg, in many cases recognise that the early embryo is worthy of a certain respect. These people will argue that as the embryo grows and develops human-like features in its journey through the womb so our response to it should increase by way of respect, and the allocation of proportionate legal protection and rights. The point of agreement here is that respect of a certain degree is deserved by the human embryo, even although this may fall short of the full rights of an adult person. Now respect is something that we show to persons not things, so in using the language of respect these people tacitly concede what they officially deny, that the embryo is more than a clump of cells or mere tissue, that it does possess a persona as well as human status. The gradualist argument is vulnerable here for two reasons. First, it ties its reasoning too closely to the physical appearance and development of the foetus, and secondly, it confers personhood in an arbitrary way.

We would further argue that personhood is not something that can be portioned out, as if there could be degrees of personhood. Personal relationship is established at conception since each conceptus is the fruit and child (son or daughter) of a particular couple, even when conception takes place in vitro. Relationship constitutes and confirms personhood; so while there can be degrees of feeling or difference within the relationship, there can be none in relation to personhood. Therefore, an embryo cannot be both a non-person and a person, both an object and a subject, at the same

time. It can be more or less loved but it cannot be more or less a person.
Either a being is a person or not a person, the possession of personal
qualities or capacities simply arguing that a person is already present, as the
bearer of those properties and powers.

An argument from the internal unity of the embryo
The fact that the human embryo from the very beginning displays a
tendency to divide and diversify into a full human being, and no other kind
of being, argues for its possession from the beginning of a human nature
that causes it to unfold and diversify in this particular way. Further, the
human embryo is not able to develop into any other form of being than a
human being, unless through the artificial injection of matter from another
species. Failing this it will develop and display all the characteristic
activities and properties of a normal human person. In order to achieve this
grand outcome of becoming a full adult person the embryo must logically
possess the nature of the person that it will become. It is no argument
against this belief that the embryo does not immediately display all those
capabilities, organs and properties that are typical of human nature. The
human nature of the embryo remains until its bodily organs develop
sufficiently for it to express itself in more recognisable and personal
ways.[337]

We have said that the question of the status of the embryo can ultimately
only be arrived at by philosophical reflection and not by learning the facts
of science alone. Yet that philosophical reflection may not be conducted
aside from the scientific evidence given the form and matter scheme of

[337] The reasoning here corresponds to Aristotle's causation thinking whereby the final cause is always
present from the first, supervening the existence and development of an organism to maturity. The other
causes (formal, material, efficient) are all subject to the final cause which controls developments from the
beginning. In our argument we have substituted human nature for final cause to reach a similar
conclusion.

being whereby the material object (body) is determined from the beginning by the formal cause (soul) within it. This makes for a unitary view of the human being and avoids the disjunctions of a dualistic model of human nature that would allow for a succession of souls or a later animation of the embryo. A hylomorphic view, however, explains the act of mitosis in the embryo and its clear organisation for developed growth, by the presence of an internal principle of life that guides the embryo from the earliest period. On this reasoning the notion of "an active potentiality for personhood" [338] on the part of the embryo is self-contradictory because the activity of the embryo is the sure sign of its being a person. Only a personal principle of life can activate the embryo through its highly organised stages of development. On the principle of Ockham's Razor [339] this is a tidier explanation of the evidence than its dualistic rival which requires more steps to arrive at the same conclusion, and so this interpretation deserves to be chosen ahead of its rival theory.

If the embryo was to develop into a set of cells that were all independent of one another rather than interactive, as they are, a theory of origin that posits the internal unity of the embryo as a human individual, would appear to be in jeopardy from the scientific evidence. Conversely, when Singer calls the early embryo a clump of cells and nothing in the way of human identity he ignores the tidy organisation and inner directionality of the early embryo. In doing so he naturally fails to draw a proportionate philosophical conclusion about the embryo. The scientific evidence suggests a hidden

---

[338] So Tooley, *op. cit.*, p.122. Tooley goes on to admit the cogency of the argument that a significant moral change has taken place when the ovum and the sperm unite if a person is present from the beginning of life. For him syngamy is a "purely physical change".
[339] Ockham's Razor stands for the logical principle – it is pointless to do with more what can be done with less.

logos that directs the whole operation from embryo to blastocyst, to primitive streak and beyond.[340]

Likewise, Tooley argues [341] that there is no real difference between the passive potentiality for personhood of the separate ovum and sperm, and the active potentiality of the fertilised egg, on the ground that in neither case do we have a fully active potentiality. He means by this that all three cells require a friendly environment to survive and become anything at all. But in all this Tooley ignores the independent, self-generating activity of the zygote that initiates its own division as well as its own implantation when it stimulates the host womb to reciprocate chemically with it. None of these are acts that either of the gametes will ever attempt or achieve. Because of the different moral status of the gametes and the zygote destroying gametes is not the same morally as destroying zygotes.

The different prospects or potential for personhood on the part of separated eggs and sperm on the one hand, and a fertilised egg on the other, are instructive for demonstrating the special status of the embryo. All three are single cells but the natural condition of the gametes is a negative one because they separately require an external force to act upon them, in this case the sexual act between a man and a woman in marriage, for them to gain the status of a living organism. The fertilised egg, however, is in a positive condition because only a deliberate act of intervention from outside itself will stop it becoming a full grown human being. Not only does the zygote possess the potential to become the individual person that it is, it actualises that potential from the time of conception onwards through

---

[340] In Christian belief this hidden principle is the soul created by God and animated into the embryo at some moment during conception; in classical philosophy this hidden principle is the form that resides in the matter and actualises its potential for diversified development.
[341] Tooley, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.

a process of increasing diversification by multiple cell divisions that will eventually result in a fully functional baby and adult person.

An argument from the embryological development of the zygote
Scientifically, does the development of the one-cell zygotic embryo from the totipotent two-cell stage to multi-cell pluripotency at the blastocyst stage, not suggest that already the creation of a single organism has begun? The blastocyst stage (eight cells after three days) represents the beginning of specialisation whereby the cells that form the inner mass of the blastocyst develop into the various tissues and organs of the new human being such as the bilaminar disc and so help achieve implantation itself. Specialisation begins to take place within four days of fertilisation when mitotic cleavage proceeds on an ever increasing scale. This process is a programmed one from within the embryo that leads naturally to ever increasing specialisation and finally the new-born baby and the fully developed adult. We know that the DNA determines the steady production of the various cells, chemicals and organs that make up the embryo and foetus during their progressive life-cycle. This process is a unitary one in which each cell cooperates with all the others in a singular show of organised life moving towards a coordinated goal of ever-increasing complexity and maturity. By this internal organisation the embryo demonstrates its individuality as an independent organism from conception onwards.

The scientific evidence is compatible with a teleological interpretation that concludes that first, there is an end towards which the embryo is already moving from the beginning, and secondly, that the embryo already knows

what that end is towards which it is moving.[342] Causation-wise the final cause is always first in logical order, though realised last in the natural order of events. The embryo will, under normal conditions, always become biologically what it already is metaphysically since, unlike Aristotle, we do not believe in the evolution of the soul and, further, a fully-developed soul is necessary for the gradual unfolding of the bodily self. Thus the zygote may already be considered a human person, despite its outward appearance as a single cell. The biological stages of the embryo's development and growth towards maturity do not have to match its ontological status which we consider to be present from the outset. The embryo's clear pathway of self-directed development carries a certain trace of its deeper mystery as an individual person.[343]

An argument from totipotency

During the first few days of embryonic development the embryo divides itself into a cluster of totipotent cells or blastomeres, about twelve in number, at which point it becomes a blastocyst and looks to implant in the mother's womb wall. Since these earliest embryonic stem cells are all totipotent this has been used by Singer, for example, [344] to argue against a single individual present from day one of fertilisation. If each of these cells has the potential to become an adult person how can we say that together they form one individual? Do we not, in fact, have potentially twelve individuals present?

---

[342] Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 228 observes: "the "purposive, goal-directed or teleological" character of the activities of the embryo . . . suggests an organisational integrity sufficient for individual life according to an organisation-teleology criterion". And at p.229 he remarks: "the organisational integrity that we find in the embryo coheres well with the view that there is a single human soul present from conception".
[343] We are using "trace" here in the way Augustine and Aquinas use it when they speak of the image of God in man as residing strictly in the human mind yet showing a certain trace in the rest of the human being or, again, the way the irrational creation carries a trace of the divine glory and image without reflecting it directly (*Summa Theologica* I. Q. 93, art. 6).
[344] Peter Singer in Helga Kuhse (ed.), *Unsanctifying Human Life* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2002), p. 190.

But this line or argument assumes that all the cells are the same and able to achieve the same results, a belief that is refuted by the latest research that reveals that, although the cells of the blastocyst are all totipotent, they have already begun to specialise, and so are not the same but require one another. [345] But if the blastomeres are to separate they must be artificially teased apart since their natural tendency leads them to "change their shape and tightly align themselves against each other to form a compact ball of cells." [346] This suggests that instead of being in each case a real individual they constitute individually a single part of the whole embryo that is in process of mitotic development. Should one of the blastomeres be teased apart and placed in an appropriate culture then possibly it could be treated as a zygote and expected to grow incrementally following the usual pathway of cell division. But even if that were the case it would in no way disprove the existence of a real, distinct individual present in the original cluster of cells, who holds them together in a unitary way.

An argument from the difference between Person and Personality

A person is what we are; personality is how we express our personhood. A person has personality and expresses it by thinking, speaking, choosing and relating. The fact that an embryo cannot perform these acts in an adult and public way does not mean that the embryo is not a person only that the power to express personhood is still lacking. Those who define personhood in terms of human capacities, such as self-consciousness or social interactive behaviour, are confusing the two by equating a human being who is a person with the personality of that person, which he/she may or may not be able to express concretely. So if we define a person as a

---

[345] See the earlier discussion about the possibility of asexual reproduction at this stage.

[346] K. Moore, *The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology* (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1982), p. 2.

free, moral agent who is self-conscious we automatically exclude certain members of the human family including embryos. In addition, we have arrogated to ourselves in an elitist way the power of bestowing or withholding personal status on some members of the human family who belong equally with us to that family. It might, on the contrary, be argued that just because human embryos lack the full power to express their personality they are owed the greater protection of the law and a greater debt of love from the other family members as moral agents.[347]

Conclusion

This chapter has interacted between the scientific evidence about the beginnings of the human embryo and the ontology of the embryo. It was argued that the scientific evidence is harmonious with the belief that the embryo possesses individual personal being from conception and should be given full legal protection of a person as a result. Alternative views of the human embryo were examined and found to be less cogent in the light of the scientific evidence and philosophical reasoning. Belief in delayed or gradual hominisation was held to be arbitrary, whatever the point at which this development was held to take place.

Only an ontology of the human being will provide the solid foundation on which to base a theory of intrinsic value of the human person and therefore of the value of its existence at every stage. The various schools of naturalism that equate the human being with its physical development or social or psychological functions and capabilities are reductionist in their

---

[347] Benedict Ashley & Kevin O'Rourke, *Healthcare Ethics* (St. Louis: The Catholic Health Association of the United States, 1989), p. 5: "According to our ordinary use of language, to be a human person does not require that here and now one is functioning as an intelligent, free, moral agent, but to have that *innate* power to develop such capacities and to exercise them more or less effectively under favorable and appropriate conditions. We are actually persons, in the sense of having human rights, even when we are not actually, buy only potentially, moral agents."

evaluation and do not protect all human beings under the law. This is because these theories find the value of the human being in something other than the human being itself. This other source of personal value is one or another aspect of the human being such as sentience or consciousness. But in selecting one such quality advocates for this approach are denying the intrinsic moral status of the human person per se and arguing instead that what possesses intrinsic value is sentience or consciousness. The approach of these advocates is pragmatic in being based on functional criteria for establishing who is and who is not a moral and legal person. What is needed is a metaphysical belief in the human being in her totality rather than in some of her parts.

Differences of opinion about the moral status of the embryo carry within them all sorts of ethical and practical consequences that decide public policy and so the destiny of future human beings. Although the issue of the genesis of the human embryo may seem to some either unanswerable or irrelevant it is the natural starting point for all practical purposes. Unless we have some understanding of what the embryo is we will never be in a position to treat it appropriately. In fact, the result may be a holocaust of human lives comparable to the worst excesses of previous centuries.

Thesis Conclusions

The thesis has been about the concept of the human person. A biblical-theological, ethical and philosophical review of this concept has been carried out through hearing a select number of representative voices. These voices, as we have shown, provide some plausible arguments for the following conclusions:

The major conclusion of the thesis is that the human person exists substantially as an individual self, from conception onwards, is ordered essentially to God as transcendent, is the morally free agent of all those acts, propensities and powers that are characteristically human, expresses himself in human relationships of all kinds and is always more than any or all of his physical parts.

The highest possible view of the human person as the image of God originates from the religious framework of the Bible within its teaching of divine creation and covenant. This God-likeness appears in the human person's instinct for relationships of different kinds, upwards to God, outwards to other human persons and downwards to the rest of the creation. Theological anthropology leads further to the belief that the human person is constituted as an integrated entity, an embodied soul or ensouled body. From the point of view of faith we may think of the human person therefore as a relational and responsible creature whose covenanted existence secures these relationships and gives him permanence, worth and dignity.

There exists a natural, moral law that coincides with the characteristic activities, propensities and aspirations of human persons. From this natural law we learn that the human person is a creature who typically wants to be free to live, know, play, enjoy life's experiences, relate to others, live justly and worship the absolute. From a religious point of view we may say that this natural law reflects the norms and obligations of the creation covenant of human persons as envisaged in the religious worldview of human origins. Not a moral code the natural law yet suggests those intelligible human goods that make for human flourishing and the virtues and vices that are attached in practice to them in each case. This natural law provides practical reason with the moral light it needs to navigate the field of human personal ethics.

The human person may be thought of as an embodied being whose inner principle directs and unifies her whole existence in the world. The Aristotelian model may be outmoded in certain of its details but the principal concept of a transcendent soul or self that animates, directs and unites the bodily life is worthy of equal consideration with later and modern explanations that reduce the human person to an account of one or more of his physical and biological parts. The human person is more than the sum of his physical parts.

There is a strong similarity between the form-matter scheme of Aristotle and the soul-body paradigm of Christianity. In each case the human person entails an existent soul or a self that acts as a centripetal principle of rational life within the whole organism. On the Aristotelian model the human person possesses intelligence and the powers of choice; on the Thomistic model the human person possesses both intelligence and freedom as his outstanding characteristics but in this case they are enlarged

to encompass the knowledge of God and his will leading to humanity's final end of eternal happiness in God. Both Aristotle and Aquinas are philosophers who argue for a metaphysical view of the human person that offers the resources to provide a plausible explanation for the mystery of the grandeur of the human person.

The scientific method by itself cannot bring to light the essential meaning of the human person. Hume made use of this method for understanding human nature, particularly in looking for the human self, but without success. The scientific method measures and quantifies objects on the basis of observation and calculation. Since the human person is essentially non-quantifiable the scientific method cannot tell us what it means to be human or exhaust our understanding of the nature of the human person.

The experience of encounter that the presence of another person brings about for each person, taking the form of an absolute demand for empathy and representation towards that other person, argues for the transcendent nature of the human person in each individual. Levinas may overstate the intensity of this demand contained in encounter but he does succeed in establishing the case for believing in the ethical dimension of the human person in relation. His work strengthens the belief that what it means to be human cannot be captured by science.

The quality of personhood is congenital to the human being and does not depend on the human embryo or foetus reaching a certain point in the timeline of gestation or on an individual's being able to demonstrate certain social capabilities in adult life. The human embryo from day one demonstrates an inner self-directionality and control that continues to the final stages of the human personal journey of life.

The spiritual and metaphysical qualities of the human person from the beginning of life constrain certain ethical conclusions. These are that each human person is intrinsically valuable, that each human person deserves the full protection of the law, that each human person begins at conception and that no human person should at any stage of their life journey become the object of destructive treatment. The relevance of these findings to current practices in biomedical experiments and procedures is obvious.

In summary, if the arguments of this thesis are at all plausible, then we affirm that the human person is an irreducible and total entity, a personal self who is naturally inclined to relationships of a loving and responsible kind towards God and other human persons. This status, of being an existent, embodied self, each individual person possesses from conception onwards. As a result the human person ought never to be used as a means to an end but always as an end in himself.

Bibliography

ABBOTT, WALTER M., GALLAGHER, JOSPEH (eds.). *The Documents of Vatican II*. New York: Guild Press, 1966.

ACKRILL, J.L. *Aristotle the Philosopher*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

ALLEN, DIOGENES. "Persons in Philosophical and Biblical Perspective" in Michael Jeeves (ed.), *From Cells to Souls – and Beyond*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004.

ANDERSON, WALTER TRUETT (ed.). *The Truth About the Truth*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher /Putnam Books, 1995.

ANNAS, GEORGE J. "Who's Afraid of the Human Genome?", *Hastings Centre Report* (July/August, 1989), pp. 19-21.

AQUINAS, THOMAS. *The Summa Theologica*. Chicago: William Benton, Publisher, 1952.

AQUINAS, THOMAS. *On the Truth of the Catholic Faith*. New York: Image Books, 1957.

AQUINAS, THOMAS. *On Being and Essence*. A Translation and Interpretation by Joseph Bobik. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970.

AQUINAS, ST. THOMAS. *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*. Notre Dame: Dumb Ox Books, 1994.

AQUINAS, ST. THOMAS. *Aquinas's Shorter Summa*. Manchester: Sophia Institute Press, 2002.

AQUINAS, ST. THOMAS. *Truth*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953.

ARISTOTLE. *Metaphysics*. London: Penguin Books, 1998.

ARISTOTLE. *De Anima*. London: Penguin Books, 1986.

ASHLEY, BENEDICT. "Dominion or Stewardship?: Theological Reflections" in K. Wildes, F. Abel, J. Harvey (eds.), *Birth, Suffering, and Death*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992.

ASHLEY, BENDICT & O'ROURKE, KEVIN. *Healthcare Ethics*. St Louis: The Catholic Health Association of the United States, 1989.

AUGUSTINE. *On the Trinity*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1873.

AUSTIACO, NICANOR. "On Static Eggs and Dynamic Embryos: A Systems Perspective" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 2 / 4 (winter, 2002): 659-683.

AUSTIACO, NICANOR. "Immediate Hominisation from the Systems Perspective" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 4 / 4 (winter, 2004): 719-738.

AUSTIACO, NICANOR. "Are Teratomas Embryos or Non-embryos?" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5 / 4 (winter, 2005): 697-706.

ATKINSON, DAVID. "Some Theological Perspectives on the Human Embryo" in N. De Cameron (ed.), *Embryos and Ethics. The Warnock Report in Debate*. Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1987.

BALL, EDWARD. "Covenant" in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. Coggin & Houlden (eds.). London: SCM, 1966.

BANNER, MICHAEL. *Christian Ethics and Contemporary Moral Problems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

BARR, JAMES. "Man and Nature – the Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library of Manchester* 55, 1 (1972-73), pp. 9-32.

BARR, JAMES. *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality*. London: SCM Press, 1992.

BARRETT, WILLIAM. *Death of the Soul. From Descartes to the Computer*. New York: Doubleday, 1986.

BARRON, ROBERT. *Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000.

BARTH, KARL. *Church Dogmatics,* III/1. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1970.

BARTH, KARL. *Church Dogmatics*, III/2. Edinburgh. T. & T. Clark, 1968.

BARTH, KARL. *Church Dogmatics* III/4. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978.

BAUER, JOHANNES B. (ed.). *Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology*. London: Sheed & Ward, 1976.

BEAUCHAMP, TOM & WALTERS, Le ROY. *Contemporary Issues in Bioethics*. 2nd Edition. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1982.

BERNASCONI, ROBERT. "Levinas, Emmanuel (1906-95)" in Edward Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Volume 5. London: Routledge, 1998.

BIRCH, CHARLES. *Biology and the Riddle of Life*. Sydney: University of New South Wales, 1999.

BLACKBURN, SIMON. *Think. A Compelling Introduction to Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

BLACKBURN, SIMON. *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

BRAY, GERALD. "The Significance of God's Image in Man" in *Tyndale Bulletin* 42.2 (1991):

BROWN, COLIN. *Christianity and Western Thought. A History of Philosophers, Ideas and Movements*. Volume 1. London: Apollos, 1990.

BROWN, WARREN S., MURPHY, NANCEY, MALONY, H. NEWTON (eds.). *Whatever Happened to the Soul? Scientific and Theological Portraits of Human Nature*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998.

BRUCE, DONALD & ANN (eds.). *Engineering Genesis. The Ethics of Genetic Engineering in Non-Human Species*. London: Earthscan Publications, 1998.

BRYANT, DAVID J. "*Imago Dei*, Imagination and Ecological Responsibility" in *Theology Today* 57/1 (April, 2000): 35-50.

BUBER, MARTIN. *I and Thou*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937.

BUBER, MARTIN. *Between Man and Man*. New York: Macmillan, 1978.

BURLEIGH, JUSTINE (ed.). *The Genetic Revolution and Human Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

BYRNES, MALCOLM. "Why Human 'Altered Nuclear Transfer' is Unethical" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5 / 2 (summer, 2005): 271-279.

CAIRNS, DAVID. *The Image of God in Man*. London: Collins, 1973.

CALVIN, JOHN. *A Commentary on Genesis*. London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965.

CALVIN, JOHN. *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1963.

CAMERON, NIGEL M. de S. *The New Medicine. Life and Death After Hippocrates*. Wheaton: Crossway, 1991.

CAMERON, N.M. de S. (ed.). *Embryos and Ethics*. Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1987.

CASSAM, QUASSIM (ed.). *Self-Knowledge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Homebush: St Pauls, 1994.

CAYGILL, HOWARD. *A Kant Dictionary*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

CHALIER, CATHERINE. *What Ought I To Do? Morality in Kant and Levinas*. Ithaca: Cornell University Pres, 2002.

CHAPMAN, AUDREY. *Unprecedented Choices*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999.

CHARLESWORTH, MAX. *Life, Death, Genes and Ethics: Biotechnology and Bioethics*. London: ABC, 1989.

CHRISTIE, DOLORES L. *Adequately Considered. An American Perspective on Louis Janssens' Personalist Morals*. Louvain: Peeters Press, 1990.

CLINES, A.J. "On the Way to Postmodernism: Old Testament Essays", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*. Supplement Series 293 (1998), pp. 447 – 498.

COHEN, S. MARC. "Hylomorphism and Functionalism" in Nussbaum & Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's <u>De Anima</u>*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

COLE-TURNER, RONALD. *The New Genesis*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1993.

CHRISTIE, DOLORES L. *Adequately Considered: An American Perspective on Louis Janssen's Personalist Morals*. Louvain: Peters Press, 1990.

CLARKE, W. NORRIS. *Person and Being*. The Aquinas Lecture, 1993. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1993.

COCKBURN, DAVID (ed.). *Human Beings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

COHEN, S. MARC. "Hylomorphism and Functionalism" in Martha Nussbaum & Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

COLEGATE, CHRISTINA. *Just Between You and Me. The Art of Ethical Relations*. Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2004.

COLSON, CHARLES & CAMERON, NIGEL de S. (eds.). *Human Dignity in the Biotech Century. A Christian Vision for Public Policy*. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2004.

CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH. *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origins and on the Dignity of Procreation*. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1987.

COPLESTON, F.C. *Aquinas*. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1955.

COPLESTON, FREDERICK. *Contemporary Philosophy*. London: Burns & Oates, 1965.

CRABBE, JAMES C. *From Soul to Self*. London: Routledge, 1999.

CRITCHLEY, SIMON & BERNASCONI, ROBERT (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

CUTROFELLO, ANDREW. *Continental Philosophy. A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

D'ARCY, M. C. *St. Thomas Aquinas*. Westminster: The Newman Press, 1955.

DAVIES, BRIAN. *Aquinas*. London: Continuum, 2003.

DAVIS, JOHN JEFFERSON. "The Moral Status of the Embryonic Human: Religious Perspectives", *Ethics and Medicine* 22, 1 (Spring, 2006), pp. 9-21.

DENNETT, DANIEL. *Kinds of Minds. Towards an Understanding of Consciousness*. London: Phoenix Books, 1996.

DIAMOND, EUGENE F. "Stem Cells and the Culture Wars", *The Linacre Quarterly* 72/3 (August, 2005), pp. 240-245.

DORAN, KEVIN. *What Is a Person? The Concept and the Implications for Ethics*. Problems in Contemporary Philosophy, volume 22. Lewiston: the Edwin Meller Press, 1989.

DOWNIE, R.S. & TELFER, ELIZABETH. *Respect for Persons*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1970.

DOYLE, JOHN P. "Reflections on Persons in Petri Dishes", *The Linacre Quarterly* 64-65 (November, 1997), pp. 63-76.

DOWNIE, R.S.& TELFER, ELIZABETH. *Respect for Persons*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970.

DUNSTAN, G.R. & SELLER, M.J. (eds.). *The Status of the Human Embryo*. London: King's Hospital Fund for London, 1988.

EMONET, PIERRE-MARIE. *The Dearest Freshness Deep Down Things. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Being*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999.

ESKENAZI, T.C., PHILLIPS, G.A., JOBLING, D. (eds.). *Levinas and Biblical Studies*. SEmeia Series 43. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

EVANS, C. STEPHEN. *Preserving the Person*. Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979.

FERGUSON, SINCLAIR. "Image of God" in *New Dictionary of Theology*. Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1988.

FINNIS, JOHN, BOYLE, JOSEPH, GRISEZ, GERMAIN. *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality, and Realism*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

FISHER, ANTHONY. "Adult Science and Adolescent Ethics" in H.D. Regan, R.B. Horsfield, G.L. McMullen (eds.), *Beyond Mere Health.* Melbourne: Australian Theological Forum, 1996.

FISHER, ANTHONY. *IVF. The Critical Issues*. Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1989.

FISHER, ANTHONY. "Individuogenesis and a Recent Book by Fr. Norman Ford", *Anthropotes* 7, 2 (1991), pp. 199 – 244.

FISHER, F.L. "Stewardship" in W.A. Elwell (ed.), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

FLETCHER, JOSEPH. *Morals and Medicine*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1960.

FLEMING, JOHN I., PIKE, GREGORY K., EWING, SELENA. *Human Embryos: A Limitless Resource?* Plympton, SA: Southern Cross Bioethics Institute, 2002.

FLEW, ANTONY (ed.). *A Dictionary of Philosophy*. London: Pan Books, 1984.

FORD, NORMAN, M. *When Did I Begin? Conception of the Human Individual in History, Philosophy and Science.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

FORD, NORMAN M. *The Prenatal Person. Ethics from Conception to Birth.* Bodmin: Blackwell Publications, 2002.

FORD, NORMAN (ed.). *Human Embryo Research, Manipulation and Ethics. Proceedings of a Conference*. East Melbourne: Caroline Chisholm Centre for Health Ethics, 2001.

FORD, NORMAN. "*When Did I Begin?* – A Reply to Nicholas Tonti-Philippini", *Linacre Quarterly* 56-57 (1990), pp. 59-65.

FOSTER, CLAIRE. *The Ethics of Medical Research on Humans*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

FREDE, MICHAEL. "On Aristotle's Conception of the Soul" in Martha Nussbaum & Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (eds.), *Essays on Aristotle's <u>De Anima</u>*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

FULTON, EDWARD. "A Defense of Oocyte-Assisted Reprogramming" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 4 / 3 (autumn, 2005): 465-468.

GAITA, RAIMOND. *A Common Humanity. Thinking About Love and Truth and Justice*. Melbourne: Text Publishing, 1999.

GAITA, RAIMOND. *Good and Evil: An Absolute Conception*. London: Macmillan Press, 1991.

GAITA, RAIMOND. *The Philosopher's Dog*. Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2002.

GARCIA, ORLANDO, D. "The Unity of the Human Person: A Central Concept in the Interface Between Medicine and Theology", *Linacre Quarterly* (2001), pp. 71-89.

GARRETT, BRIAN. *Personal Identity and Self-Consciousness*. London: Routledge, 1998.

GAYLIN, WILLARD. "Fooling with Mother Nature", *Hastings Center Report* (1990), pp. 17 – 21.

GEORGE, ROBERT, P. "Natural Law and Human Nature" in Robert P. George (ed.), Natural *Law Theory. Contemporary Essays*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.

GERMAN, L.G. "The Beginning of Human Life", *Linacre Quarterly* 64-65 (1997).

GIBLET, JEAN & GRELOT, PIERRE. "Covenant" in *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Xavier Leon-Dufour. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1997.

GILKEY, LANGDON. *Nature, Science and Religion*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.

GILLETT, GRANT. "You Always Were a Bastard", *Hastings Center Report* (Nov-Dec, 2002), pp. 23-28.

GLOVER, JONATHAN. *I: The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity*. London: Penguin Books, 1988.

GOTTSCHALK, ALFRED. "The Image of Man in Genesis and the Ancient Near East", *Maarav* 7 (1991), pp. 131-140.

GRABILL, STEPHEN. *Rediscovering the Natural Law in Reformed Theologicals Ethics*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 2006.

GRENZ, STANLEY. *The Social God and the Relational Self. A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001.

GRENZ, STANLEY. *The Moral Quest*. London: Apollos, 1997.

GRISEZ, GERMAIN. *The Way of the Lord Jesus*. Volume 1. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983.

GULA, RICHARD. *Reason Informed by Faith*. New York: Paulist Press, 1989.

GUSTAFSON, JAMES M. *Intersections. Science, Theology, and Ethics*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1996.

HALDANE, JOHN. "The Spirit of Thomism and the task of Renewal" in James McEvoy and Michael Dunne (eds.), *Thomas Aquinas: Approaches to Truth*, Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002.

HAND, SEAN (ed.). *The Levinas Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.

HARING, BERNARD. *Free and Faithful in Christ*. 3 volumes. Homebush: St Paul Publications, 1981.

HARING, BERNARD. *Ethics of Manipulation. Issues in Medicine, Behaviour Control, and Genetics*. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.

HARING, BERNARD. *Morality is for Persons*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1971.

HARING, BERNARD. "Dynamism and Continuity in a Personalistic Approach to Natural Law" in Outke & Ramsey (eds.), *Norm and Context in Christian Ethics*. London: SCM, 1968.

HARRIS, JOHN. *The Value of Life*. London: Routledge, 1991.

HAYES, ZACHARY. *What Are They Saying About Creation?* New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1980.

HEBBLETHWAITE, BRIAN. *Ethics and Religion in a Pluralistic Age*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997.

HEFNER, PHILIP. "The Evolution of the Created Co-Creator" in Ted Peters (ed.), *Cosmos as Creation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.

HEIDEGGER, MARTIN. *What Is Philosophy?* London: Vision Press, 1956.

HEIDEGGER, MARTIN. *Being and Time*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978.

HENDRY, G.S. *Theology of Nature*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980.

HINDMARSH, R., LAWRENCE, G., NORTON, J. "Bio-Utopia: the Way Forward?" in Hindmarsh, Lawrence, Norton (eds.). *Altered Genes. Reconstructing Nature: the Debate*. Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1998.

HITTINGER, RUSSELL. "natural law" in A. McGrath (ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Christian Thought*. London: Blackwell, 1993.

HOEKEMA, ANTHONY. *Created in God's Image*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

HOEHNER, PAUL. "Altered Nuclear Transfer: Probing the Nature of Being Human" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5 / 2 (summer, 2005): 261-269.

HOLLINGER, DENNIS. *Choosing the Good. Christian Ethics in a Complex World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002.

HONDERICH, TED (ed.). *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

HUDSON, JAMES. "What Kinds of People Should We Create?", *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 17, 2 (2000), pp. 131-143.

HUGHES, P.E. *The True Image*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 1989.

HUI, EDWIN C. (XU ZHI-WEI). *At the Beginning of Life. Dilemmas in   Theological Bioethics*. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2002.

HUME, DAVID. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Volume 1. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1959.

HURLBUT, WILLIAM. "Altered Nuclear Transfer as Morally Acceptable Means" in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5 / 1 (spring, 2005): 145-151.

IRWIN, TERENCE. *A History of Western Philosophy: 1 Classical Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

JAKI, STANLEY. *Means to Message: A Treatise on Truth*. Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.

JAKI, STANLEY. *Cosmos and Creator*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1980.

JEEVES, MALCOLM. *Mind Fields. Reflections on the Science of Mind and Brain*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994.

JENKINS, JOHN. *Understanding Hume*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992.

JOHN PAUL II. *Veritatis Splendor*. Homebush: St Pauls, 1993.

JOHN PAUL II. *Fides et Ratio*. Strathfield: St Pauls Publications, 1998.

JOHN PAUL II. *Love and Responsibility*. London: Harper Collins, 1982.

JOHN PAUL II. *The Theology of the Body. Human Love in the Divine Plan*. Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997.

JOHNSON, ALAN F. "Is There a Biblical Warrant for Natural-Law Theories?", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 25, 2 (1982), pp. 185-199.

JONES, GARETH. *Brave New People*. London: Inter Varsity Press, 1984.

JONES, GARETH. *Valuing People. Human Value in a World of Medical Technology*. Cornwall: Paternoster Press, 1999.

JONES, GARETH. *Clones: the Clowns of Technology?* Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2001.

KASS, LEON. *Toward a More Natural Science. Biology and Human Affairs.* New York: The Free Press, 1985.

KASS, LEON. *Life, Liberty and the Defense of Dignity. The Challenge of Bioethics.* San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2002.

KASS, LEON (chair). *Beyond Therapy. Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness.* A Report by the President's Council on Bioethics. New York: HarperCollins, 2003.

KEEN, SAM. *Gabriel Marcel.* London: The Carey Kingsgate Press, 1966.

KENNEDY, TERENCE. *Doers of the Word. Moral Theology for Humanity in the Third Millennium. Volume 1. Tracing Humanity's Ascent to the Living God.* United Kingdom: St Pauls, 1996.

KENNY, ANTHONY (ed.). *Aquinas: a Collection of Critical Essays.* London: Macmillan, 1970.

KENNY. ANTHONY. "Body, Soul and Intellect in Aquinas" in James C. Crabbe, (ed.), *From Soul to Self.* London: Routledge, 1999.

KERR, FERGUS (ed.). *Contemplating Aquinas. On the Varieties of Interpretation.* London: SCM Press, 2003.

KERR, FERGUS. "Getting the Subject Back into the World: Heidegger's Version", in Cockburn, David (ed.), *Human Beings.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

KIDNER, DEREK. *Genesis.* London: Tyndale Press, 1968.

KISCHER, C. WARD. "The Big Lie in Human Embryology: The Case of the Preembryo", *Linacre Quarterly* 64-65 (1997), pp. 53 – 61.

KNOWLES, DAVID. *The Evolution of Medieval Thought.* New York: Vintage Books, 1962.

KORSMEYER, JERRY D. *Evolution and Eden. Balancing Original Sin and Contemporary Science.* New York: Paulist Press, 1998.

KREEFT, PETER. *A Summa of the "Summa".* San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990.

KRETZMANN, NORMAN & STUMP, ELEONORE (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

KUHSE, HELGA & SINGER, PETER. *Should the Baby Live? The Problem of Handicapped Infants*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

KUHSE, HELGA (ed.). *Unsactifying Human Nature*. Maldon: Blackwell, 2002.

LACEY, A.R. *A Dictionary of Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 1996.

LAUER, EUGENE & MLECKO, JOEL. *A Christian Understanding of the Human Person. Basic Readings*. New York: Paulist Press, 1982.

LEE, PATRICK. "Personhood, the Moral Standing of the Unborn, and Abortion", *The Linacre Quarterly*, 57 (1989), pp. 80 – 89.

LEFF, GORDON. *Medieval Thought. St Augustine to Ockam*. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1965.

LEVINAS, EMMANUEL. *Entre nous*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

LEVINAS, EMMANUEL. *God, Death, and Time*. Stanford: Stanford University, 2000.

LEVINAS, EMMANUEL. *Totality and Infinity. An Essay in Exteriority*. The Hague: Martinus Hijhoff Publishers, 1979.

LEVINAS, EMMANUEL. *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. The Hague: Mantinus Nijhoff Publisher, 1981.

LEVINAS, EMMANUEL. *Ethics and Infinity. Conversations with Philippe Nemo*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1994.

LITTLE, DAVID. "Calvin and the Prospects for a Christian Theory of Natural Law" in Gene Outke & Paul Ramsey (eds.), *Norm and Context in Christian Ethics*. London: SCM, 1968.

LOCKE, JOHN. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. London: Fontana, 1975.

LONERGAN, BERNARD J.F. *Insight. A Study of Human Understanding*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1965.

LOSSKY, VLADIMIR. *In the Image and Likeness of God*. London: Mowbrays, 1974.

LUSCOMBE, DAVID. *A History of Western Philosophy II: Medieval Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

MacINYTRE, ALASDAIR. *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*. London: Duckworth, 1982.

MacINTYRE, ALASDAIR. *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* London: Duckworth, 1988.

MacINTYRE, ALASDAIR. *Three Versions of Moral Enquiry*. London: Duckworth, 1990.

MacKINNON, D.M. "Aristotle's Conception of Substance" in R. Bamborough (ed.), *New Essays on Plato and Aristotle*. New York: Humanities Press, 1965.

McCARTHY, D.J. *Old Testament Covenant. A Survey of Current Opinions*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973.

McCORMICK, RICHARD A. "Theology and Bioethics", *Hastings Center Report* (March/April, 1989), pp. 5-10.

McFARLAND, Ian. "Personhood and the Problem of the Other", *Scottish Journal of Theology* 54 (2002), pp. 204-220.

McGINN, COLIN. *The Making of a Philosopher*. New York: Harper Collins Books, 2002.

McGRATH, ALISTER. *The Twilight of Atheism. The Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World*. London: Rider, 2004.

McGRATH, ALISTER. *A Scientific Theology*. 3 volumes. London: T. & T. Clark, 3.

McKEON, RICHARD (ed.). *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. New York: Random House, 1941.

McNEILL, JOHN. "Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers", Journal of Religion 26, 3 (1946), pp. 168-182

MACHUGA, RIC. *In Defense of the Soul. What It Means To Be Human*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2002.

MARCEL, GABRIEL. *The Philosophy of Existence*. New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969.

MATTHEWS, ERIC. *Twentieth-Century French Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

MATTHEWSON, MARK. "Moral Intuitionism and the Law Inscribed on Our Hearts" in *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 42/4 (December, 1999): 629-643.

MAY, WILLIAM E. *An Introduction to Moral Theology*. Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 1994.

MAY, WILLIAM. "What is a Human Person and Who Counts as a Human Person? A Crucial Question in Bioethics". http://www.christendom-awake.org

MEILAENDER, GILBERT. *Body, Soul, and Bioethics*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1995.

MEILAENDER, GILBERT. *Bioethics. A Primer for Christians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

MEYE, ROBERT P. "Invitation to Wonder: Toward a Theology of Nature" in Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (ed.), *Tending the Garden*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

MIDGLEY, MARY. *Utopias, Dolphins and Computers*. London: Routledge, 2000.

MIDGLEY, MARY. *Beast and Man. The Roots of Human Nature*. London: Methuen, 1978.

MOLTMANN, JURGEN. *The Crucified God*. London: SCM, 1979.

MOORE, G.E. *Principia Ethica*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

MORACZEWSKI, ALBERT & NELSON, N. (eds.). *On the New Frontiers of Genetics and Religion*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

MORACZEWSKI, ALBERT. "Genetic Manipulation. Some Ethical and Theological Aspects" in A.S. Moraczewski (ed.), *Genetic Medicine and Engineering. Ethical and Social Dimesions*. Louisville: Catholic Health Association and the Pope John XXIII Medical-Moral Research & Education Centre, 1983.

MORELAND, J.P & Rae, B. SCOTT. *Body and Soul. Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics*. Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 2000.

MOULE, C.F.D. *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962.

MUELLER, J.J. *What Are They Saying About Theological Method?* New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1984.

MURPHY, CHARLES. *At Home on the Earth. Foundations of a Catholic Ethic of the Environment*. New York: Crossroad, 1989.

MURRAY, ROBERT. *The Cosmic Covenant.* London: Sheed & Ward, 1992.

NAGEL, THOMAS. *The View From Nowhere*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

NASH, RONALD H. *Life's Ultimate Questions. An Introduction to Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999.

NELKIN, DOROTHY & LINDEE, SUSAN. *The DNA Mystique. The Gene As* Cultural *Icon*. New York: W.H. Freeman, 1995.

NELSON, THOMAS. "Is the Zygote a Person?", *Linacre Quarterly* 72, 4 (2005).

NICHOLS, TERENCE. *Sacred Cosmos. Christian Faith and the Challenge of Naturalism*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2003.

NOSSAL, G.J.V. & COPPEL, R.L. Reshaping Life. Key Issues in Genetic Engineering. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1989.

NUSSBAUM, MARTHA & RORTY, AMELIE OKSENBERG. *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

O'COLLINS, GERALD. *The Tripersonal God. Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity*. London: Continuum, 2004.

O'DONOVAN, OLIVER. *Resurrection and Moral Order. An Outline for Evangelical Ethics*. Leicester; Inter Varsity Press, 1986.

O'DONOVAN, OLIVER. *Begotten or Made?* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

O'HARA, M.L. (ed.) *Substances and Things: Aristotle's Doctrine of Substance in Recent Essays*. Washington: University Pres of America, 1982.

O'HEAR, ANTHONY. *What Philosophy Is*. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1985.

O'SULLIVAN, GABRIELLE, SHARMAN, EVELYN, SHORT, STEPHANIE (eds.). *Goodbye Normal Gene. Confronting the Genetic Revolution.* Annandale, NSW: Pluto Press, 1999.

OLGIATI, FRANCESCO. *The Key to the Study of St. Thomas*. London: B. Herder Book Co., 1925.

OSBORNE, LAWRENCE. *Guardians of Creation. Nature and the Christian Life*. Leicester: Apollos, 1993.

OUELLET, MARC CARDINAL. *Divine Likeness. Toward a Trinitarian Anthropology of the Family*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

OZOLINS, JOHN. "Protecting the Human Embryo", *Ethics Education*, 8, 2 (2002), pp. 11-13.

OZOLINS, JOHN. "Human Embryos as Persons", *Ethics Education*, 8, 3 (2002), pp. 2-6.

PANAU, ROBERT. *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature. A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae Ia 75 – 89*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

PEACOCKE, ARTHUR & GILLETT, GRANT (eds.). *Person and Personality. A Contemporary Inquiry*. Ian Ramsey Centre Publications No. 1. London: Basil Blackwell, 1987.

PEARS, D.F.(ed.). *David Hume. A Symposium*. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1963.

PENELHUM, TERENCE. *Themes in Hume. The Self, the Will, Religion*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003.

PEPPERZAK, ADRIAAN (ed.). *Ethics as First Philosophy*. New York: Rutledge, 1995.

PERRY, JOHN (ed.). *Personal Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

PETERS, TED (ed.). *Genetics*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1989.

POPE, STEPHEN J. "Neither Enemy Nor Friend: Nature As Creation in the Theology of Saint Thomas Aquinas", Zygon 32, 2 (1997), pp. 219-229.

POPKIN, RICHARD H. *The Pimlico History of Western Philosophy*. Pimlico: Columbia University Press, 1999.

PORTER, JEAN. *Natural and Divine Law. Reclaiming the Tradition for Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999.

PREECE, GORDON (ed.). *Rethinking Peter Singer. A Christian Critique*. Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2002.

PURCELL, MICHAEL. *Levinas and Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

PUTNAM, HILARY. "Levinas and Judaism" in Simon Critchley & Robert Bernasconi (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 33-62.

QUINTON, ANTHONY. "The Soul" in *Personal Identity*, John Perry (ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

RACHELS, JAMES. *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995.

Von RAD, GERHARD. *Genesis*. London: SCM, 1963.

RAE, SCOTT & COX, PAUL. *Bioethics. A Christian Approach in a Pluralistic Age*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

RAHNER, KARL. *Theological Investigations*. Volume 9. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1972.

RAHNER, KARL. *The Content of Faith*. New York: Crossroad, 1994.

RAMSEY, PAUL. *Fabricated Man*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970.

RAMSEY, PAUL. *The Patient As Person*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973.

RATZINGER, JOSEPH. *In the Beginning . . .* Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 1995.

REISS, M.J. & STRAUGHAN, R. *Improving Nature?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

RICEOUR, PAUL. *Oneself As Another*. Chicago: University Press, 1994.

RIFKIN, JEREMY. *The Biotech Century*. London: Penguin Putnam, 1998.

ROBBINS, JILL. *Is It Righteous to Be? Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas*. Stanford: Stanford University Pres, 2001.

RORTY, AMELIE OKSENBERG. "De Anima: Its Agenda and Its Recent Interpreters" in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, Marth Nussbaum & Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (eds.). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

RUMBOLD, GRAHAM. *Ethics in Nursing Practice*. London: Bailliere Tindball, 1999.

RUSSO, E. & COVE, D. *Genetic Engineering*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

SARTRE, JEAN-PAUL. *Being and Nothingness*. New York: The Citadel Press, 1971.

SCHMAUS, MICHAEL. *Dogma*. Volume 2. London: Sheed & Ward, 1983.

SCHOONENBERG, PIET. *Covenant and Creation*. London: Sheed & Ward, 1968.

SCULLION, JOHN. *Genesis*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992.

SCULLION, JOHN. "Creator and Creature in the Bible" in J. Scullion, A. Hamilton, T. Daly, W. Daniel (eds.), *God's Creation and Human Responsibility for the Earth*. Melbourne: Polding Press, 1981.

SCULLION, JOHN, HAMILTON, ANDREW, DALY, THOMAS. *God's Creation and Human Responsibility for the Earth*. Melbourne: The Polding Press, 1981.

SEIDEL, GEORGE JOSEPH. *Martin Heidegger and the Pre-Socratic: An Introduction to His Thought*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964.

SELLING, JOSEPH. "The Human Person" in *Christian Ethics*, Bernard Hoose (ed.), ch. 6. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1998.

SELMAN, FRANCIS. *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Truth*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994.

SHAND, JOHN. *Philosophy and Philosophers: An Introduction to Western Philosophy*. London: Penguin Books, 1994.

SHANLEY, BRIAN J. *The Thomist Tradition*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002.

SHANNON, THOMAS. "Genetics, Ethics and Theology: the Roman Catholic Discussion" in Ted Peters (ed.), *Genetics. Issues of Social Justice*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998.

SHULTS, F. LeRON. *Reforming Theological Anthropology. After the Philosophical Turn to Relationality*. Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003.

SINGER, PETER. *Practical Ethics*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

SINGER, PETER. *Rethinking Life and Death. The Collapse of Our Traditional Ethics*. Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 1994.

SINGER, PETER, KUHSE, HELGA, BUCKLE, STEPHEN, DAWSON, KAREN, KASIMBA, PASCAL (eds.). *Embryo Experimentation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

SINGER, PETER (ed.). *A Companion to Ethics*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993.

SOLOMON, ROBERT C. *Continental Philosophy Since 1750. The Rise and Fall of the Self*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

SPANNER, HUW. "Tyrants, Stewards: or Just Kings?" in Andrew Linzey & Dorothy Yamamoto (eds.), Animals on the Agenda. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1998.

STRAWSON, P. F. *Individuals. An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1969.

STRAWSON, P. F. "The First Person – and Others" in *Self-Knowledge*, Quassim Cassim (ed.), ch. XII. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

SWEET, WILLIAM. *Approaches to Metaphysics*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004.

SWINBURNE, RICHARD. *The Evolution of the Soul*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

TAYLOR, RICHARD. *Metaphysics*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

TAYLOR, C.C.W., HARE, R.E., BARNES, JONATHAN. *Greek Philosophers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

THOMPSON, LARRY. *Correcting the Code*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994.

TOLLEFSEN, CHRISTOPHER (ed.). *John Paul II's Contribution to Catholic Bioethics*. Philosophy and Medicine 84. Dordrecht: Springer, 2004.

TONTI-FILIPPINI, NICHOLAS. "A critical Note", *The Linacre Quarterly,* 56, 3 (1989), pp. 36-50.

TOOLEY, MICHAEL. "Personhood" in Helga Kuhse & Peter Singer (eds.), *A Companion to Bioethics*, pp. 117 – 126. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998.

TORRANCE, THOMAS. *The Ground and Grammar of Theology*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980.

TORRANCE, THOMAS. *Divine and Contingent Order*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997.

TORRANCE, ALAN. "What Is a Person?" in Malcolm Jeeves (ed.), *From Cells to Souls – and Beyond*, (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 199-222.

URMSON, J.O. & REE, JONATHAN (eds.). *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers*. London: Routledge, 2000.

VAWTER, BRUCE. *On Genesis. A New Reading*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977.

VELEZ, JUAN. "Immediate Animation: Thomistic Principles Applied to Norman Ford's Objections", *Ethics and Medicine* 21, 1 (2005), pp. 11-18.

VIGNAUX, PAUL. *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: An Introduction*. Translated from the French by E.C. Hall. New York: Meridian Books, 1959.

VAN EWIJK, THOMAS J.M. *Gabriel Marcel: An Introduction*. Glen Rock: Deus Books, 1965.

VERHEY, ALLEN (ed.). *Religion and Medical Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

VOLPE, E. PETER. *Test-Tube Conception. A Blend of Love and Science*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987.

WADE, NICHOLAS. *The Ultimate Experiment. Man-Made Evolution*. New York: Walker, 1977.

WALDENFELS, BERNHARD. "Levinas and the Face of the Other" in Simon Critchley & Robert Bernasconi (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 63-81.

WALKER, MARK & McKAY, DAVID. *Unravelling Genes. A Layperson's Guide to Genetic Engineering*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2000.

WARE, KALLISTOS. "'In the Image and Likeness'": the Uniqueness of the Human Persons" in J.T. Chirban (ed.), *Personhood. Orthodox Christianity and the Connection Between Body, Mind and Soul*. London: Bergin & Garvey, 1996.

WATTS, FRASER (ed.). *Christians and Bioethics*. London: SPCK, 2000.

WEIGEL, GEORGE. *Witness to Hope. The Biography of Pope John Paul II*. New York: Cliff Street Books, 1999.

WENNBERG, R.N. *Life in the Balance*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.

WERHANE, PATRICIA. "Levinas' Ethics: A Normative Perspective without Metaethical Constraints" in Adriaan Peperzak (ed.), *Ethics as First Philosophy*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 59-67.

WESTERMANN, CLAUS. *Genesis 1-11*. London: SPCK, 1984.

WHELTON, BEVERLY. "On the Beginning of Life", *The Linacre Quarterly* 64-65 (1998), pp. 51-65.

WHITE, LYN. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis, *Science* 155 (1967), pp. 1203-1207.

WILKINSON, DAVID. *The Message of Creation*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2002.

WILMUT, IAN, CAMPBELL, KEITH, TUDGE, COLIN. *The Second Creation. The Age of Biological Control by the Scientists Who Cloned Dolly*. London: Headline Book Publishing, 2000.

WILSON, E.O. *On Human Nature*. London: Penguin Books, 1995.

WIPPEL, JOHN. "Metaphysics" in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, Norman Kretzmann & Eleonore Stump (eds.), ch. 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

WIPPEL, JOHN. *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000.

WRIGHT, CHRISTOPHER J.H. *Knowing the Holy Spirit Through the Old Testament*. Oxford: Monarch Books, 2006.

WRIGHT, N.T. *The Epistles of Paul to Colossians and to Philemon*. Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1979.

ZIZIOULAS, J.D. "Human Capacity and Human Incapacity: a Theological Exploration of Personhood", *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28, 5 (1975), pp. 401-448.

ZIZIOULAS, JOHN D. *Being As Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church*. New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997.

ZWEIG, ARNULF. *The Essential Kant*. New York: Mentor Books, 1970.

Reports

Beyond Therapy. Biotechnology and the Pursuit of Happiness. A Report of the President's Council on Bioethics, (New York: Regan Books, 2003)