

The Mysterious Value of the Human Person

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An openness to reality without limits (*logos, nous*) is what marks man out from the other animals, as Greek philosophy discovered. Man-made things, like houses, bridges, computers, business corporations, legal codes and civil governments, as well as nature-made things, like vegetables and animals, are stamped with limitation. The human person alone, among all beings in the cosmos, has the capacity to transcend or “go beyond” oneself into infinity, not of course through his or her physicality (confined to space and time and quantifiable), but through that other human component which is able to go beyond the confines of space and time to an indefinite degree, namely his or her metaphysicality. This wondrous power, traditionally called spirit (human knowledge and love), opens humanity towards infinite reality, and thus places the dignity of the human person, or the intrinsic value of every human being, above the entire physical cosmos.¹ This, Aquinas pointed out *passim*, and Maritain emphasized in his socio-political philosophy.² For the various “ways of knowing”, we can recall Maritain’s masterpiece, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, as well as *Science and Wisdom* and *The Range of Reason*.³ For his part, Gilson provided the epistemological ground for this total openness to reality, especially in his works *Methodical Realism* and *Thomist Realism and Critique of Knowledge*.⁴

¹ Joseph M. de Torre, *Work, Culture, Liberation*, (Manila: Vera-Reyes, 1985), chap 5, and *Openness to Reality: Essays on Secularism and Transcendence* (Manila: SEASFI, 1995), chap. III.

² See especially his classic *Humanisme intégral* (Paris: Aubier, 1936), and *Man and the State* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951).

³ Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995); *Science and Wisdom* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1940); *The Range of Reason* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1952).

⁴ Étienne Gilson, *Methodical Realism* (Front Royal, Virginia: Christendom Press, 1992); *Thomist Realism and Critique of Knowledge*, trans. Mark A. Wauck (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986).

The human person is invited by his or her Creator, who is the fulness of personal existence, to plunge into that potentially infinite reality of the physical world (both macrocosmic, in an ever expanding universe; and microcosmic, in an ever explorable intra-atomic world of pure energy). As well as into the unfathomable and purely transensible and intangible world of moral values, anchored in the depth of human nature.⁵

Astride these two experiences (which fascinated Kant),⁶ the physical and the ethical, is the metaphysical drive in search of ultimate beauty—the impulse toward total beauty and good, through the experience of partial beauty and good. Plato called this impulse, *Eros*, a term which subsequently lost its original meaning.⁷ He also identified the possession of total knowledge as wisdom, and since this is unattainable by man, he has to be humbly satisfied with the “love of wisdom,” namely philosophy. Man is both the poorest and the richest of all beings—the poorest, because he realizes the abyss of his ignorance (other beings don’t), and the richest, because he can embark on an indefinite adventure to dispel that ignorance. The study of nature and history is the privileged path for this adventure.

The Global View of Reality

On the one hand, man has an infinite variety of choices in his quest for truth or revelation of reality to the human mind.⁸ This gives rise to the specialization of the sciences (mathematical, natural, social).⁹ Likewise, the search for values and ultimate meaning, and the sensible expression of them through the fine arts, which are also called The Arts of the Beautiful (as distinct from the arts of the useful), also opens up an infinite number of vistas.¹⁰

On the other hand, however, man also perceives that beyond those supreme values of beauty, good and truth lies the ultimate unity of all being. The

⁵ Stanley L. Jaki, *The Relevance of Physics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978). Also William A. Wallace, *The Modeling of Nature* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996).

⁶ Joseph M. de Torre, *The Humanism of Modern Philosophy* (Pasig City, Philippines: University of Asia and the Pacific, 1997), chap. XI, 7.

⁷ *Symposium*.

⁸ *Aletheia* or “revelation” is the Greek term for truth.

⁹ Jacques Maritain, *Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1947).

¹⁰ Étienne Gilson, *The Arts of the Beautiful* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1965) and Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1930). Also the “Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to Artists,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed. (28 April 1999).

perception (or glimpse) of the latter is what gives man the global view of reality, which is therefore the indispensable vantage point from which to describe and explore any particular area of reality. This means that the philosophical or metaphysical approach to reality, with the candidness of an unprejudiced child who is not afraid of asking ultimate questions, must start and orient every endeavor to know, express and communicate the grasping of any truth.¹¹

In other words, things have to be studied in their context and background.¹² The mind must strive always to see things with a global perspective of totality, without rushing into premature analyses, which miss the wood for the trees, or take the part for the whole. Most dreadful and terrifying mistakes can be made in the absence of this global and comprehensive (philosophical) orientation. The reduction of man to a mere economic unit (*homo oeconomicus*) is an instance of that distortion of reality that has produced huge quantities of human victims in battlefields, genocides, concentration camps and, above all, in mothers' wombs: the so called "collective guilt", so trenchantly opposed by Viktor Frankl's personalist philosophy.¹³

Spirit over Matter

The human person must be approached with this global view of his and her place in the cosmos. The human person must be looked at metaphysically and ethically, as a bearer of values and a God-seeker, as Max Scheler put it.¹⁴ The human person is not just an animal that happens to have evolved from monkeys. This may be true with regard to the human body, but the spirit of man, oriented and open to infinity, and transcending all the limits of the space-time cosmos, can only originate from a Being infinitely beyond the quantified horizons of the material universe. The human spirit, both finite and capable of infinity, can be created from nothing only by an Omnipotent Creator.¹⁵

To be really human, therefore, the human person must allow his or her intelligence (drive for the truth) and will (drive for the good) to take command

¹¹ Dietrich von Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973). Also Jacques Maritain, *On the Use of Philosophy* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961).

¹² Jacques Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957).

¹³ Viktor Frankl, *Recollection: An Autobiography* (New York: Plenum Press, Insight Books, 1997).

¹⁴ *The Humanism of Modern Philosophy*, chap. XXIII.

¹⁵ Joseph M. de Torre, *Generation and Degeneration: A Survey of Ideologies* (Manila: SEASFI, 1995), chap. 14.

of his or her entire person (body and soul), impelled by that core of the self which is traditionally called the heart, and which is the inner drive for beauty.¹⁶

This humanism is not “secular” (closed to transcendence) or immanent, but is truly sacred (open to transcendence) and carrying the human person to an ecstatic self-surpassing and encompassing plunge into the entire expanse of reality. Only then can the human spirit begin to analyze and concentrate his or her attention on specific areas of reality, such as the physical sciences, the social sciences, the practical sciences or the fine arts. To perceive things properly, the human mind must always widen the scope of its vision, so as to take in as much context as possible: a panoramic and historical view is necessary with the ability to see the multiplicity of relationships and correlations; the global view of reality.

If the philosophical or metaphysical approach is missing in education, the products will not be real human persons, but voracious animals or dumb machines, with the catastrophic consequences that we are witnessing in our era of unbridled galloping technologism.¹⁷

A crippling of humanity occurred when positivists began to limit the field of human knowledge to what can be perceived by the senses and measured mathematically, lumping everything else into the sphere of subjective belief or “preference” or simply “mystical” incommunicable experience.¹⁸ This distortion took different shapes.

From the Enlightenment to Romanticism

Kant in his *Critique of Judgment* tried to recompose the seemingly unbridgeable gap he himself had created between “pure reason” and “practical reason”, namely between the world of necessity (physical phenomena) and the world of freedom (moral judgment).¹⁹ But his attempt ended up in Hegel’s absolute idealism and Marx’s dialectical materialism, both obliterating human freedom and individual personality, as denounced by Kierkegaard and his personalist followers.²⁰

It was Comte’s positivism or scientism that consummated the split between physical necessity and spiritual or moral freedom, the former regarded as “objective” and the latter as “subjective.”²¹ This was the origin of the

¹⁶ Joseph M. de Torre, *Christian Philosophy* (Manila: Sinagtala, 1980), chaps. 7, 19, 23.

¹⁷ *Generation and Degeneration*, chap. 16.

¹⁸ *The Humanism of Modern Philosophy*, chap. XIV, 5, and chap. XXII. See also Étienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1937).

¹⁹ *The Humanism of Modern Philosophy*, chap. XI.

²⁰ *The Humanism of Modern Philosophy*.

²¹ *Generation and Degeneration*, chap. 16 and 21.

“two cultures” of the sciences *versus* the so-called humanities (popularized by C.P. Snow),²² with the so-called social sciences awkwardly falling between the two stools, and becoming the target of both the physical sciences (for not being as quantifiable as the latter), and metaphysics and ethics (for failing to see the transcendent dimension of the human person).

Dilthey later tried to recover the validity of what neo-Kantians called the “sciences of the spirit” (humanities) as distinct from the “sciences of nature” (physical sciences),²³ and the attack on positivism was followed up with the rise of the phenomenological movement, merging with the existentialist revival of Kierkegaard’s critique of Hegel,²⁴ while positivism got a new lease of life with the advent of logical positivism and the Vienna Circle. And the conflict goes on.

Thought versus Reality

But it is a conflict stemming from a wrong starting point. The philosophical or metaphysical approach to all branches of knowledge, outlined above, shows that the split between the sciences and the humanities is entirely unreal and artificial, since the sciences are not “inhuman”, nor are the humanities “unscientific”. The confinement of the field of human knowledge to what is empirical and quantifiable is an *a priori* dogma without basis in real human experience.

As Stanley L. Jaki has endeavored to show,²⁵ this dogma has not been accepted by the genuine scientists of our time who, in the field of macrophysics, microphysics and microbiology, have ventured into the transensible world of pure energy with the sole tool of the most abstract and meta-empirical science of mathematics, thus defying the positivistic reduction of knowledge to what is empirically verifiable.

If by “science” we mean true and certain knowledge through causes,²⁶ we have to rescue the concept of cause from its impoverishment at the hands of the empiricists and Kant,²⁷ and see it again in the context of a real metaphysics of actual being, not of abstract essences. And we ought to verify

²² C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and A Second Look* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959).

²³ *The Humanism of Modern Philosophy*, chap. XIX.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. XXIII and XVIII.

²⁵ *The Relevance of Physics; The Road of Science and the Ways to God*.

²⁶ This is the classic Aristotelian definition of science or *epistemé*: to know not just that something is like that, but why it is like that.

²⁷ *Christian Philosophy*, chap. 18.

once again that the human intelligence, keeping a global outlook on reality, can and does penetrate into the innermost core of the being of everything.²⁸

Only this thrust can drive the human intelligence into the vast world of the physical and social sciences, and activate scientific discovery and technological invention. And only this thrust can stimulate human creativity in literature and the fine arts, or what has been called (somewhat inaccurately) the humanities.²⁹

Reason and Faith

But there is still a higher knowledge to which philosophy can lead, as the gateway to it, just as it is the gateway to all other fields of human knowledge.

Aristotle spoke about “right reason” (*orthos logos*) as the openness of the human mind to reality, but not having received any tradition of allegedly revealed religion, he was not in a position to compare his rational knowledge with such a kind of revelation. His concept of person was not mature enough to ascribe it to a deity who could, therefore, speak to, or communicate with man, and so, could actually and historically make a revelation to man.³⁰

Augustine and Aquinas, on the other hand, were in a different position. The former saw in the *Doctrina christiana* a Christian philosophy in perfect correlation or harmony with Judeo-Christian revelation. And eight centuries later, Aquinas enlarged and widened the scope of the *orthos logos* or *recta ratio* of Aristotle to include the sublime reality of God’s own revelation to man. Faith in this revelation thus became the supernatural enlightenment of human reason; and philosophy, or rational thought and enquiry, became the indispensable tool of theology or rational understanding of revelation. This has been lucidly discussed in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio*.

Now was human reason open to the totality of reality by opening itself to the brighter enlightenment of Judeo-Christian revelation: thus, in the expression of Aquinas, supernatural grace came to bring nature to its perfection, without substituting itself for it.

But after the humanistic turbulence of the Renaissance, the Enlightenment emerged, calling that revelation blind and naive and irrational belief, having obfuscated and shackled reason (obscurantism!): the rationalists and the empiricists converging into Kant, and enclosing reason in the material universe. This is the real “closing” not only of the “American mind”, in

²⁸ *Methodical Realism; Thomist Realism and Critique of Knowledge*.

²⁹ *Work, Culture, Liberation*, chap. 1.

³⁰ *Christian Philosophy*, chap. 2 and 3.

Allan Bloom's famous phrase,³¹ but also of the entire modern mind. No one has fought more forcefully for this re-opening of the human mind and heart than Etienne Gilson with his classics, *Methodical Realism* (which he also calls "naïve realism") and *Thomist Realism and Critique of Knowledge*.

Back to Transcendence

Mankind now looks hopefully toward a future post-modern mind that can open itself again to transcendence.³² This philosophical approach to all fields of knowledge, which is the openness to transcendence without artificial confinements, has in the past (and in the present) yielded the greatest accomplishments of culture.³³ It was present in the great poets and writers, artists and scientists, statesmen and economists, philosophers and theologians. It was present in Dante and Fra Angelico, Piero della Francesca and Raphael, Da Vinci and Michaelangelo, Cervantes and Calderon, Shakespeare and Milton, Copernicus and Newton, Corneille and Racine, Velazquez and Rubens, Goethe and Schiller, Beethoven and Wagner, Wordsworth and Blake, Burke and Lincoln, Jefferson and Disraeli, Dostoyevsky and Chekhov, Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky, Duhem and de Broglie, Planck and Einstein, Heisenberg and Weisszaecker, Dirac and Schroedinger, Undset and Stein, Churchill and Adenauer, Sun Yat Sen and Chiang Kai Shek, T. S. Eliot and C. S. Lewis, Chesterton and Belloc, Leo XIII and John Paul II, Ratzinger and de Lubac, Maritain and Gilson, Pieper and von Balthasar, Dawson and Jaki, etc.

It was because all these persons, among many others, were primarily philosophers, seekers of ultimate truth, that they attained greatness in their respective fields of knowledge and endeavor.

They combined the receptive power of the intellect (Aristotle's *nous pathetikos*) with its active power (Aristotle's *nous poietikos*). In other words, they were opened to the Dionysian or *yin* mystery of a reality always surpassing man (predominant in the feminine spirit), while driven by the Apollonian or *yang* impulse to definition and clarity (predominant in the masculine spirit): both insatiably thirsty for data-gathering, information and receptive experience, and anxiously eager "to do something about it". They were persons both speculative and practical, analytical and synthetic, con-

³¹ Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).

³² Of particular importance are the works of Viktor Frankl (especially *Recollection. An Autobiography*) and Paul Ricoeur, *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, ed. L. E. Hahn (Chicago: The Library of Living Philosophers, 1995).

³³ *Openness to Reality*, chap. III.

templative and active; in short, true philosophers or “lovers of wisdom”, and thereby benefactors of humanity despite their human limitations.

Philosophy as Content and Form of Education

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the founders of the first university, the *Universitas magistrum et scholarium Lutetiae Parisiorum degentium*, seemed to have had very much in mind this propedeutic or introductory role of philosophy for all other fields of knowledge, when they made it the core curriculum of the College of Arts and Sciences.³⁴ There the students (all of them) would get their bachelor’s degree, which would qualify them for the masteral and doctoral programs of the faculties of law, medicine or theology. The Catholic Church even now requires the students for the priesthood to take a very thorough grounding in philosophy, before going on to theology. Thus, the Second Vatican Council in its *Decree on Priestly Training (Optatam Totius*, no. 15): “The philosophical disciplines are to be taught in such a way that the students are first of all led to acquire a solid and coherent knowledge of man, the world, and of God, relying on a philosophical patrimony which is perennially valid and taking into account the philosophical investigations of later ages.”

This philosophical approach to all branches of knowledge also ensures that the mistake of confusion of method and object among them is avoided. Only the global or overall view of reality makes it possible to see the limits, correlations and overlappings of the different areas of it. While, from the objective point of view, theology can be considered the highest science, and philosophy its means of investigation and expression with regard to all sciences and arts, this does not in any way detract from the “autonomy of earthly affairs” mentioned by the Second Vatican Council (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 36) and therefore from the autonomy of every science and field of knowledge.

Thus, it would be a methodological mistake and scientific blunder to try to solve the strictly physical, biological or economic problems with theological or philosophical principles. The task of philosophy (and for believers, theology) is to point out the links of any part of those sciences with philosophical anthropology and ethics. Thus any physical, biological, economic, social or political problems, to the extent that they affect the human person, cannot be solved by merely “scientific” principles, ignoring ethics. It is a

³⁴ F. J. C. Hearnshaw, ed., *Mediaeval Contributions to Modern Civilization*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967).

matter of not confusing secularity or the rightful autonomy of earthly affairs with secularism,³⁵ or the ideology of enclosing man in a cosmos without any transcendence, which in fact closes the door to civilization.

A Liberal Arts Course

It is assumed therefore that the goal of a liberal arts course is to provide a basic higher education grounded in an anthropology open to reality, a philosophy of man flowing from the realization of man's openness to the infinity of being through his intelligence and free will, above the turbulent sea of sensitive feelings and *emotions*. This is the transcendence of man that makes him *homo sapiens* and *homo religiosus*: thus man surpasses himself indefinitely and dominates the universe.

Consequently, the core curriculum has to be articulated and organized taking into account man's search for wisdom (philosophy and science) and for moral perfection (ethics and religion), expressed in his creativity (technology and the arts), and open to both nature and supernatural religion as the source of this creativity.

Furthermore, as the achievements of mankind (economic, social, political, artistic, in short, culture and civilization) are accumulated in a living manner in the history of the various peoples interrelated by their geographies, it is indispensable, for the adequate perception of what is permanent and universal (*viz.*, values) in the changeable and plural (*viz.*, fashion and trends), to study all realities in their historical and geographical setting and context, and thus avoid the quicksand of cultural relativism and historicism.³⁶ Man is indeed existentially "in the making" (immersed in time), but essentially immutable *pace Heidegger*.³⁷ "You must remember this," said the song of *Casablanca*, "a kiss is still a kiss, a sigh is still a sigh: the fundamental things apply, as time goes by."

That permanence and unity in the changeable and plural is the field of both physics (science) and metaphysics (wisdom). It is by perceiving that permanence and unity (the supreme values of being: the true, the good and the beautiful)³⁸ that man is enabled both to master the world of change with his technology, and to express the universal and eternal in the particular and temporal with aesthetic experiences and creations through literature, poetry

³⁵ *Generation and Degeneration*, chap. 15.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. 6, 17, 29.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, chap. 23.

³⁸ *Christian Philosophy*, chap. 19.

and music and other fine arts.³⁹ Thus, man creates culture and civilization, embodied in history and geography.

The March Towards Unity and the Centrality of Logic

However, due to the accelerated technological progress of the last two centuries, particularly in the fields of transport and communications, both culture and history are becoming increasingly global, highlighting more than ever the fundamental unity of the human race, and the moral call to promote the universal common good and purify mankind from narrow-minded and divisive nationalism and racism.⁴⁰ Every nation should therefore be anxious to know its own subjectivity (or personality) in all its richness, foster it and share it with the world at large.

Furthermore, since the conquest of culture through education is the achievement of human intelligence, it is indispensable to undertake the study of the laws ruling the proper use of this wondrous God-like human faculty of the intelligence.⁴¹ Thus, the science of logic must be a part of the curriculum, as well as the art of speaking and that of writing. The classic *trivium* of (i) how to think (*dialectics* or logic); (ii) how to speak (*rhetoric*; not the modern or ancient empty bla-bla of sophistry, but the solid connection of reality to thought, and thought to speech); and (iii) how to write (grammar, not formalistic subjection to clichés, but dominating language for the purpose of clarity and precision in communication). And in this regard, that study of the Latin language is extremely useful as a perfect example of a logical language (intellectual training), as well as the key to understand Western culture and civilization at its roots.

Upon the *trivium* of logic, language, and writing, we can build the classic *quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, transformed into the modern “arts and sciences”, philosophy and history: all the “humanities” and all the “values”, on a realist, objective foundation, conducive to peace and unity, freedom and progress in mankind.⁴²

The Greek *paideia* or educational system put these seven “liberal arts” together as its core curriculum, with rhetoric at the head, aided by history, under the Sophists. Then the Socratic-Platonic-Aristotelian revolution re-

³⁹ *The Arts of the Beautiful; Art and Scholasticism*.

⁴⁰ Joseph M. de Torre, *The Roots of Society*, (Manila: Sinagtala, 1977), chap. XIII and XIV; *Person, Family and State: An Outline of Social Ethics* (Manila: SEASFI, 1991), chap. V.

⁴¹ *Christian Philosophy*, chap. 26-28.

⁴² *Work, Culture, Liberation*, chap. 7.

placed rhetoric with the “love of wisdom” (philo-sophia), later called metaphysics and ontology. This attempt was drowned by the returning tide of skepticism, relativism, and rhetoric of the Hellenic period. Right in the midst of this Greco-Roman era, Jesus of Nazareth was born under Emperor Augustus at the crossroads of all world empires.

The Advent of Christianity

Christianity came not to destroy the world but to bring it to its perfection. “Love of wisdom”, or the pursuit of knowledge and good, became now both natural and supernatural; reason and faith in perfect continuity and harmony.⁴³ Thus, it crystallized in the *Doctrina christiana* of St. Augustine, wherein the seven liberal arts would be headed by theology. Henceforward, this Christian culture grew, through the “dark ages” of the barbarian invasions of Europe, until reaching its climax with St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. In him, both reason and faith attained their highest peaks in the dialogue with both Christians (*Summa Theologiae*) and non-Christians (*Summa Contra Gentiles*). In these two works the major headings are roughly the same, namely God, the World, and Man. But while the first approaches each topic from the standpoint of revelation (faith), the second does so from the standpoint of natural reason. But both converge into the same truths. Theology, both natural and supernatural is thus the “love of wisdom” as the seventh or supreme liberal art.

The Humanism of the Enlightenment: West and East

Now, from the time of the European Renaissance onward Western philosophy took a twist in the direction of a humanism immanent to man, in growing alienation from man’s transcendence and openness to infinite being, while Western experimental science remained firmly anchored to an objective realism (man, the disciple of reality, not the other way around). The result has been both a dazzling scientific and technological progress and an appalling moral decadence due to that immanentistic anthropology. As man recedes from God, he uproots himself from the ground of his own dignity and greatness. A renewed alliance of science and conscience is therefore required, as John Paul II has been emphasizing—an integrated approach to the totality of knowledge, with no more dichotomies between science and humanities:

⁴³ Joseph M. de Torre, *The Leaven of the Gospel in Secular Society* (Quezon City, Philippines: Vera-Reyes, 1983), chap. 8.

logic and philosophy, natural sciences and social sciences; technology and fine arts, theology and ethics, all within the framework of geography and history. The encyclical *Fides et Ratio* responds to this vision.

This renaissance must, however, take account of the history of ideas in the West since the Renaissance, so as to recapture the realism that was almost lost by modern philosophy, and that had been kept in both the Greco-Roman and Christian centuries, and now is called to come back rejuvenated in a post-modern and truly progressive philosophy. And at the same time it is necessary to study the best achievements of both Indian and Chinese philosophy. Both of these, while always deeply influential, have remained largely unaffected by Western immanentism, and are therefore closer to the classic Western traditions of realism and common sense philosophy, although they can benefit from their exposure to Western monotheism and personalism so deeply rooted in the Bible.⁴⁴

Modern European philosophy, beginning with Descartes replaced theology as the seventh liberal art with mathematics (Descartes), physics (Kant), history (Hegel), sociology (Comte), and economics (Marx), gradually dissolving humanity into inert matter or lifeless abstractions. We can recall here another classic of Gilson: *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*.

Cardinal Newman, in the middle of the 19th century, spearheaded the movement to restore theology as the seventh liberal art, a movement which thirty years later received a powerful impetus from Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* of 1879, which came in continuity with the constitution *Dei Filius* of Vatican Council I (1870); the restoration of “Christian philosophy” according to the mind of St. Thomas Aquinas.⁴⁵ Since Vatican II, the Popes have not ceased to promote this restoration, which, as Cardinal Newman explained in his *Idea of a University*, takes account of the creative force of both natural theology (philosophy) and biblical theology in shaping first Western and then global world culture and civilization, as expressed in science, technology, literature and the arts, as well as in economic and political institutions, through the emphasis on the dignity of the human person in his openness to infinity by freedom, knowledge and love. The encyclical *Fides et Ratio* has also been a response to this vision, as well as the two previous encyclicals, *Veritatis Splendor* (1993) and *Evangelium Vitae* (1995).

⁴⁴ The encyclical *Fides et Ratio* also takes up this point.

⁴⁵ *Openness to Reality*, chap. V.