

First Philosophy of Democratic Capitalism As Creative Economy: A Thomistic Onto- Theology of Self- Communicative Ownership

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This paper attempts a theological justification for the right to private property or ownership. This I have subtitled, “A Thomistic Onto-Theology of Self-Communicative Ownership,” for our discourse grounds human ownership as a participation of the self-giving creativity of the Divine owner. Such a justification of ownership is also a metaphysical articulation of the true spirit of the creative economy, which should be the theological norm for democratic capitalism, insofar as capitalism aspires to be such a creative economy. This is no blind praise of any capitalist system, but proposes itself as a normative thesis as well as a justificatory thesis of capitalism. Hence its title, “First Philosophy of Democratic Capitalism As Creative Economy,” for it intends to be a demonstration of its first principles—first of a creative economy, and by extension also of democratic capitalism insofar as the latter should instantiate such an economy.

The deepest moral justification for a capitalist system is not solely that ... it serves liberty better than any other known system; nor even that it raises up the living standards of the poor higher than any other system; not that it improves the state of human health and maintains the balance between humans and the environment better than Socialist or traditional Third World societies. All these things, however difficult for some to admit, may be empirically verified. In fact, the true moral strength of capitalism lies in its promotion of human creativity.

—Michael Novak
The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

Introduction: Setting the Stage

In *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II defends the right to private property against socialism. Noting that the right to private property has been a traditionally defended theme in Catholic social thought, the pope is particularly eager to highlight this right, for reasons that extend beyond the justifications made by his predecessors. While the right to property is a natural right insofar as the divine command to cultivate the earth is not to be frustrated; even more so, it is, as the pope explains, a right of man insofar as he is a being with self-determination and thus, creative subjectivity, as such, antithetical with anthropologies presupposed by socialism. Praising this as a step forward on behalf of capitalism, Michael Novak comments in *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*,

[The] point blank thrust into the erroneous anthropology of socialism allows Pope John Paul II to begin with the human individual and move to the larger context of social relations and social systems: “Today, the Church’s social doctrine focuses especially on man as he is involved in a complex network of relationships within modern societies.” The individual is not *merely* the sum of social relationships, but is socially engaged.... Thus, the main lines of *Centesimus Annus* are clean and clear: the human being as an acting, creative person, capable of initiative and responsibility, seeking institutions in the three main spheres of life (political, economic, and cultural) worthy of his or her capacities—institutions that do not stifle or distort human liberty. For God Himself made human beings free.¹

Again,

As one part of the tripartite structure, capitalism rightly understood flows from the pope’s anthropology: “Man’s principle resource is himself. His intelligence enables him to discover the earth’s productive potential and the many different ways in which human needs can be satisfied.” “Man,” he writes again, “discovers his capacity to transform and, in a certain sense, creates the world through his own work ... carrying out his role as cooperator with God in the work of creation.” And yet again, “Man fulfills himself by using his intelligence and freedom. In doing so he utilizes the things of this world as objects and instruments and makes them his own. The foundation of the right of private initiative and ownership is to be found in this activity.”²

Thus, man participates intelligently in God's creativity through work. I hope, however, to further develop this idea. It is still not immediately clear how "the right to own" follows from "work." How, we may ask, is the *right* to anything consequent upon one's *using* it? How may we say that if I use something, I make it my own? The relation is not clear. It does not follow in any strong sense that just when I use anything it should become mine, unless we mean to say that something is in our possession (own) when we are using it—yet such a sense of ownership is too weak for any use. This state of affairs needs a more precise expression of the right to private property in terms of the creative subjectivity of man as a self-determining being.

This paper attempts a detailed and positive justification for the right to private property—or indeed toward the very justification of ownership. This I have subtitled, "A Thomistic Onto-Theology of Self-Communicative Ownership," for our discourse founds human ownership as a participation of the self-giving creativity of the divine owner. Such a justification of ownership is really nothing other than the metaphysical articulation of the true spirit of the creative economy, which should be the theological norm for democratic capitalism, insofar as capitalism aspires to be such a creative economy. In other words, this is no blind praise of any capitalism but proposes itself as a normative thesis as well as a justificatory thesis of capitalism. It condones, by way of enhancing it. One may say even that we are hoping to baptize it and to convert it. Grace must perfect nature, much as it presupposes nature. Hence, its title, "First Philosophy of Democratic Capitalism As Creative Economy," for it intends to be demonstrations of its first principles³—first of a creative economy,⁴ and by extension also of democratic capitalism insofar as the latter should instantiate such an economy.

Self-Communicative Ownership— Some Preliminaries

To speak of self-communicative ownership might sound self-contradictory, as if to state an oxymoron. A notion like this can seem curious. "To self-communicate" describes an act that shares of oneself, to pour out from within what is from "me" to the other. It is open and diffusive. "To own," on the other hand, seems to be a closed concept: It hints of self-centeredness if not, indeed, selfishness. To own is to possess, to enclose something within boundaries, which marks it as *mine* and, thus, safe from the appropriation of the other. It is greedy and egoistic. It is, in a word, not to share. A paradox? Or

rather, a pseudo-paradox, for precisely this is our thesis: that this bipolarity is false; that ownership need not be conceptually related to greed or self-appropriation, and, indeed, it cannot. For too long, ownership has been misaligned with moral egoisms, and this is a fallacy. On the contrary, true ownership, rightly understood, is a concept founded on the desire to share, to make available to the other, indeed to make oneself available to another. It is, founded on the metaphysical principle of sharing, of self-giving, and diffusion, as what follows hopes to make clear.

Of the Concept of Ownership: Biblical and Sufficient Reasons to Own

Of the many things that are in the world and of their corresponding, controverted masters, there is at least one Master whom most would admit. This is God. Indeed, one might even suggest that the proposition “God owns the world” seems a self-evident truth, and precisely for that reason, not controversial. Yet, Scripture is even clearer. The psalmist says,

Psalm 23

*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof:
the world, and all they that dwell therein.*

*For he hath founded it upon the seas;
and hath prepared it upon the rivers.⁵*

In this song, the psalmist unequivocally says that the earth belongs to God. Commenting on this psalm, Saint Thomas writes,

Consequently, this psalm is divided into three parts. In the first, he sets down the whole of His dominion. In the second, he sets down or shows the way in which men come near to God, at, *Who shall ascend*. In the third, he proclaims the future worship of God (which will extend) throughout all the world, at, *Lift up*. Concerning the first part, he does two things. First, he shows that God's dominion is universal; and second, sets down a sign or cause, at, *For he hath founded it upon the seas*.⁶

Saint Thomas points out that the psalmist “shows that God's dominion is universal” and then proceeds to give a reason for this. This, he says, by observing that he “sets down a sign or cause,” that is, a sign that God's dominion is universal or a cause that God's dominion is universal.

Now to say that something is a sign for another is to point out that when the first is present, the second is also made present, for when we say that *A* is a sign for *B*, we mean to say that when we have *A*, we can conclude that *B* is implied, since a sign, insofar as it is a sign, truly has a corresponding significance. Thus, John of Saint Thomas defines the sign generally as “that which represents something other than itself to the cognitive power.”⁷ If *A* does not have a corresponding *B*, then *A* is not a sign.

Again, Saint Thomas uses the disjunction “or” for “... sign or cause,” understanding thus that these are synonymous, in which case, then, that this “cause” has the same logical efficacy as a sign, but a sign is not merely necessary but primarily sufficient for what is signified, because a sign is a sign insofar as it indeed implies it is signified, and not merely is necessary for implying the signified. Thus, a letter “D” is necessary but does not imply an animal that barks, and is not a sign for the animal, but the word “D-O-G” is sufficient toward an implication of an animal that barks and truly is a sign that signifies by implication such an animal, although this signification is without any judgment about existence. It follows then that “cause” in “sign or cause” refers not to necessary cause but to sufficient cause. In other words, Saint Thomas reads the psalmist as speaking of a sufficient cause when he sets down a cause. Of this (sufficient) cause Saint Thomas comments,

Consequently, he reveals the cause of the aforesaid, namely because *He hath founded it upon the seas*. It is as if he were saying, “That (thing) is of the artist, which the artist himself makes.” But God made the earth and those things that are upon it. Therefore, the earth is of him and of his plenitude.⁸

It seems, then, that according to the psalmist, the ownership of the earth is attributed to God as its maker. Insofar as God made the world, it follows then that he owns it. Creation of the world is, thus, a sufficient cause for ownership of the world, just as the artist’s making his art is sufficient reason for us to justly attribute the work as his. Hence, we have the principle of ownership: The creation of anything suffices for the ownership of the same.

Creation: What It Is

But what does it mean for God to create the world? Saint Thomas writes,

... the emanation of all being from the universal cause, which is God ... we designate by the name of creation.... [I]f the emanation of the whole universal being from the first principle be considered, it is impossible that any being should be presupposed before this emanation.... [S]o creation, which is the emanation of all being, is from the *not-being*, which is nothing.⁹

Hence, to create is to make something from nothing. It is to create *ex nihilo*. God's creation presupposes nothing existent prior to his creative activity. He brings into being from pure privation, nothingness. But to stop here would be to leave much unsaid. For what properly is creation *itself*, granted that it is emanation from nothing—on the side of God? What is happening at *God's side*, if we may put it this way, when God creates?

Saint Thomas teaches much more about Creation—much more than simply saying that it is an emanation from nothing, and it is my hope to draw this out for you. Our question has, of course, been reduced into a quest for more primordial reasons for God's creative act, by refusing to stop at the mere ontological description of the event—and quite deliberately: What is at work on the side of the Creator, that is, God in creation? In this way of asking about the creative act, I hope to retrieve the metaphysics of Saint Thomas concerning the creative act in order that I might apply it analogically to the human person as a creative agent, and thus to see also in what analogous way he may be said to *own* those things he “creates,” and also all other implications as may be drawn from this analysis for a theology of economics.

Creation As the Self-Diffusion and Self-Communication of the Creator, Who Is

Recent research on Saint Thomas's metaphysics has done much to uncover the sources of his doctrines. And one of most innovative advances in Thomist scholarship is the recognition of Neoplatonic elements in Saint Thomas. While Saint Thomas is always eager to express his ideas after the fashion of Aristotle, the philosopher, one cannot in any case fail to observe certain influences of the Neoplatonists in his vision of reality as the fruit of the inner dynamic life of Being. To this end, we owe much to W. Norris-Clarke, S.J., who pointed out in the 1940s that Saint Thomas had synthesized the Neoplatonic “vertical”

metaphysics of participation with the Aristotelian “horizontal” metaphysics of change in terms of act and potency, with the magnificent result that the defect of one was complemented by the virtues of the other.¹⁰

It is, nevertheless, necessary prudence to point out that Neoplatonism was not adopted without correction, much as some central insights are retained. In Saint Thomas’s metaphysical account, therefore, we find the Neoplatonic doctrine of emanation, but nonetheless modified and corrected in order to more correctly specify the relation between God and creature as transcendent, some of which Norris-Clarke highlights in his above analysis. Thus, Aquinas will modify the Neoplatonic emanation wherein the distinction between the One and the Many is formally construed, in which case the Many are lesser *formal* participations of the One, and hence it is the *essential* One that is being participated. In this way, one is easily open to the charge of a pantheistic concept of creatures, since these have a share in the *essence* of the One understood to be God, insofar as what they participate in is His Essence, formally understood (i.e., as a form or essence).

To qualify this, Saint Thomas specifies the notion of participation by pointing out its particular predication as accidental¹¹ and also that, while creatures do share of God’s being, it is not his being *qua essence formally understood* but being *qua existence* in which it participates.¹² Yet this is not to say that God has no essence;¹³ certainly God himself has an essence, yet his essence is his Existence (*Esse*) and not any essential form, which, if it were in God, would limit him,¹⁴ who is, on the contrary, unlimited. God is not He who is such-and-such but He Who Is, period.

Hence, for Saint Thomas, creatures only participate in God’s being and thus do not have the being of God in their essences—which is to say that when creatures are said to *be*, their *be*-ing is predicated accidentally, *per accidens*, understood precisely as *outside* of the essence, *praeter essentiam*, and not essentially *of* them.¹⁵ In this way, also, the created being (*ens*) is one by way of a composition of the principle of essence and a really distinct principle of existence (*esse*), but nevertheless its existence (*esse*) is a principle that is not included in its essence. (We will return to this theme again later when explicating Creation on the side of creatures).

Again, unlike Neoplatonic emanation, God does not create with necessity. He is free to create or not to create. Therefore Saint Thomas attends to the kind of causality implicit in the emanation of the Many from the One, and shifts the weight from efficient causality toward final causality.¹⁶

However, granted that we acknowledge God's creative act as free, we may still ask, Why in freely creating the world, did God Himself create? Indeed our discourse on God's freedom all the more highlights the nobility of God's creative act, because God is not necessitated into creating. What sufficient reason, then, might be accounted for in God's creative act? In locating a reason that is sufficient, the Thomistic explanation implicitly endorses and assimilates the Neoplatonic insight of the One Being that is self-communicating and self-diffusing:

To bring forth an actuality is, of itself, proper to a being in act: for every agent acts according as it is in act. Therefore every being in act is by its nature apt to bring forth something in act. But God is a being in act.... Therefore it is proper to him to bring forth some being in act, to which He is the cause of being.¹⁷

In this very terse text, Saint Thomas points out that God is the proper cause of being, precisely insofar as he is a being in act *that is by its nature apt to bring forth something in act*. The Aristotelian notion of act that Saint Thomas here uses refers to completion or perfection: a quality of being fulfilled. But that is not immediately our interest. Our point here is to notice the reason why he says that God brings forth beings in act (i.e., create), and his reason is this: that God is a being in act and that *every being in act is by its nature apt to bring forth something in act*.

In other words, Saint Thomas explains God's very creativity as His own natural tendency to self-communicate: Insofar as God is fulfilled in being, He has the tendency to communicate His own being. Why? Because *every being in act is by its nature apt to bring forth something in act*. That is, any being that is fulfilled tends to replicate its own fulfillment—especially in the case of God, who is a being fulfilled in every kind of fulfillment—and most important of all: The fulfillment of *be*-ing here understood precisely as existence (*esse*), the principle of every reality—this fulfillment of *be*-ing (*esse*) will want to overflow as the self-communicative act of creation, so that others also *are*. Thus, Norris-Clarke:

Here we touch on the most fundamental dynamism of being, itself, for Saint Thomas. Not only does every being tend, by the inner dynamism of its act of existence, to overflow into action, but this action is both a self-manifestation and a self-communication, as self-sharing, of the being's own inner ontological perfection, with others. This natural tendency to self-giving is a revelation of the natural fecundity or "generosity" rooted in the

very nature of being itself. We are immediately reminded of the ancient Platonic tradition—well-known to Saint Thomas—of the “self-diffusiveness of the Good” (*bonum est diffusivum sui*, as the Romans put it). What Saint Thomas has done is to incorporate this whole rich tradition of the fecundity of the Good into his own philosophy of being, turning this self-diffusiveness, which the Platonic tradition identified as proper to what they considered the ultimate ground of reality, the Good, into a *property of being* itself, of which the good now becomes one inseparable aspect (or transcendental property). Whereas in Platonism, and especially Neoplatonism, being itself is only a lesser dimension, on the finite level, of the primal self-diffusiveness or self-communication of the Good; for Saint Thomas, the Good is a derivative property of existential being itself, expressing more explicitly the primal dynamism of self-expansiveness and self-giving inherent in the very nature of being as act of existence. The primacy always lies with existence, for Saint Thomas. Nothing can be good unless it first actually *is*; and from the very fact that it *is*, it naturally follows that it is good, since the act of existence is the root of all perfection in any domain, “the actuality of all act, and the perfection of all perfections.”¹⁸

This locating of the principle of creativity in God—this “why?” of God’s creative act—in his desire to self-communicate and self-diffuse his own Goodness is made most explicitly in Saint Thomas’ following reply.

[W]e must say that the distinction and multitude of things come from the intention of the first agent, who is God. For he brought things into being in order that His goodness might be communicated to creatures, and be represented by them....¹⁹

Hence, Saint Thomas points out that the reason *why* God creates, is precisely because of God’s intention to share his own goodness, to “communicate”—Saint Thomas himself says—His own goodness. The Good here is intended to diffuse his own goodness, which is also himself; and thus, which is the same thing as to self-communicate. This is the reason for Creation. In this sense, we understand *what* Creation is—this deeper appreciation of the motivations on the side of the Creator. Do we grasp the essential meaning of creativity and not merely a technical description in metaphysical terms of *what* is happening, but *why* what is happening is happening? In this way we approach a more complete ontology of Creation: in the sense that we do not merely grasp in analogically physical terms *what* God is doing but what is *God* doing?—namely, that he is formally (and hence essentially, principally,

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most importantly) sharing himself, but materially (secondarily) bringing beings into existence.

The above-quoted text from the *Summa* is not isolated. Quite the contrary, it seems that later in his life, Saint Thomas was rather enchanted by this Neoplatonic vision of reality as the fruit of the self-giving, self-diffusing Good, that he made it a point to write a complete detailed commentary on the pseudo-Aristotelian text often cited among medieval scholars as the *Liber de Causis* (*Book of Causes*), or what is also called the *Liber de Expositione Bonitatis Purae* (*Book on the Exposition of Pure Goodness*), which, interestingly, Saint Thomas also pointed out to be really an anonymous summary of Neoplatonic doctrines, principally that of the Neoplatonist Proclus's *Elements of Theology*, which, in turn, depends on much of Plotinus's *Enneads*. A quotation from his commentary on the ninth proposition of the *Liber de Causis* is revealing. Thus, Saint Thomas writes in *Super Librum de Causis Expositio*,

After stating how an intelligence [i.e., angel] knows what is above it and what is under it, [the author] shows here that what is above it, introducing this [ninth] proposition to show that an intelligence depends on this first cause: *The stability and essence of every intelligence is through pure goodness that is through the first cause*. Proclus also states this proposition, but more universally, that in Proposition 12 of his book: "The principle of all beings and their first cause is the good." The author means the same thing by "pure goodness" in his proposition that Proclus means by "the good" in his proposition. For pure goodness is said to be, not a participated goodness, but the very subsisting essence of goodness, which the Platonists called the "good itself." What is essentially, purely, and primarily good must be the first cause of all things because, as Proclus proves, a cause is always "better" than its effect. So what is the first cause must be the first cause of all things because, as Proclus proves, a cause is always "better" than its effect. So what is the first cause must be best. Hence, it must be that what is essentially "good is the first cause of all beings." And this is what Dionysius says in chapter 1 of *On the Divine Names*: "But because" God is the very "essence of goodness through" his "very being, He is the cause of all existing things." So, too, must intelligences, which have participated being and participated goodness, depend on pure goodness as an effect does on its cause. And this is what [the author] says: *The stability and essence of an intelligence exists through pure goodness* because an intelligence has from the first goodness stable being; that is, it endures without motion.²⁰

One might quibble with this text to say that, in it, Saint Thomas merely points out that the first cause must be the best and hence, the self-subsisting good. It does not follow that the first cause is a cause *because he is good*, but simply just that he is also good. So, granted that his creativity and his goodness are coextensive in the one God, that does not mean that one is the reason for the other. God could be good, indeed, but his creativity need not be due to his own goodness, and even less to communicate his own goodness. He could be a good God who does communicate his own goodness but does not do so *for communicating his own goodness*. Hence, it could be that his creativity derives from his goodness not *per se* but *per accidens*. But listen now to this following text taken from his gloss on the twenty-third proposition, and with this I hope to convince you that Saint Thomas unequivocally regards God's creative act of self-communication as principally derived from His being a self-diffusing Good and not for any other reason. Thus, Saint Thomas,

... it is proper to God, who is the very essence of goodness, to communicate himself to other things. We see that everything, insofar as he is perfect and a being in act, transmits its likeness to other things. Hence what is essentially act and goodness, namely, God, essentially and originally communicates his goodness to things.²¹

As Norris Clarke sums it, thus "The very inner life of God himself, the supreme fullness of what it means to be, is by its very nature *self-communicative Love*, which then subsequently flows over freely in the finite self-creation that is Creation. Now wonder, then, that self-communication is written into the very heart of all beings, as finite but positive images of their Source."²² This last comment points toward the analogical participation of the creativity of God in creatures, especially in person-creatures, which we will discuss in a while.

Intermezzo: Getting Some Things Straight to Secure a *Nihil Obstat*

"A slight initial error eventually grows to vast proportions, according to the Philosopher."²³ Thus, Saint Thomas. There is a subtle doctrine, which we have to grasp aright if we are not to go astray at this point of our essay, since in speaking of creatures, one is most in danger of sliding off the course of orthodoxy, and orthodoxy demands that we specify with accuracy the analogical

likeness of God in creatures, without which, one falls away into pantheistic monisms.

The danger, briefly, is this: One must be careful that in affirming the likeness of God and creatures, we do not end up saying that *what* creatures are is *what* God is. The key to expressing this rightly is to affirm a *real distinction* between the essence of the creature and the existence (*esse*) that the creature receives from God.²⁴ This means, in effect, that while we have our existence from God, that existence, which we receive from God, keeps us existing *not as part of us insofar as we are what we are*. The existence, which we receive from God, is very intimate to our being, no doubt, for without it we shall collapse into nothingness; yet intimate to our being it may be, it is *outside of our essence*. The principle of existence, which makes the being *is*, is composed with the principle of essence, which makes the being *what* it is, yet the composition is a composition of really distinct principles, distinct ontologically—that is, they are not one and the same principle in reality but two different principles, neither of which is metaphysically reducible to the other. Creation then, is simply this: It is for creatures to receive existence (*esse*) really distinct from their essence—at least this is so on the side of creatures. And this, of course, applies both to material and immaterial substances:

Essence is found ... in created intellectual substance. Their being (*esse*) is other than their essence, though their essence is without matter. Hence their (*esse*) being is ... received, and therefore it is limited and restricted to the capacity of the recipient nature.²⁵

Essence is found in substances composed of matter and form. In these too, being (*esse*) is received and limited, because they have being from another.²⁶

If the essence of creatures excludes *qua essence*, the existence that they receive from God, then it would seem fair to say that they are not the cause of their own existence, since existence does not belong to their essence, and what the essence does not have it cannot confer to itself.²⁷ God's existence, on the other hand, belongs to His Essence—indeed rather, God's Essence is Existence, in which case God is his own Existence: He is a necessary being. Creatures then are not necessary beings, but are beings if at all thanks to the existence that comes from God. That is to say, creatures receive their existence from God, Who (alone) Is.²⁸ But

[e]verything that receives something from another is potential with regard to what it receives, and what is received in it is its actuality. The quiddity or form, therefore, which is the intelligence, must be potential with regards to its being (*esse*), which it receives from God, and this being is received as an actuality. Thus, potency and act are found in the intelligences....

Since there is both potency and act in the intelligences, it will not be difficult to find a multitude of them that would be impossible if they had no potentiality.... These substances, moreover, are distinct from one another according to their degree of potency and act, a superior intelligence, being closer to primary being, having more act and less potency, and so with the others. This gradation ends with the human soul, which holds the lowest place among intellectual substances.²⁹

Now, since creatures have act admixed with potency, they are not pure act. Their being or existence (*esse*) as act is received and thus limited by their essence as potency. Creation, then, again, is this: It is for creatures to receive existence (*esse*) as act really distinct from their essence as potency—at least this is so on the side of creatures God, on the other hand, whose existence (though we strain language here since God’s existence is not his but is He himself) is not received in anything, is altogether unlimited, and thus is unlimited actuality. In sum, then, *act is limited by potency, without which act is altogether unlimited*. This metaphysical principle captures all the grades of being in the universe, immaterial and material. Hence, Cajetan comments: “Within the spread of being there are two extremes, namely, the glorious God, altogether pure act, and prime matter, altogether pure potency. All the rest are intermediate, seeing that they have act and potency.”³⁰

Granted, then, this spread of being, our attention falls on the human being, whose soul Saint Thomas speaks of in the above quote as “[holding] the lowest place among intellectual substance.” This last is of immense consequence. The human person, in effect, Saint Thomas is saying, is a rational creature because he has a soul, the least of intellectual—that is, spiritual, immaterial—substances. And because spirituality posits the condition for intelligence to the extent that, thanks to the principle of spirituality, the being is receptive of intellectual forms abstracted from phantasms, he is an intelligent or rational creature. He is the least of rational creatures, no doubt—yet a rational creature nonetheless. Again, he is a poor composite of spirituality and materiality, but still he is spiritual nonetheless. He is, an *embodied spirit*. Norris-Clarke explains this metaphysical anthropology as follows.

A *human* person is a personal being possessing its intellectual nature as joined in a natural unity with a material body. Aristotle defined this unity called 'man' as 'a rational animal.' Saint Thomas, too, accepts this and uses it often. But a profounder and more exact description in terms of Saint Thomas's own total vision of man would be *embodied spirit*. These two perspectives are different, though by no means contradictory. "Rational animal" signifies man's place as the highest of animals, starting from this material world of our experience as its frame of reference and moving *upwards*. "Embodied spirit" signifies man's place in a total vision of the hierarchy of being, looking *downward* from God as Infinite Spirit, through the various levels of finite pure spirits (angels), then down through man as embodied spirit, all the way down to the levels of purely material being.³¹

This embodied spirit is one who make conscious acts, who can say "I" and has the experience of an *ego*. Let us now draw out the consequences of this metaphysical anthropology of man.

Human Persons As Creative Persons

We are now in a position to discuss human persons relevant to the theme of creativity and self-communication. This is the cardinal point of our essay in that we are here going to explicate the creative tendency in human persons, analogous to the creativity, which we have described of God. This, of course, directly leads to the possibility of "ownership" insofar as it is the latter's sufficient justification. We take as our point of departure the analogical nature of being and the key to drawing out the creative aspect of the human person is in the term *analogous*.

Analogy enables us to answer the following objection. It would seem that creation according to man is impossible, since Saint Thomas teaches clearly that only God can create. Hence,

... to create can be the action of God alone. For the more universal effects must be reduced to the more universal and prior causes. Now among all effects the most universal is being itself: and hence it must be the proper effect of the first and universal cause, and that is God.³²

This is true, but this is to use creation in a strict sense. Certainly no man can confer real being (*esse*) to things. No one can bring things into being *qua being* from nonbeing except God. In its proper sense, as it is used in the *Summa*, no one but God may create. In this way, only God creates, absolutely

speaking, to wit, it follows, according to our formula, that He alone owns, absolutely speaking, and thus has absolute rights.

Yet at the same time, we have shown clearly that for Saint Thomas, and rightly so, Creation is first and foremost the self-communication of one's goodness. Insofar as this latter is possible in man, we may speak of human creation, not in a proper sense, but in an improper sense *yet nonetheless without equivocating*. In other words, "creation" cannot be applied univocally to both man and God, that much we grant, since no man may create, properly speaking.

Yet, if this is to say then that to speak of man creating is to use "creation" equivocally—that we deny. Our proof lies here: that while God and man create—should man create—quite differently, this difference is not to the extent of completeness but leaves room for a similarity—indeed a very central one—that in both acts, so to speak, both agents are engaging in diffusive self-communication. And since creation applied thus is both different and similar, we may speak of human creation in an *analogical* way, though never in an absolute and univocal way.

Because this creativity in man is not, as it were, as complete as it is in God, thus we may say that man shares a part of God's creativity, participating in it. Yet, this is neither to say that God grants man the power to create and in this way we participate in it, for in this case "creation" for man and God would be univocal. It is, rather, that man in creation engages in self-communicative actions just as God does, and in this sense, creation in man and God are similar, yet at the same time, these two creations are different, for in no uncertain terms does man create from nothing as God does but, rather, presupposes prime matter. Thus, creation applied to God and man are similar, as it is dissimilar and hence analogical—even if, we must say, in any analogy what separates God and creature is greater than what assimilates God and creature.³³

With this, in turn, we have the possibility of man's right to "own," if at all, though also in an analogous and participatory manner, and not absolutely, insofar as it is derived from a participatory and analogous creativity. Analogy, then, controls our explication of human creation, because it requires that human creation *must be similar in significant aspects* as compared to God's creation even while there are equally important differences insofar as "creation" is analogous and not equivocal.

Human Creation, Analogously Similar to Divine Creation, Is Self-Communicative

We have explicated the act of Creation by God. It is, the self-communicative outpouring of being (*esse*). Through this outpouring of being (*esse*), the grades of being exist, each according to its degree of participation of being. And as is typical of Saint Thomas,

... that which is through participation in something cannot be the first being, because prior to it is the being which it participates in order to be. But God is the first being, with nothing prior to Him. His essence is, therefore, His being (*esse*) ...

Again,

... This sublime truth Moses was taught by our Lord. When Moses asked our Lord: "If the children of Israel say to me: What is His name? What shall I say to them?" The Lord replied: "I AM WHO I AM.... Thou shalt say to the children of Israel: HE WHO IS hath sent you" (Ex. 3:13, 14). By this, our Lord showed that His own proper name is HE WHO IS. Now names have been devised to signify the natures or essences of things. It remains, then, that the divine being is God's essence or nature.³⁴

God, He Who Is, from our perspective, can be said to be communicating himself when he creates and communicates being (*esse*), because he is being itself (*esse ipse*). Again, from God's own perspective, the "I Am Who Am" (*Ego Sum Qui Sum*), when he is creating—when he is communicating being (*esse*)—is in fact communicating his "I (*Ego*)," because God's "I (*Ego*)" is that which *is*, as the name, *Ego Sum Qui Sum* (I Am Who Am), indicates. The *Sum*; "am" in *Qui Sum*; *who am* is but the Latin, first person singular of the infinitive verb *esse*; to be. "*Sum*; am," therefore, indicates the *existential act* that the verb *esse*; being or to-be signifies. God's creative act, insofar as it is a self-communication of being (*esse*) is, hence, a self-communication of his "I."

No human being, for sure, can call himself "I" in the same way that God speaks of "I." The obvious difference of referents makes for any equation a blatant blasphemy. Yet, as the *imago Dei*, the image of God, man images the divine activity by corresponding acts. Man—even if merely as an image of correspondence and not of conformity—nonetheless as *imago*, like God, can have subjective, self-referential consciousness experience, expressed by the "I."

"I am writing this thesis about human creativity." Such a statement expresses a conscious awareness marking out a *subject*—an actor over *here*—as engaging in the activity of writing. But not any subject—a particular subject: "I", or me. This "I" is indeed a human being; but not just *any* human being but one *specific, individuated* human being—a human individual. "I" am contradistinct from "you," "him," "her," or "it"; such an individual is unrepeatable and is, hence, ontologically unique. At the same time, this "I" experiences itself as a conscious being, with varying degrees of intelligence—and hence, rational. This we call a *person*—an individual substance of a rational nature. Thus, Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.,

"Person" (human, angelic, or divine) means a subject, a suppositum that can say "I," which exists apart, which is *sui juris*.... The name "person," says Saint Thomas, is derived from the form that we call "personality," and "personality" expressed subsistence in a rational nature.³⁵

Or as Krapiec, O.P. puts it,

This subsistent "I" who is conscious of both "my" spiritual and corporeal acts is nothing other than that sought-after person, about whom Saint Thomas said is his own existence and proportional nature, and who can be defined in agreement with the current classical philosophy as the "I" of a rational nature.³⁶

The "I" is present as the conscious *self* in every human person. Each man or woman, as *human* subjects saying "I am thinking; I am walking; I am talking to you," indicate by that "I" *themselves*, as unique and rational centers of really existing beings, which we call persons: a real center of existence that is rational. But the "I"—the *self* of man is not the self of any person whatsoever but the self of *human* person. And, just as *humanity* grants the gift of *rationality*, so also it confers upon this personal center *materiality*. The human person is embodied. Here one recalls our earlier expression of the human personality.³⁷ Rationality refers to that conscious spirituality in man, while materiality envelops the spirituality in a body. The human person is, hence, an *embodied spirit*.

This embodied spirit is free and follows necessarily upon its spirituality. Spirituality or immateriality in the human person as embodied *spirit* implies the potentiality for infinite satisfaction. The human intellect as spiritual is a potential capacity for an infinity of forms. Because spirituality is, in essence, fluid, it is capable of taking on the formality of various things, which would

have been impossible if spirituality were static. Our experience of knowing things betrays this: In knowing the soul as spiritual or intellectual substance reproduces the form of things abstract from the matter in which the form inheres. If spirituality were static, the mind could not know anything, since it could not take on the form that is known. It is, in a sense, a potency for an infinity of forms. If it is a potency for an infinity of forms, one would say that it is only satisfied by an infinity of forms, but as it sweeps the earth, this spiritual potency cannot find any thing that can possibly have in itself such an infinity. Each thing may have many forms—substantial or accidental—but, in any case, it will be finite. There remains, then, only one Being who can fulfill the spirit of man, and this is God, who contains in himself infinitely all the forms there could ever be, according to which, Saint Augustine calls the *divine ideas*, the essences of all things: “O Lord we are made for you alone, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” This is only in the Vision of God.³⁸

But for now, the will, as spiritual desire,³⁹ as desiring what the mind judges as a source of satisfaction,⁴⁰ therefore cannot be satisfied with any created thing. As the mind turns on each thing, very soon its infinite potentiality begins to hunger, and the object is judged no more as a source of satisfaction, and the will begins to lose its grip on the object. Yet precisely because of this, the will is not determined to any particular thing, since no particular thing can be judged in true spirit⁴¹ to be satisfactory. Nothing binds it forever. Nor will the seeking of much created things be of any help, since nothing makes for the infinity that will finally quench its soul. Spirituality informs it that nothing here can make up for God. As such, the true spirit cannot be grasping all the time—for it knows that this is futile; there is no point in appropriating creation, for it will not heal the wound. Sooner than later, the pain of thirst returns. Greed is contrary and foolish to the spirituality of this embodied spirit.

But if greed is foolish—since grasping is a pointless endeavor, then the true spirit is not fixed on anything: It is free. It is not dead-locked, as it were, on any kind of created good. This is not to say that it will no more seek created goods—but rather, that in seeking anything, this seeking is not necessary, because nothing has an absolute hold on the will that is directed by true spirit.⁴² If there is no necessity to seek any good, then it may seek the good or it may not. Further, if spirituality rules out necessitation to *any created good*, it follows that it also rules out the *necessary appropriation* of any created good: If there is *nothing* that one must want, there is no act of *necessary wanting*. In effect, the embodied spirit is neither determined to grasping *anything*, nor determined to *grasping* anything. It can *not-grasp*, since there is *nothing* it must grasp. If it need not grasp, then *freedom for other acts* is possible: There

is just nothing it is determined to do.⁴³ Detachment, as it were, has given birth to freedom. Acts of the embodied spirit, which are not determined to one kind—namely, grasping—betray this freedom. Devoid of spirituality, brutes cannot free themselves from the yoke of constant grasping consumption; the embodied spirit, on the other hand, is free to engage in *production*.⁴⁴ His spirituality frees him to make, to create. The variety of human production *reveals* him as possessing this freedom conferred by spirituality.

The Thomistic understanding of human nature as embodied spirit, or even rational animal, does not imply a static structure, rigidly determined in all its details, but rather, a free dynamic center of free self-conscious action on two levels (material and spiritual), whose outside limits of development are set *a priori* only as those of a spirit united to a material body... None of the most varied forms of culture or technology produced in the long course of human history gives us the slightest evidence for believing that we are dealing with anything else than an embodied spirit. In fact, this immense variety is exactly what we would expect from a being whose *nature* is to possess creative freedom.⁴⁵

So, then, production as a creative endeavor reveals man's nature: in the sense that it shows man to be spiritual. Production, then, for any man, is *self-communicative*: Through this free activity—instead of being predetermined to grasping—he shows himself to be spirituality embodied in materiality. One might say, in traditional Thomist parlance, that the nature of anything is known by its acts.⁴⁶

Yet there is a still deeper sense in which productive activity is self-communicative for man. Man, as was said, does not communicate real being (*esse*), since he does not bring things into being from nothing. Being a creature, his being (*esse*) is really distinct from his essence. Therefore, unlike God, whose "I" is His existence (*esse*) man's "I" is not his being (*esse*). Yet, like God, man's creative, productive activity is also a self-communication and, indeed, a self-communication of his "I." This "I," this "*Ego*," which is self-evidently manifest in his consciousness through activity, is the term that refers to his *self as subject*: his *subjectivity*.⁴⁷

To say "I" is to point at one's personality—that center of existence that makes that human being the *sole subject in the world of objects*. The person who experiences "I" is the only one who can only have this "I" perspective and never another. He is the only one center to himself, which is *here* and not there. He is the only one to whom his own subjectivity is manifest. The self as *subject* is only available to the person *himself*, and never to another.

Now the “self” can be a self-as-subject or a self-as-object. In the case of the latter, when I think of my memories of myself, my intentionality turns on the self as an idea, as an object of investigation. Such objectification of the self is also present in introspection, when consciousness looks upon the self to seek it, but nevertheless always as something *over-there* to be known.⁴⁸ But this is in a sense to miss the true self—that is to say, the subjective self. The “I-over-here”—this *self as subject*—is most properly that “I” that is my *self*.⁴⁹ The “I” that is truly me is one that is essentially *here as subject, as the actor*. It is not that which is known, but the *knower*. The known is over-there, at the end of the intentional act. The knower, on the contrary, is *right-here*, conducting the intentional act directed at some object over there. If consciousness is consciousness of something, as the phenomenologists say, we must add that *self-consciousness* is consciousness of something *other than the self*.

The only way that my self-consciousness is present as a *subjective self* is to intend something besides the self, rather than to introspect or look upon the self. To intend the self is not helpful. Whenever I turn upon myself to intend it, I kill its subjectivity: It becomes for me an object. On the other hand, whenever I intend an object consciously, I retain my subjectivity, since the subjective self remains *here* directing my intentionality toward that object. Intending *objects* situates my self where it should be: *here as subject*. With this one draws Lonergan’s conclusion: that the subject as subject is the revealed according to the type of intentional acts.

... the reader, if he tries to find himself as subject, to reach back and, as it were, uncover his subjectivity, cannot succeed. Any such effort is introspecting, attending to the subject; what is found is, not the subject as subject, but only the subject as object; it is the subject as subject that does the finding. To heighten one’s presence to oneself, one does not introspect, *one raises the level of one’s activity*. If one sleeps and dreams, one is present to oneself as a frightened dreamer. If one wakes, one becomes present to oneself, not as moved but as moving; not as felt but as feeling; not as seen but as seeing. If one is puzzled and wonders and inquires, the empirical subject becomes an intellectual subject....⁵⁰

Lonergan’s last remark is important. It is not merely that intentional activity exposes the subjectivity of the self, but even more, the *kind of intentional activity* determines directly the *kind of self* that is now subjectively made available. To the extent that the intentional activities are intellectual, so also the subjective self now subjectively revealed is revealed as an *intellectual* subject, a *spiritual* “I-here” that is now embodied.

And, precisely, this is what happens in human production—and even more so in corporate acts of production, where intelligent intentional acts are multiplied. From the very start of a great idea to the finished product on the shelf for sale, presupposes an infinite number of nonaccidental, planned, strategic, intelligent activities—“the intentional acts that envisage ends, select means, secure collaborators, direct operations,”⁵¹ and so forth. All these acts are intended. Yet, one might call these acts—acts of meaning—since they are intelligent, meaningful acts. Intellectual intentions, therefore, are directed toward meanings by the subject.⁵² The point is, then, that in production, the subjective self is made present, revealed, as each and every presupposed meaningful activity. Thus, Lonergan:

Beyond the world we know about, there is the further world we make. But what we make, we first intend. We imagine, we plan, we investigate possibilities, we weigh pros and cons, we enter into contracts, we have countless orders given and executed. From the beginning to the end of the process, we are engaged in acts of meaning; and without them, the process would not occur or the end be achieved. The pioneers in this country found shore and heartland, mountains and plains, but they have covered it with cities, laced it with roads, exploited it with their industries, until the world man has made stands between us and a prior world of nature. Yet the whole of that added, man-made, artificial world is the cumulative, now planned, now chaotic product of human acts of meaning.⁵³

In sum, as activity that reveals to others a spiritual being free from determined greed and consumption, production as such is *self-communicative* of man. Again, as activity that *is* reveals the subjective self through acts of meaning, human production is therefore also *self-communicative*. Human creative productivity, whether private or corporate, is analogous to divine creativity.

With this, then, we are warranted to say, by way of an analogy, that man in human production—whether private or corporate—is also creating. Man *creates*, by his intelligent acts involved in production. Such creations, certainly are not univocal with God’s act of creation: to bring something out of nothing: Such is the Divine prerogative. So, *absolutely*, only God creates. Still, there is the certain and undeniable analogy between man’s mode of intelligent production of things (thanks to his spirituality) and God’s act of diffusing His being (*esse*) in that both are clear forms of the self-communication of *persons*, centers of spirituality. This analogous *personalistic self-communication* warrants our predication of “creativity” and “creation” for both persons, as has been explained above. Both man and God create, analogically speaking. Recalling,

therefore, the principle of ownership that we derived at the beginning: “The creation of anything suffices for the ownership of the same,” we are now in a position to apply this to human acts of production; if the creation of anything suffices for the ownership of the same, then it follows that man who creates his productions will legitimately own these productions. Such productions can range from the simplest bookmark to the most complex electronic systems, from the tallest building to the deepest underground channels, and stretch to every road and city that is built, across vast terrains. All these are productions and, as created, can be owned. Again, since man does not create, absolutely speaking, neither does he own anything, absolutely speaking: Such is the privilege of the divine Creator. Instead, he owns in a qualified sense. Still, he does own, because he does (analogically) create—thanks to his spirituality, which entails self-communication through acts of production, as we have explicated and repeated. Again, much as his spirituality makes possible his creativity, which, in turn, entitles him to ownership, to private property, this spirituality at the same time excludes greed and obsessive self-appropriation insofar as these are directed to material finitudes.

I have, therefore, within the limits of this paper, achieved my aim of articulating the first principles of the *creative economy*, which I understand to be instantiated in democratic capitalism. These principial foundations for a creative economy set themselves as a participatory and analogous act of God’s own creative principles. At the same time, these principles have, as corollaries, principles that contradict norms that condone greed as any form of moral motivation, the latter having been exposed as foolish and out of step with the spirituality of the human person, the embodied spirit.

Before I finish, I wish to add that some other corollaries can be drawn from this analysis, and though it will not be done in detail here, it might be interesting to point out some possible directions for development. Considerations of self-communication can also be extended toward communication of self beyond the product. Human creativity, as we have explicated, is always intelligent acts of meaning: It entails something cognitive as its object. Such cognitive data, called intentional being (*ens intentionale*), certainly do not remain in the mind but translate into the product. The idea of a car becomes really a car in real production. The mental blueprint as intentional being in the mind becomes a reality—real being—when put through the industry of man.

At the same time, the car created does not just exist but is used, and as something used, is something understood. The user appreciates—even if not completely—the car. In a sense, he grasps its meaning: It is a car and not just a pile of metal and motors, and he understands how it operates, and what it

can do, and so forth. He has, in a word, *assimilated* the meaning, the cognitive form, the intentional being of the car, which was originally in the mind of the maker. Hence, the creative self-*communication* continues through into the user beyond the product. One can, in a sense—though a much weaker sense—be said to have extended one’s creative act beyond the product to the user: Therefore, it can also be said that one “owns” the user. Hence, extension of one’s *imperialism* need not be a matter of controlling geographical areas, but producing meaningful and useful artifacts for the benefit of the human race—in which case, one *conquers by way of benefiting humanity*, by making things that others will find useful, and thus use them, assimilating the intentional being that has its origin in you. M. A. Krapiec, O.P.’s writings on culture and intentionality clearly move in this direction.⁵⁴

Further, a consideration of human production *on the side of the product* can also help strengthen the analogy and lead to more normative principles. In human production, the principal activity is *change*. We always change things when we produce anything. Change, in turn, is like the creative act insofar as it is an application of act to potency. *Act*, which is really distinct from *potency* and received by the latter, occurs at the physical domain in terms of form (act) and matter (potency), analogous to its metaphysical parallel in terms of existence (act) and essence (potency).

Therefore, insofar as production is concerned, it is really some kind of substantial change—taking some raw material and turning it into something else. It is, like divine creation, an act of perfecting: God perfects essences (potency) by granting these existence (act); man perfects raw material (second matter) by applying to these shape, design, and a new organization—in a word, various formalities (act). We take scrap matter and turn these into cars. We take plastic and turn it into computers. What we are, in fact, doing is really granting basic matter some kind of substantial formality but, in applying actual form to potential matter, we are perfecting the matter, since act always perfects potency. *Like* God, we are perfecting things in human production—and therefore our creative *analogy* is further strengthened: Man creates, analogously, as God creates, and this strengthens our deduction toward man’s right to anything he produces. This, at the same time, implies that acts contrary to the creativity—to the extent that these are *not* the perfecting of matter—excludes such acts as being “creative” and hence, excludes the actor in turn to any claim to anything.

Such acts, which are contrary to the perfection of matter, are necessarily the reverse of the perfection of matter, in the sense that one acts *so to strip second matters of their substantial formalities*. This, in ordinary language, is

to *destroy*. In destruction, one, in essence, reduces a thing from its original state to a simpler state by stripping it of its present formality. To destroy a car is to crush it and deprive the metal (matter) of its original shape (form). To ruin a computer is to break the silicon chips and pull out the wires, which is to deprive the silicon plastics and metal wires (matter) of an internal organization (form). This, in turn, leaves us with the conclusion that the most primary self-contradictory acts must be acts of terrorist destruction: Such acts aim to articulate ownership rights of the destroyer—that they have rights to own certain goods of which they have been deprived—yet, at the same time, precisely such destructive acts implicitly and most necessarily exclude them from fulfilling the principle of ownership because such acts are the direct contradictories of creative activities. But an analysis of such acts must remain for another paper.

Notes

1. Michael Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 122.
2. *Ibid.*, 127.
3. To speak of first principles is to say that they are the self-evident starting points of thought, and thus indemonstrable, but first principles are self-evident only within their order and can be conclusions of another science of a higher order. Hence, the first principles of *democratic capitalism* are self-evident for the social theorist, but are conclusions for the metaphysician or theologian insofar as for him these principles admit of demonstration *qua* metaphysics, as a science of a higher order than social philosophy.
4. The notion of a *creative economy* was first coined by Michael Novak (*Catholic Ethic*, 237). His presentation of the creative spur in democratic capitalism seems somewhat imperfect: Namely, that the prospect of obtaining material reward is the main motivation: “Yet Lincoln also saw the great cause of wealth is human wit, and grew quite eloquent in praising the role of invention in drawing wealth from the hidden bounty of creation. Similarly, he saw in the Patent and Copyright clause of the U.S. Constitution a remarkable incentive for inventors and creators (and one of history’s greatest boons to human freedom), since the prospect of the temporary ownership of ideas (as property) ‘added the fuel of *interest* to the *fire* of genius’” (*ibid.*, 129). This can be further refined; otherwise, it can be wrongly interpreted to condone capital greed. Hence, in distinction from that, it is my explicit intent to develop a justification of creativity as a noble moral call or the-

ological norm to participate self-consciously in God's creative life (which one might even call "contemplation in action"—as some Jesuit Fathers say), rather than as a mere effort to obtain a material reward, which, Saint Thomas clearly says, is an inordinate desire for which, object of desire being finite, will not grant real happiness. Our happiness consists in God alone, and the reward is the perpetual intellectual sight of Him, the Beatific Vision, of which we have a natural desire. This natural desire to see God is confused and negative, in the sense that it does not know its true fulfillment but knows that the finitude here fulfills it not, suffering, as it were, a constant restlessness, as even Aristotle in the *Ethics* displays, observing that happiness consists in nothing earthly, neither riches nor honor. Philosophy tells us that it is contemplation of the infinite and points in hope to an infinite being if this pain be not in vain, while religion reveals that this is God, who fulfills this clamor of unrest, as Saint Augustine testifies: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You." This satisfaction begins with the free theological gift of faith, through which, we begin to have a peering or obscure vision of God, until it is consummated in Heaven. Thus, through faith our souls begin its quench, faith being the spring of water leading to everlasting life, which life is the vision of God: "The glory of God is man fully alive, and to be fully alive is to see God."

5. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Psalms*, trans. Steven Loughlin (The Aquinas Translation Project, <http://www.niagara.edu/aquinas/>).
6. Ibid. "Dividitur ergo psalmus iste in tres partes. In prima ponit universale eius dominium; in secunda ponit sive ostendit modum quo homines accedunt ad Deum, ibi, quis ascendet; in tertia praedicat futurum cultum Dei per totum mundum, ibi, attollite. Circa primum duo facit. Primo ostendit quod universale est Dei dominium; secundo ponit signum vel causam, ibi, quia ipse super maria."
7. John of Saint Thomas, *Tractatus de Signis*, ed. John Deely (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), chap. 2, "The definition and division of signs," 25.
8. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Psalms*: "Consequenter reddit causam supradictorum, quia scilicet, super maria fundavit eam; quasi dicat: illud est artificis, quod ipse artifex facit. Sed Deus fecit terram et ea quae sunt in terra. Ergo ipsius est terra et plenitudo eius."
9. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 1 (New York: Christian Classics, 1981), 232–33.
10. W. Norris-Clarke, S.J., "The Limitation of Act by Potency," in *Explorations in Metaphysics* (New York: UNDP, 1994), 81: "First, he [Aquinas] had to empty the participation-limitation structure of its original Neoplatonic content.... Second, he had to disengage the Aristotelian act and potency theory from its hitherto exclusive attachment to a change context, and to add to the already existing "horizontal"

function of potency a new dimension, the static “vertical” function of receiving subject limiting a higher plenitude in a participation framework.” Father W. Norris-Clark, S.J., is one of the most important Thomists this century has known, creatively retrieving the principles implicit in Saint Thomas for personalistic themes. Anyone interested in peering into the future of Thomistic personalism will find his very fine 1993 Aquinas Lecture book, *Person and Being*, (Marquette: Marquette University Press, 1993) a most engaging read, to which I also credit to have been a source of philosophical antecedent and inspiration for this essay.

11. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibetal Questions 1 and 2*, trans. Sandra Edwards (Canada: PIMS, 1983), q. 2, 2, ad 1, 79.
12. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence (De Ente et Essentia)*, trans. Armand Maurer, chap. 5, 60.
13. Ibid.
14. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Book of Causes (Super Librum De Causis Expositio)* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), props. 22, 129.
15. See Ralph McInerny, “Being and Predication,” in *Being and Predication* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 227.
16. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. James Anderson, vol. 2 (New York: Hanover House, 1956), 69: “That God acts for an end can also be evident from the fact that the universe is not a result of chance but is ordered to a good, as Aristotle makes clear in *Metaphysics* XI. Now, the first agent acting for an end must act by intellect and will, for things devoid of intellect act for an end as directed thereto by another. This is obviously true in the world of things made by art; it is the archer who directs the flight of the arrow to a definite mark. This must also be the case in the realm of natural things; the right ordering of a thing to a due end requires knowledge of that end and of the means to it, and of the due proportion between both; and this knowledge is found only in an agent endowed with intelligence. But God is the first agent; therefore, he acts, not by a necessity of his nature, but by His intellect and will.”
17. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, c. 6, quoted in W. Norris-Clarke, S.J., “Action As the Self-Revelation of Being,” in *Explorations in Metaphysics*.
18. W. Norris-Clarke, S.J., “Action As the Self-Revelation of Being,” in *Explorations in Metaphysics*, 48–49.
19. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 246.

20. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Book of Causes*, 65–66.
21. *Ibid.*, 132.
22. W. Norris-Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being* (Marquette: Marquette University Press, 1998), 12.
23. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, Prologue, 28.
24. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought*, trans. Patrick Cummings (St. Louis, Mo.: Herder and Herder, 1950), 361.
25. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, c. 5, 4, 62.
26. *Ibid.*, c. 5, 10, 65.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ego Sum Qui Sum*. See Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality*, 80.
29. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, 57–58.
30. Cajetan Thomas de Vio, *Commentary on Being and Essence (In De Ente et Essentia d. Thomas Aquinatis)*, trans. Francis Wade (Marquette: Marquette University Press, 1964), 228.
31. W. Norris-Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being*, 32–33.
32. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 236.
33. I am grateful to Joseph A. Komonchak for this reminder.
34. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, vol. 1, c. 22, 11–10, 121.
35. Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality*, 392, 394.
36. Mieczylaw A. Krapiec, O.P., *I-Man: An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology*, trans. Marie Lescoe, Andrew Woznicki, and Theresa Sandok (Marcel Publications, 1983), 323.
37. See note 31.
38. One can observe that we are describing Saint Thomas’s teaching of man’s natural desire for God; that is, that man’s intellect is never satisfied with finite being but only with Infinite Being. In this way, man as intellectual is constituted such that he has a fitting capacity for the Infinite. Since God is Infinite Being, man is said to be “capable of God” or *Capax Dei*. As such, man as pure nature could not possibly be satisfied with the contemplation of causes through their effects, since to know the cause of anything through its effect is to know it in terms of its effects, and the effects of the Infinite accessible to us naturally is finite creation. On this point, therefore, Cajetan was wrong, as Cardinal Henri de Lubac, S.J., rightly pointed out. Man can only be satisfied with the knowledge of the cause in itself,

and this is to see God in the face. Nevertheless, we present the natural desire for God, as seen here, as primarily founded upon a desire of the intellect—an intellectual hunger, and thus we differ from Cardinal de Lubac who locates it in the will. To Brian Mullady, O.P., I owe this point.

39. The will is called the rational (spiritual) appetite (desire), which desires according to the judgment of reason (spirit).
40. The rational appetite (will) moves toward what reason judges to be good, and what is judged good is that which has the capacity to fulfill or, more generally, what is perfective, or perfects. The Good is that which is perfective, and accordingly, something will be judged good to the extent that it perfects, though its goodness is limited by its ability to perfect—it is good to that *finite* extent. But since all things cannot be perfective unless they even *are*, all perfections have to *exist*, in which case, existence (*esse*) is the first perfection of all perfections. Therefore, existence (*esse*) is that *good* by which anything is even good. Yet existence (*esse*) is participated, insofar as the essence of creatures is really distinct from it. Hence, the good of created things derive from their existence or act of being (*esse*), and not from their essence. See *De Veritate*, Q. 22, 1, ad 4; Q. 21, 5.
41. Right reason; *recta ratio*.
42. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* exemplifies what I mean here: The philosopher examines all created things, which could constitute happiness, and finds that none of them do, except to point out a weak approximation of happiness as contemplation.
43. This is not to say with J. P. Sartre that man is absolutely free—if by “absolute” one means “at all times and in all situations.” Man is not absolutely free; there are some things he cannot do, such as tend toward evil as evil, nor can he resist the Beatific Vision. However, before the myriad of created finitudes, he is not determined to do anything and, hence, in and confined to such a context, one can say that he is absolutely free.
44. W. Norris-Clarke, S.J., *Person and Being*, 39: “... unlike animals, the unrestricted range of man's intellectual power and interests, matched by the corresponding freedom of his will, give him an inexhaustible creativity to express himself in constantly new—and not always predictable—cultural forms, instruments, and ways of interacting with nature—give him, in a word, the ability to *make his own history* as he journeys down through time.”
45. *Ibid.*, 40.
46. See also Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*, trans. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Holland: D. Reidel Publishing, 1979), 27–28.

47. One might add that it is the *reflexive* capacity of the mind, which enables the presence of the self as *subject*. See Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 46: “Every man is also given to himself as a concrete ego, and this is achieved by means of both self-consciousness and self-knowledge. Self-knowledge ascertains that the being, who objectively is I, subjectively constitutes my ego, if it is in it that I have the experience of my subjectiveness. Hence, not only am I conscious of my ego (on the ground of self-knowledge) but, owing to my consciousness in its reflexive function, I also experience my ego, I have the experience of myself as the concrete subject of the ego’s very subjectiveness. Consciousness is not just an aspect but also an essential dimension or an actual moment of the reality of the being that I am, since it constitutes its subjectiveness in the experiential sense. This being ... would never without consciousness constitute itself as an ego.”
48. This is what Karol Wojtyla means by “self-knowledge.” See *ibid.* For us, *true* self-consciousness—the experience of the ego-as-subject—refers to Cardinal Wojtyla’s “self-consciousness.” Self-consciousness, which is objectified, which is the self-as-object, coincides with the Cardinal’s “self-knowledge.”
49. See Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 46.
50. Bernard Lonergan, S.J., “Cognitional Structure,” *The Lonergan Reader*, ed. Mark and Elizabeth Morelli (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 385.
51. Bernard Lonergan S.J., “Dimensions of Meaning,” *The Lonergan Reader*, 390.
52. Also see M. A. Krapiec, O.P., *I-Man*, 177.
53. Lonergan, “Dimensions of Meaning,” 389.
54. Krapiec, *I-Man*, 169–84.