

HOMO ECONOMICUS:
PART HUMAN, PART MACHINE

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For well over the last 100 years, *homo economicus* has been an essential concept in the way that orthodox economics represents the economic agent, construes economic behavior, and presents its insights on economic affairs to the general public. From the very beginning students of economics are taught to think in terms of *homo economicus* and are reinforced relentlessly as they continue their studies. They inevitably reach a point where the concept is taken as a fundamental truth and never re-examined.

If an upstart challenges the concept he/she is reassured that all is well because the utility (profit) maximizing economic agent that *homo economicus* stands for allows important analytical work to proceed with confidence and generate findings that form the foundation of economic theory and in turn economic policy. *Homo economicus* gives economics heightened standing in the academic community as a hard value-free science.

This confidence in the findings of orthodox economics is strengthened by a way of thinking in which all economic activity repeats itself in cyclical fashion. This kind of thinking shuts itself off from the unpredictability of human behavior because all science, including economics, demands repetition for the purpose of maintaining control and achieving predictability. Nothing yields structure to human events more so than the circle because the circle is the "...simplest of generalized patterns ... [providing] structure at its barest and most evident." (Ong 1967, p. 87). For that reason, orthodox economics is closed to the reality of human life. For a remedy to this closed system, one must turn to the openness of evolutionary thinking. (cf. Ong 1967, pp. 61-126).

There are two reasons to reject the views expressed in orthodox economics. First, orthodox economics is not value-free. It rests firmly on utilitarianism, a philosophy that was applied in economics first by Jeremy Bentham at roughly the same time that Smith published *Wealth of Nations*. (Haney 1949, pp. 247-249). Utilitarianism teaches that all things including human beings have value in terms of their usefulness. Simply put, one is either useful or worthless. Strictly speaking, that assertion is not a scientific finding. It is a presumption. True enough, many outside economics hold fast to that presumption and that in itself is a fact which finds expression for example in the wage contract. Nonetheless, recognizing that some workers are paid more than others because they contribute more to the production process does not lead directly and necessarily to the conclusion that in the end all human beings are either useful, more or less, or they are worthless and nothing else matters.

Second and related to the first, *homo economicus* is a contrived concept constructed by orthodox economists around four principal human characteristics: individuality, rationality, volitionality, and acquisitiveness. Rationality and volitionality recognize that humans are endowed with

intelligence and free will and know best how to arrange their economic affairs. Acquisitiveness means that economic agents pursue maximum personal net advantage in all matters economic. In that sense, getting and possessing are all-important. Individuality¹ means that *homo economicus* is entirely inward-directed, an individual being who notwithstanding Kant's second categorical imperative acknowledges others only in terms of their usefulness to him/her. Rationality means that *homo economicus* makes all decisions by carefully weighing what is to be gotten and what must be given up.

This value-laden orthodoxy gives us an economic agent with the appearance of a sculpted figure that the artist has left half-finished but needs no further work because in its present state is useful for analytical purposes. As a graduate student more than 60 years ago, William Waters (1952, p. 63) asserted that this kind of thinking is not restricted to economics: "this method ... is the procedure of modern scientific theory."² This contrived representation of the economic agent not only simplifies economic analysis but also enhances economics as an authentic science. Economists can walk away from the reality that human beings are more than individual, rational, volitional, and acquisitive. They are, as well social, emotional, intuitive, spontaneous, imaginative, inventive, entrepreneurial, and most importantly embodied spirits. (Titus and others 2018, p. 1; Waters 1952, p. 75; Danner 2002, p. viii).

REPLACING UTILITARIANISM IS LONG OVERDUE

We propose a different economics that replaces utilitarianism with personalism which derives from and extends the work of William Waters in economics, and rests on the work of others outside economics including R.D. Laing (psychiatry), Walter Ong (human communication), John Paul II and Edith Stein (philosophy and theology), and C.S. Lewis and Gerard Manley Hopkins (literature and personal struggle). We refer to this new economics as personalist economics and the new economic agent as the *person of action*. *Homo economicus* is a passive economic agent who selects from the various options available at the moment the one that offers the promise of maximum personal net advantage. The *person of action* is an active, living, breathing, existential

¹ Individual (n). "single object or thing," c. 1600, from individual (adj.). Meaning "a single human being" (as opposed to a group, etc.) is from the 1640s. Colloquial sense of "person" is attested from 1742. Latin *individuum* as a noun meant "an atom, **indivisible** particle," and in Middle English *individuum* was used in the sense of "individual member of a species" (early 15c.). Cf. Online Etymology (no date; emphasis highlighted in red has been added).

² If a researcher were to find a very strong correlation between the annual number of deaths from eating poison mushrooms and for example gross domestic product, orthodox economics would accept such a correlation, properly constructed, on grounds of its usefulness. Never mind that there is no theoretical reason as to why the two might be linked, the correlation gives macro-economists confidence in predicting a most important economic metric. We might be tempted to accept the correlation as useful, but would find ourselves coming up short as to what death from eating poison mushrooms has to do with economic agents carrying out their everyday routines in the marketplace and the workplace.

actuality who by acting virtuously in economics is better positioned to achieve his/her final objective in life -- human perfection, or as Miller put it while commenting extensively on Hopkins "...the creation of [one's] own best self." (J. Miller 1955, p 318).

Notwithstanding the vast differences in their academic and personal backgrounds, Laing, Ong, John Paul II, Stein, Lewis, Hopkins, and Waters all espoused personalism, a philosophy that emerged in the 20th century and puts the human person at the center of all human activity. (Ong 1967, p. 14; Young 2011, not paginated). Personalism rejects "individualist, materialistic, reductionist, relativist, determinist, dualist, [and] behaviorist conceptualizations" of human beings. (Titus and others 2018, p. 60) All seven writers were inspired by Christian thinkers or were Christians whose writings were directed unapologetically by faith and reason and who understood that conflicts in life often produce the divided self.¹ For economics, personalism replaces the undivided but incomplete *homo economicus* with the unrepeatably, (re-)unified *person of action*.²

Our review of these seven writers necessarily is quite brief because it is intended only for the purpose of establishing that personalism has been espoused by persons of stature outside the field of economics. Waters is included in the seven because his contribution to personalism in economics is groundbreaking.

C.S Lewis (1898-1963).

Pilgrim's Progress, which C.S. Lewis published when he was 34 years old, presents an account of a pilgrim travelling along a road that to the north are found the various objective ways of thinking grounded in reason and to the south the subjective ways based on emotion. Lewis notes that whenever the pilgrim wanders too far away from the roadway, whether to the north or the south, the more extreme those different ways of thinking become. Lewis is describing his own personal struggle to find a purpose in life in which he finds himself divided between those two ways of thinking. As a younger man he tried "the rationalist philosophy of the Enlightenment, romantic art, modern art, Freudianism, asceticism, nihilism, hedonism, classical humanism, and religious liberalism." None of those ways of thinking resolved his most fundamental and

¹ Cf. <https://vimeo.com/197816202> for a dance rendition of the divided self.

Politicians caught in an improper sexual adventure sometimes fall back on a divided-self argument. "Don't judge me in terms of my private life, look what I have done for you in my public life." Not too long ago a very high-level politician who perjured himself in an incident involving his personal conduct with a subordinate was allowed to continue serving the public on precisely that argument.

² For more on personalism apart from its application in economics, cf. <https://tpf.siu.edu/Account%20of%20Personalism.htm>
For more on the mystery of the human person, cf. Crosby 2011.

personal conflict until he turned to the Christian faith where he found re-unification for his divided self. (McGrath 2013, pp. 169-174).

Though Lewis had no more than “an affinity with Personalism,” his writings are replete with extended comments on self, along with other (human) and Other (divine). For example, Lewis asserts that self-centeredness is our natural condition but unlike orthodox economics and *homo economicus* we are called by others to transcend ourselves. It is not the *concept* of other that Lewis is referring to but the very flesh-and-blood *reality* of other. In Lewis’ own words, “... not my idea of God but God ... not my idea of my neighbor but my neighbor.” (Young 2011, not paginated; emphasis added).

Walter J. Ong (1912-2003).

From his writings, it is clear that Walter Ong was a personalist. (Farrell 2000, pp. 102, 103). By digging into his writings, we observe that Ong offers two powerful insights that help improve our understanding as to how we in economics are to represent the economic agent along the lines of personalism. The first relates to the three stages of communication. The second refers to the I-Thou communication.

Of the three stages of human communication,¹ the oral stage is the most intense because communication is face-to-face. Prior to the Industrial Age, work was carried out in small shops and cottages that isolated human beings from one another and for that reason they had to be self-reliant. Self-awareness was constructed primarily around human individuality. Is it any wonder that economics, which originated in an age marked by small shops and cottages, represented the economic agent as an isolated and self-reliant individual being?

The script stage is less intense and personal because the parties involved do not have to meet face-to-face. Humans are less isolated in their work, more dependent on others, and no longer self-reliant. Nevertheless, self-awareness remains largely a matter of human individuality. Until the development of the railroad, community was constrained to the distance one could travel in a day by foot, horse, or boat.

In the electronic stage, communication is organized first around the telegraph, then the telephone, radio, and television, and more recently the internet, e-mail, and smart phone. Communication is less intense and personal. The workplace is re-constructed around telecommunication systems and as a result humans are less isolated in their work, and more dependent on others. These developments underscore human sociality and undermine *homo economicus* as an authentic representation of the economic agent in the 21st century.

¹ Cf. Ong 1967 for more on the three stages of human communication.

As to Ong's *second* powerful insight, personal growth occurs when one human being encounters another provided their communication is dialogue and not *just talk* as represented by a television commercial and a pop-up advertisement. Dialogue "... develops the persons who take part in it, enabling them to realize to a greater extent their own promise and perfection."... dialogue "unites, and [it does] this despite the greatest difference there is, that between your person and mine, between you and me." (quoted in Farrell 2000, pp. 92-93). Most fundamentally, dialogue requires commitment, for the Christian a commitment to Christ, for the non-Christian commitment means a belief "in" God whether implicit or explicit. (Farrell 2000, p. 92). In brief, this is what Ong means by I-Thou communication: "... the whole of human life is a dialogue with other men and with God." (quoted in Farrell 2000, p. 92).

According to Ong, human persons are divided because they are both inward-driven "self" and outward-driven "other." (Farrell 2000, p. 103). Working mothers, especially professional women, encounter conflict between work and child care. Parents are divided in terms of their own personal desires and the needs of their children. Young married couples are divided between the conflicting expectations and demands of his family and hers. Teens and young adults are at odds as to staying at home or breaking away.¹

Strictly speaking, *homo economicus* is not a divided self because there is no "other," no outward directedness, only "self" and inward directedness. Thus, no possibility for dialogue and no opportunity for personal growth. It is tempting to call attention to the occasional altruism in *homo economicus* as evidence of other directedness but orthodox economics will have nothing to do with such an interpretation. Instead altruism is reduced to enlightened self-interest. In like manner social capital seems to suggest other directedness but in orthodox economics social capital is not what *homo economiucs* gives to others but what is taken from them. Social capital is all about the "what's-in-it-for-me" self.

William R. Waters (1920-1998).

Along with the other writers who are the focus of our attention, Waters has been an advocate of personalism since his days as a graduate student. Indications of his personalism are scattered throughout and between the lines of his dissertation *Entrepreneurship, Dualism, and Causality: An Appreciation of the Work of Joseph A. Schumpeter* (cf. Waters 1952, pp. 15-16, 62-64, 75, 83, 124-125, 129, 143-144, 172). Most telling are his comments on the personalism of Schumpeter: "... the great man who restored the human person as the dynamic factor in the explanation of

¹ Ong's powerful insights allow us to see more clearly that Adam Smith was a precursor of the economic agent as represented by the *person of action*. Taking the "self" from Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and uniting it to the "other" from his *Moral Sentiments* produces a rough sketch of the *person of action* – a more fully human economic agent, a unit of economic analysis far better-suited today than *homo economicus*. By clinging fast to the entirely inward-directed *homo economicus*, orthodox economics teaches in effect that telegraph, telephone, radio, television, internet, e-mail, and the smart phone never happened and Smith *Moral Sentiments* is of no concern.

economic activity” and his identifying Schumpeter as “... by philosophical preference a true personalist.” (Waters 1952, pp, 14, 125).¹

Years later he commented extensively on “solidarism,” (Waters 1988, pp. 114-117), a philosophy underpinning “the social system of labor” which was strongly linked to the “sacred person.” However, the social-system-of-labor label was considered awkward and that system never became popular in the United States. From the very beginning of the Catholic Economic Association in 1941, solidarism, also known as social Catholicism,² competed with a more nearly orthodox economics based on Christian ethical principles. By 1965 the orthodox perspective became so dominant in the *Review of Social Economy* that interest in social Catholicism was “almost nonexistent.” (Waters 1990, pp. 91-98).

Even so, as editor of the *Review* from 1965 to 1985 Waters admitted to a “not-so-subtle” support for the social Catholicism that had competed unsuccessfully with the orthodox-cum-Christian-ethics perspective under his predecessors, and referred to social Catholicism as personalist economics. (Waters 1990, pp. 98, 100). For that reason, though he uses “solidarist economics” two years earlier in his presidential address to the Association we replace that label with personalist economics and solidarism with personalism.

Waters first identified the four pillars of conventional or classical economics in order to compare them to the hard-core principles of personalist economics. The four pillars of conventional economics are the law of nature, the individual, certainty, and contracts. (Waters 1988, pp. 114-117). The law of nature means, in the eyes of conventional economists, that the economy is self-regulating and the individual is strictly self-interested, rational, and utility maximizing. Certainty indicates that due to the power of rational thought, economists are able to construct models of economic activity that are determinative. Contracts signifies that behaviour in economic affairs is contractual in nature. (Waters 1988, pp. 144-115).

Personalism is radically opposed to and precedes the individualism of orthodox economics that grew out of the Enlightenment. Quoting Goetz Briefs, Waters asserts that personalism is the ethos “of the previous state of society from which liberals emancipated themselves.” (Waters 1988, pp. 117-118).

The four hard-core principles of personalist economics are institutions, person, uncertainty, and status. Institutions means that decisions are driven not by the law of nature but through the values that culture embeds in its institutions. The person, not the individual, is the economic

¹ Cf. O’Boyle 2017 for more on Schumpeter and economic agency.

² For the 19th and early 20th century precursors of social Catholicism, cf. Nitsch 1990, pp. 15-24, 51-70, 72-74.

agent whose decision-making at times is rational and at other times erratic (but not irrational), and driven by various habits and biases. Uncertainty means that decisions made freely are incompatible with the hard-core principle of certainty. Status replaces contracts because the *sacred* dignity of the person, a concept that originates in Christianity, guarantees “certain rights that are more basic than contracts.” (Waters 1988, pp. 118-120).

For the contemporary economist who does not wholeheartedly embrace the orthodox way of thinking, the divided self refers to the need to reconcile the conflict between an orthodox economic agent whose decision-making is strictly rational and one who is driven by his/her creativity, originality, imagination, intuition, inventiveness. More than any other, this difference in thinking about the economic agent accounts for the strong opposition to what *at that time* was the prevailing view in economics. (Waters 1952, p. 64)

Waters offers an extensive review of the opposition to the orthodox way of thinking that emerged at the end of the 19th century in Cambridge, Vienna, and Lausanne and involved for instance Freud, Veblen, Pareto, Berdyaev, and Scheler. (Waters 1952, pp. 64-94). However, Waters does not admit to this conflict because as he states at the time he was preparing his dissertation only a few economists including notably von Mises cling to utilitarianism as “an adequate explanation of real human action.” (Waters 1952, p. 92).

What Waters observed in 1952, it seems fair to say, no longer applies as economics over the next 65 years turned away from history of economic thought and economic history and evolved increasingly as a way of thinking grounded in general equilibrium theory and econometrics that requires a strictly rational, calculating, economic agent who maximizes personal net advantage. For orthodox economists person is just a synonym for individual and economics has become even more reliant on *homo economicus* .

Self-evidently, the divided self relates to the conflict in everyday economic affairs between instrumental value and sacred dignity. How is an employer to deal with a worker who no longer is needed on the job for which he/she was hired? The instrumental-value position supports the employer’s decision to terminate that worker and thereby protect the firm’s bottom line. The sacred-dignity view encourages the employer to find other work for that person even when it may reduce the profits of the firm. An employer who is known for respecting the sacred dignity of his/her workers may discover that his/her work force responds by becoming more productive, thereby actually enhancing the firm’s profitability.

The same issue can arise when a customer is unable to pay for a good or service that is desperately needed. Faced with that situation, a merchant who sees that consumer in terms of his/her usefulness in contributing to the merchant’s profits will feel fully justified in demanding payment in full. If instead that merchant sees that customer as a person with a sacred dignity he/she may provide the good or service at a reduced price or even free of charge. Such a

merchant may find his/her reputation (goodwill) enhanced by such generosity, adding to the value of the business.

To our knowledge, neither Lewis nor Waters ever used the expression “divided self.” Nonetheless, their writings make clear that Lewis was divided between the logic of reason and the reality of emotion in his personal life as was Waters in his professional life.

“... it is understandable that strong academic opposition arose against the utilitarian maximizer. The opposition was not directed against the ethics, i.e. the utilitarianism as such – rather against the psychology, i.e. the presumption of universal rational activity. It is indeed paradoxical that the marginal utility economists while accepting the passivity of calculated rational action, fully defined man’s freedom of will; the extreme anti-rationalism that followed, while stressing the creativity and active quality of human action, denied free will to man. Quite naturally, the study of economics was in greatly influenced by these philosophical changes.” (Waters 1952, p. 64).

Both found resolution in Christianity, Lewis in Anglicanism and Waters in Catholicism.

R.D. Laing (1927-1989).

Laing was trained as a physician at Glasgow University where he expressed an interest in phenomenology and existentialism, along with neurology and psychiatry. He identified Joseph Schorstein, a specialist in neurosurgery from Vienna who settled in Glasgow, as his spiritual mentor. Following two-years service in the British Army as a psychiatrist, Laing completed his training in psychiatry and started a hospital-based practice where he began to challenge the orthodox way of thinking among psychiatrists who organized treatment for their patients around drugs, electroshock, and insulin coma therapy. His way of thinking about treating patients involved listening and talking to them, and treating them with respect. (Collins 2008, p. 185; Ticktin no date, not paginated; Crichton 2007, p. 211). Years later Laing put it quite succinctly: “The way we treat one another is the therapy.” (Laing 1988, video).

This training and experience, in addition to his research in what Laing referred to as “social phenomenology,” led to his *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*, published in 1960, that set forth a new paradigm for psychiatry and the treatment of persons with mental illness. (Ticktin no date, not paginated). The book was a loose blending of existential phenomenology and psychiatric studies that specifically challenged psychiatric orthodoxy which at the time regarded madness and delusion as “unworthy of consideration.” (Paterson 2005, pp. 535-536).

Laing argued that psychosis is the result of tension within that he referred to as the divided self.

... each and every man is at the same time separate from his fellows and related to them.
Such separateness and relatedness can exist only between beings who are separate but not

isolates. We are not isolates and we are not parts of the same physical body. Here we have the paradox, the potentially tragic paradox, that our relatedness to others is an essential aspect of our *being*, as is our separateness, but any particular person is not a necessary part of our being. (Laing 1965, p. 26; emphasis in the original).

For Laing schizophrenia is the result of disturbances within the family.

The “self” of the child [with a schizoid personality] cuts itself off from other people and starts to relate only to itself so that it can maintain its identity and protect itself from external danger. The self comes to hate the world but also feels guilty because it thinks it does not deserve to be alive. The self may then attempt to destroy itself – or may split and then relate only to its false self (the self that complies emptily with the world). In psychosis the self can disintegrate into several parts or subsystems, which persecute what is left of the real self. In the end the self may no longer exist at all, but only what one patient poetically described as “the ghost of the weed garden.” (Crichton 2007, p. 211).

Laird, according to Gavin Miller, was greatly influenced by the personalist philosophy of the Scottish intellectual tradition. Though controversial, *The Divided Self* had a significant impact on the culture of the 1960s and 1970s. (Carthy 2008, p.237; Crichton 2007, p. 211).

Miller asserts that *The Divided Self* was informed by “Christian thinkers on scriptural interpretation” and traces Laing’s understanding and thinking about psychiatry to mystical and corporate Christian theology. Combining mystical theology with psychoanalytic theory allows the recovery of the real self. Corporate theology is a remedy for the social exclusion of the mentally ill. (G. Miller 2009, p. 1; G. Miller 2012, p. 135).

The schizophrenic is desperate, is simply without hope. I have never known a schizophrenic who could say he was loved, as a man, by God the Father or by the Mother of God, or by another man. He either *is* God, or the Devil, or in hell, estranged from God. When someone says he is an unreal man or that he is dead, in all seriousness, expressing in radical terms the stark truth of his existence as he experiences it, that is – insanity. (Laing 1965, p. 38; emphasis in the original).

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889).

For us, Hopkins the poet is a very opaque human being in part because we have always struggled to unravel the poet’s meaning, any poet, and for that reason we rely on others to help us understand what he is revealing about his self and identity. More importantly in this matter Ong, who greatly admired Hopkins’ work,¹ asserts that

¹ Cf., for example, Farrell 2000, pp. 178-184.

The “I” that I say is as completely different from any other self in my own culture as it is from any other self in any other culture, real or imaginable. I am simply not you, no matter who or how close you are. (Ong 1981, pp. 10-11).

In this regard and using Ong’s own words, no one can hope to really know the “unduplicability and interior inaccessibility” of Hopkins the man. (Ong 1967, p. 105).

Nevertheless, Milward (2002, not paginated) provides the following details about Hopkins.

- He was born into an Anglican family and became a Catholic as a student at Oxford.
- He was an Englishman who, as a Jesuit, was unhappy with his “exile” in Ireland .
- Both his personality and poetry were powerfully influenced by his confrontation with Self and Other.

Farrell (2000, pp. 179, 184, 181) tells us the following about Hopkins.

- Like Ong, he was a Jesuit priest and a personalist.
- Unlike some of his contemporaries he was not taken up with the faith-reason issue.

J. Miller (1955, pp, 304-305, 316, 296) provides these insights.

- Hopkins’ “grasp of the external world ... is as much emotional as intellectual.”
- For Hopkins the central moment of history is Christ’s death on the cross.
- Hopkins is both over-joyed and terrified by “... a self [that] is an absolute which stands to the absolute of God as the infinitesimal to the infinite.”

Quoting Hopkins directly, Miller identifies the compelling question as “from what then do I with all my being and above all that taste of self, that selfbeing, come?” “What relation do I or should I have to this Being who is so infinitely my superior and so ‘dangerous to me’?” (J. Miller 1955, p. 295).

For Hopkins these are terrifying and isolating questions. His self is formed not through interaction with other human beings but with non-human nature. However, Hopkins acknowledges that the instability of nature cannot help him establish a permanent identity. Then and only then does he begin to understand that he had to lose himself in Christ in order to find himself, that his very existence depends on becoming Christ.

Becoming Christ means transubstantiation into Christ in which man does not surrender his human selfhood. Transubstantiation is reached only by say YES to God’s grace. For Hopkins,

this grace does not come from God in eternity “... but only in history through Jesus Christ, who was both and is both God and man ...” Accepting that grace is all that is left of authentic human free will. This transformation makes for “only one self out of infinity of possible selves.” (J. Miller 1955, pp. 297-298, 306, 314-318; Ong 1967, p. 122).¹

As implausible as it may sound, *homo economicus* is only one self out of infinity of possible selves. But that self is not wholly human.

Edith Stein (1891-1942).

Stein was born in Wroclaw Poland in 1891 and died (executed) 51 years later in Auschwitz. Edith was raised in an Orthodox Jewish family but renounced her faith in 1904 and became an atheist. She converted to Catholicism in 1922 and in 1934 entered the Carmelite convent in Cologne, taking the name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. She was canonized by John Paul II in 1998.² (Encyclopaedia 2018, not paginated).

As a student Stein focused primarily on the interiority and exteriority of the human being in order to deepen her understanding of the unrepeatable nature of that human being. (Bello 2003, abstract). In 1916 she completed her doctorate in philosophy at the University of Freiburg under the supervision of Edmund Husserl and published her dissertation – *On the Problem of Empathy* -- in 1917. (Encyclopaedia 2018, not paginated; Svenaeus 2018, p. 741).

Empathy, according to Stein, is one’s own experience of the experience of another human being. In personal terms, with empathy my own experience is the other person that I am holding within myself. Empathy takes one into the “realm of intersubjectivity.” (Moran c.2015, p. 6). For Stein empathy is strictly positive. In other words, there is no negative dimension to empathy; no repulsive response to the other person. (McClellan 2017, p. 25). Further, and most important, empathy is a “way of *feeling* oneself into the experiences of the other person.” (Svenaeus 2017, p. 742; emphasis in the original).

Empathy, to Stein, is a three-stage process that begins when the empathizer becomes aware of the experience of another person, then follows through with that experience, and ends when the empathizer develops a greater feeling-based understanding of the experience of that person. Stein distinguishes between sensual empathy and emotional empathy. Sensual empathy is a bodily process that takes place in the first stage and may end there if the would-be empathizer backs away. Emotional empathy happens when the empathizer enters the second stage. Here emotion is twofold: the emotion of the empathizer who is responding to the feeling of the other

¹ For more on Hopkins the poet and priest, cf. Mariani 2008 and Mariani 1970.

² For his homily on the occasion of her canonization, cf. John Paul 1998a.

person. Empathy may lead to sympathy or some other way of expressing concern for the other person. (Svenaesus, pp. 742, 759).¹

It is not the intellect that prompts acts of empathy. Emphatic acts are not correlates of ideas, they are feelings that proceed from the nature of humans as bodily creatures. (Haney and Valiquette 2002, p. 466).²

Empathy forms the foundation of Stein's coherent theology of the human person. Human beings become fully human persons by choosing to act freely in union with God. That union is achieved through sanctifying grace. Accepting God's love is not enough. Rather, it is necessary to actively participate with God in the salvation of the world by becoming Christ-like and taking on the burdens and sufferings of others. (McClellan 2017, pp. 12-13). Thus do we find in Stein's theology a convergence with Hopkins.³

Stein and John Paul II are alike in that both approached the question of the human person via the intersection of theology and philosophy. Stein is regarded as one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. (Lebech no date, pp. 10,13). Haney refers to her as the "mother of personalism."⁴

All that aside, there is no evidence in his *The Acting Person*, published in Polish in 1969, that John Paul (Karol Wojtyla) was aware of Stein's writings notably those on empathy.⁵

John Paul II (1920-2005).

It is fitting to follow our brief review of Edith Stein and conclude our comments on the seven Christian personalists with our remarks on John Paul II. Both Stein and John Paul were Polish. John Paul was studying to become a priest in Krakow at the very time that Stein was martyred

¹ For more on Stein's theory of empathy see the full article by Svenaesus 2018. For more on Stein's entire body of work cf. *Listening to Edith Stein* 2018.

² For more from Stein on empathy and personalism, cf. Haney and Valiquette 2002.

³ We were struck by Haney's comment regarding Stein's views on male and female in her article on phenomenological feminism in John Paul II and Edith Stein because it uses the scissors' analogy that Alfred Marshall employed to answer the question Is it supply or demand that determines market price?

The unity of male and female can make them a useful pair, but not a pair on the order of a pair of socks. Together they can be more like the blades of a scissors, and who can say that one blade is more important? (Haney 2018, chapter 15).

Cf. Baseheart 1989 for more from Stein on women.

⁴ Haney quoted in Doyno 2018, not paginated.

⁵ Cf. John Paul 1979, pp. 358-367.

nearby in Auschwitz as a Catholic Jew. He was a great admirer of Stein's work, mentioning her in his 1998 encyclical *Fides et Ratio* one month after canonizing her as a saint of the Catholic Church. If Stein properly is called the "mother of personalism," John Paul can be referred to as the "father of modern personalism," at least in Catholic circles.

John Paul's initial extended commentary on personalism appears in his doctoral dissertation *The Acting Person* which was translated into English and published in 1979. In the introduction, John Paul acknowledges that Max Scheler was most influential in the formation of his ideas about the human person and that his approach is grounded in the unity of that person which is manifested in the human act. (John Paul 1979, pp. viii).

John Paul provides a simple but essential insight to assist the reader when he asserts that it is "fulfillment in an action" that is all important in addressing the principal problems taken up in *The Acting Person*. Fulfillment means to bring oneself to the fullness of his/her being through acting, thus assuring that he/she is "somebody and not merely something." The unity of the person is more than corporeal. Indeed, it is most significantly spiritual and is known to us intuitively in his/her "spiritual nature and spiritual life." (John Paul 1979, pp. 149-151, 185).

Further on, John Paul states that the human body is the means by which a human being is able to express him/herself as a person, and that through action reveals "simultaneously the deepest sense of the integrity of [man/woman] as a person." It is fundamental, he asserts, that the person is not just a human body but a spiritual soul as well which "appears to be the ultimate principle of this integrity." It is acting with others or as John Paul puts it "acting together" that allows the human being to fulfill himself and for that reason the community must be sensitive to the role that cooperation and participation play in the self-realization of the human person. (John Paul 1979, pp. 205, 271).

Both individualism and "objective totalism," by which he means the all-powerful state, impose limits on the participation necessary for the human being to achieve his/her full potential.

Individualism sees in the individual the supreme and fundamental good, to which all interests of the community or the society have to be subordinated, while objective totalism relies on the opposite principle and unconditionally subordinates the individual to the community or the society. (John Paul 1979, p. 273).

By denying his/her social nature, individualism effectively limits acting together and thereby interferes with the good of others and the common good. By denying his/her individual nature, objective totalism sees the good of the individual as a barrier to the common good and therefore the individual good must be limited. Both limits must be removed so that the human person is free to act and thereby able to achieve fulfillment. (John Paul 1979, pp. 272-275).

John Paul examines human emotion at length, including sorrow and joy, anger and tenderness, love and hatred. Nowhere, however, do we find any reference in *The Acting Person* to Stein or empathy. He comments on reason and emotion, subordinating the latter to the former, and adds that the truth about good and evil provides guidance in choice and decision-making. (John Paul 1979, pp. 238-253).

So far as the reference to truth is concerned, the integrating process of developing and improving the psyche gradually produces the result that the will – guided by the light of reason – learns how by spontaneous reference to emotion, by a spontaneous move of attraction or repulsion to choose and to adopt to the real good; it also learns to reject the bad. (John Paul 1979, p. 253).

In this sphere the integration of the acting person is a task that lasts until the end of a man's life. (John Paul 1979, p. 253).

Though they express themselves differently, John Paul and C.S. Lewis are alike in that Lewis calls attention to the personal need for re-unification of a self that is divided due to an excess of emotion or reason whereas John Paul asserts that the integration of the acting person depends on finding the best ways to relieve the tension between spontaneous emotivity and self-determination. (John Paul 1979, pp. 252-253).

Sin is cause of the dividedness found in the human person because sin is the body's rebellion against the spirit. Unity or healing comes through the Holy Spirit who reunites the human person to the sacrificial love of Christ. (Ten Eyck and Borrás 2014, pp 22 and 30).

In *Fides et Ratio* John Paul rejects the argument that truth as derived from evidence always is superior to truth based on belief on grounds that belief “is often humanly richer than mere evidence” because it requires entrusting one's self to an “intimate and enduring” relationship with others. Human perfection, he insists, comes not through the evidence or knowledge acquired through reason but through the “dynamic relationship of faithful self-giving to others.” (John Paul 1998b, §32).

John Paul's personalism is plainly evident in his many public documents as Holy Father including his encyclical letters.¹ For example, by insisting on the *primacy* of the sacred dignity² of the human person in economic affairs, by putting *being more* ahead of *having more*, by proclaiming that human beings are more important than capital, by condemning the consumerism

¹ Notably, *Laborem Exercens*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, and *Centesimus Annus*.

² For more on the value of the human person, John Paul 1998b, §60 recommends Chapter One of the Church Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*.

of western economies, by affirming that the subjective dimension of work is more important than the objective dimension, by revealing that work is an extension of the original Act of Creation. (O'Boyle 2005, pp. 520-540).

HOMO ECONOMICUS* versus *PERSON OF ACTION

Homo economicus is a concept, a way of representing the economic agent who is entirely predictable. A decision-making contrivance that functions rationally in all economic matters so as to maximize personal net advantage. *Homo economicus* is a convenience, an assumption that does not reflect reality, a modern scientific tool of the type accepted across the sciences and adopted because it simplifies economic analysis.

Homo economicus is entirely devoid of creativity, originality, imagination, intuition, inventiveness, and unable to experience any emotion. No sorrow or joy, no anger or tenderness, no hatred or love. No empathy. A fabrication of enlightened thinking. A mere **something**.

The prominent orthodox economist Alan Blinder characterized *homo economicus* as a rational, self-interested calculating *machine*. (Blinder 2000, pp. 18, 24; emphasis added). Whether or not, this depiction is widely shared by economists who espouse the orthodox way of thinking. Notice that *homo economicus* is one part human (rational and self-interested) and one part machine (not active but passive). Not a divided self in any of the ways set forth in the preceding because a divided self is a broken human being. Rather, *homo economicus* is a cybernetic organism or cyborg whose feedback mechanism has been stripped of every emotion along with imagination, creativity, originality, and intuition.

Homo economicus relies entirely on intellect and will to calculate costs and benefits in order to maximize personal net advantage in every decision-making circumstance. *Homo economicus* is unable to add to the available alternatives from which to select, and for that reason decision-making is essentially passive. The fundamental worth of others is determined instrumentally.

The *person of action*, on the other hand, is fully human with the emotions, intellect, and will necessary for self-determination. Decision-making is active because the *person of action* has the creativity, imagination, and intuition to broaden the range of alternatives from which he/she chooses. As noted above, it was Schumpeter who more than 75 years ago restored the human *person* as the active element in economic affairs (Waters 1952, p. 14; emphasis added). Even so, Schumpeter was able to gain only very limited acceptance of his active economic agent as a replacement for the passive *homo economicus*.

At times the *person of action* is divided, with the emotional side urging one thing while the rational side prompts another, with the inward-directed self pointing in one direction at the same time the outward-directed self points in another. The *person of action* must reconcile these

divisions in order to recover as a unified person. Christian personalism informs us that reunification is achieved through self-sacrifice. The scriptures teach that “greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” This teaching often is seen at work with loving parents and grandparents, with firefighters, with men and women in the active-duty military, with Good Samaritans, and to a lesser extent with living organ donors, physicians and attorneys whose practice includes pro bono work, and financial advisers who are true fiduciaries. To the *person of action* others have a sacred dignity that surpasses their instrumental value.

The *person of action* is no abstraction, no contrivance, no cyborg. He/she is a real human being, a flawed **somebody** who longs for a purpose in life. For the *person of action*, that purpose resides in the pursuit of human perfection.¹ For personalist economics human perfection means maximum human material well-being which in economic affairs is achieved not by maximizing personal net advantage but by accruing personalist capital through the practice of virtues such as generosity, sympathy, and benevolence and the rejection of vices such as stinginess, callousness, and cruelty.

Most fundamentally, *homo economicus* is one part human, one part machine. A cyborg. The *person of action* is somebody, made in the image and likeness of God. Nearly divine.

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¹ Consider how professionals routinely pursue human perfection in terms of truth, goodness, beauty. To cite a few: musicians, athletes, artists, authors, physicians, architects, philanthropists, scientists, poets, designers, and playwrights.

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