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Between Humanity and Divinity: Christ Consciousness in Jacques Maritain's *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* and the Epistemology of Michael Polanyi

Stephen Doering

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**Between Humanity and Divinity:
Christ Consciousness in Jacques Maritain's *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*
and the Epistemology of Michael Polanyi**

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty

of the Theology Department

McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Stephen Patrick Doering

28 April 2006

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Stephen Patrick Doering

Between Humanity and Divinity: Christ Consciousness in Jacques Maritain's *On the*

Grace and Humanity of Jesus and the Epistemology of Michael Polanyi

Ph.D., Theology

28 April 2006

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I lovingly dedicate this work to:

Fr. Gregory Brian Wilson

Priest of the Diocese of Charleston,
South Carolina

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CHAPTER 1

Preliminary Questions

Introduction

The purpose of this opening chapter is to explore and address several background questions as a preparation to examining the consciousness of Jesus Christ as presented in Jacques Maritain's *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*.¹ Maritain was not the first to enter into the discussion of the consciousness of Jesus Christ, and, in fact, his work follows numerous other attempts to understand the consciousness of Jesus that began at the turn of the twentieth century. The question of the consciousness of Jesus Christ allows for a fundamental integration of the findings of psychology in theology. For the sake of clarity, when speaking of "consciousness," I am using the word in a general sense, i.e., a subjective awareness of oneself and one's surroundings.² When applying "consciousness" to Jesus Christ, theologians seek to understand more deeply questions of identity, namely, what he understood about himself and his surroundings in light of the

¹ Jacques Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (New York: Herder and Herder, Inc., 1969). Maritain's book was first published in French in 1967, and is based on two talks given to the Little Brothers of Jesus in Toulouse, France, in February and March of 1964. Maritain revised the talks for the published edition.

² Defining consciousness within the sphere of the human person is difficult for various reasons. A simple definition can be found in Stuart Sutherland, *International Dictionary of Psychology* (New York: Crossroad, 1996): "The having of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings; awareness" (95). However, G. William Farthing, "Consciousness and Unconsciousness," in *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, ed. Alan E. Kazdin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) notes that the problem with universally defining consciousness is that different academic disciplines use the term with particular nuances within their own respective fields (268). Nonetheless he offers a sweeping definition of consciousness as "[including] perceived objects and events, retrieved memories, thoughts in words or mental images, bodily sensations, emotional feelings and desires, and our own actions" (268). For a brief summary of modern uses and meanings for consciousness in psychology and philosophy, see K. R. Roa, "Consciousness," in *Concise Encyclopedia of Psychology*, ed. Becky Ozaki (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), 183-185. For a Freudian synopsis of consciousness, see L. S. Carrier, "Consciousness," in *The Freud Encyclopedia: Theory, Therapy, and Culture*, ed. Edward Erwin (New York: Routledge, 2002), 107-109.

Incarnation. Prior to Maritain, explorations in the consciousness of Jesus Christ varied depending on the methodology employed. In order to understand more fully the controversy before Maritain, we will explore in a general manner the theological question as it stood prior to Maritain's book on the subject. Lastly, an article by Karl Rahner will be examined which presents in a concise manner the state of the question of the consciousness of Jesus just a few years previous to Maritain's book on the subject.³

While the purpose of this study is to examine the consciousness of Jesus Christ in light of Maritain's Christology and the epistemology of Michael Polanyi, it is important to examine the main biblical passage relevant to the question of Christ's consciousness in Maritain's work. While Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus will be examined at length in the next chapter, one of the fundamental points behind his thesis is a disagreement between him and St. Thomas Aquinas. This disagreement deals with the understanding of one particular passage in St. Luke's Gospel, namely 2.52, "And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God and man."⁴

The final two sections of this chapter will present a personal and intellectual profile of both Maritain and Polanyi.

³ Karl Rahner, S.J., "Dogmatic Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ," trans. Karl-H. Kruger, in *Theological Investigations*, (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), 5: 193-215, was originally given as a talk to the Theological Faculty of Trier in December of 1961.

⁴ All Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Bible.

A. The Question before Maritain

General Background

While the question of the consciousness of Jesus Christ among theologians in the early twentieth century is vast, there are several modern Christological works that offer concise summaries of the controversy.⁵ Two detailed studies of the issue can be found in Jean Galot and Bernard Lonergan, while Walter Kasper and Wolfhart Pannenberg offer more succinct accounts.⁶ Theologians writing on the consciousness of Christ prior to and including Maritain did so primarily within a scholastic framework and attempted to understand the consciousness of Christ in light of the scholastic distinction of the threefold knowledge of Jesus and the Christological teachings of the Council of Chalcedon. Since these two issues play such a significant role in the various attempts at understanding the consciousness of Jesus Christ, a brief review of them will precede an examination of the controversy itself.

Scholastic theology was often taught using “manuals” that summarized theological points or opinions and assigned to them various “notes” of certainty. A good example of such a summary of the theological tradition in the manual style is Ludwig Ott’s *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*.⁷ In the section entitled “The Attributes of

⁵ For a detailed presentation of the early writings on the consciousness of Christ prior to 1954, see A. Michel, “Jésus-Christ: Théologie du Christ,” in *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, ed. Bernard Loth and Albert Michel (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1958), 2: 2646-2654.

⁶ Jean Galot, S.J., *Who is Christ? A Theology of Incarnation*, trans. M. Angeline Bouchard (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981), 319-343; Bernard Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2002), “Part 6: The Consciousness of Christ,” 190-289; Walter Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, trans. V. Green (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1976), 243-244; Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), 325-334.

⁷ Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Patrick Lynch, ed. James Bastible (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1955).

Christ's Human Nature,"⁸ Ott describes the three different kinds of knowledge proposed by the scholastics and ascribed to Jesus. The first of these three kinds of knowledge is the immediate vision of God, or beatific vision, present to Jesus in his soul.⁹ Ott presents the scholastic doctrine that while ordinary human beings cannot possess the beatific vision until they pass through death to eternal life, Jesus Christ possesses the vision of God in his soul from the moment of his conception by virtue of the hypostatic union.¹⁰ To this theological opinion Ott ascribes the theological note *sententia certa*, meaning that while the teaching does not carry the weight of an explicit theological definition by the pope or a general council (*de fide definita*), it nevertheless "is a doctrine, on which the Teaching Authority of the Church has not yet finally pronounced, but whose truth is guaranteed by its intrinsic connection with the doctrine of revelation."¹¹ According to Ott the fathers affirm this teaching, albeit indirectly, and the "Schoolmen ... unanimously accepted" this thesis.¹² As a result of the beatific vision in his soul Jesus' life existed under two different states at once, both as *viator* (pilgrim, journeyman) and as *comprehensor* (one who has attained the goal, who grasps and beholding God).¹³ In the beatific vision Jesus sees the divine essence along with all things external to God (specifically as they relate to his "vocation as Redeemer") including "all things real of the past, the present and the future, including, of course, the thoughts of mankind" (as

⁸ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 162-168.

⁹ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 162-165.

¹⁰ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 162. In fact, Ott notes that Jesus possesses the beatific vision to a greater degree than either the angels or the blessed in heaven "by reason of the Hypostatic Union" and thus "beholds God more perfectly than any other creature" (164).

¹¹ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 10.

¹² Ott, *Fundamentals*, 163.

¹³ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 162. This particular distinction will play an important role in Maritain's understanding the consciousness of Jesus Christ.

comprehensor).¹⁴ This same knowledge, though, while existing under the state of *viator* is limited according to Jesus' finite human nature. "On account, however, of the finiteness of human nature the Beatific Vision of Christ as man is not comprehensive knowledge of God."¹⁵

Along with the beatific vision the second and third types of knowledge in Jesus are infused and acquired knowledge. Infused knowledge in Jesus is "knowledge by means of concepts which are immediately and habitually communicated to a Spirit by God. It is distinguished from *scientia beata* [beatific vision] in that through it things are known in their proper nature through infused concepts ... communicated by God in a finished way to the Spirit."¹⁶ On the other hand acquired knowledge "is the natural human knowledge which proceeds from sense perception, and which is achieved through the abstracting activity of the intellect."¹⁷ Simply put, infused knowledge is conceptual knowledge of something placed directly in the mind of Jesus by God, whereas acquired knowledge entails those things which Jesus comes to know through the ordinary operation of his human senses and intellect. Ott assigns to the thesis that Jesus has both infused and acquired knowledge the theological note of *sententia communis*, a teaching "which in itself belongs to the field of free opinions, but which is accepted by theologians generally."¹⁸ This is a lower note of certainty than the note assigned to Jesus' having the immediate vision of God. In fact, concerning infused knowledge, Ott writes, "No definitive scriptural proof can be adduced of the existence in Christ of *scientia infusa*."

¹⁴ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 164-165.

¹⁵ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 164.

¹⁶ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 167.

¹⁷ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 167.

¹⁸ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 10.

Speculatively, it may be demonstrated not as necessary but as very appropriate.”¹⁹ With regard to acquired knowledge in Jesus, Ott notes that such knowledge is a “necessary consequence from the reality of the completeness of His human nature,” but adds that, according to St. Thomas, Jesus does not acquire new knowledge.²⁰ Why? Ott writes, “the knowledge which Christ acquired though His experimental knowledge was already contained in His scientia beata and in His scientia infusa, it was not new, not in its content, but only in the mode by which Christ attained it.”²¹ The earliest attempts at understanding the consciousness of Jesus Christ worked within this scholastic theory of Jesus’ knowledge, along with the Christological teachings of the Council of Chalcedon.

Because the Christological teachings of Chalcedon play such an important role in the discussion of Jesus’ knowledge among the scholastics and those theologians writing on the consciousness of Jesus Christ prior to and including Maritain, a summary review of the main texts from the council and their importance will help further situate the discussion.²² Concerning the two natures in Christ and his person the council states:

... following the saintly fathers, we all with one voice teach the confession of one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: the same perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, the same truly God and truly

¹⁹ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 167.

²⁰ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 167-168. See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 12, a. 2. According to St. Thomas, Jesus “compares” the information he gathers through sense experience with what he knows through infused or beatific knowledge. He is not actually learning anything new through acquired knowledge but simply affirming what he already knows through beatific and infused knowledge. One can see the difficulty involved in such an affirmation. If Jesus has the totality of knowledge through the beatific vision, what purpose would there be in having infused or experiential knowledge?

²¹ Ott, *Fundamentals*, 168.

²² For the decrees and canons of the Council of Chalcedon, see *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils: Nicaea I to Lateran V*, ed. Norman P. Tanner (Washington, D.C.: Sheed & Ward and Georgetown University Press, 1990), 1: 75-103. For a detailed work on the early Christological councils and the controversies that surrounded them, see Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church*, trans. Matthias Westerhoff, ed. Andrew Louth (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1993); see also J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1978).

man, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards divinity, and the same consubstantial with us as regards humanity; like us in all respects except for sin ... one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single subsistent being; he is not parted or divided into two persons, but is one and the same only-begotten Son, God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ.²³

What Chalcedon affirms is that Jesus Christ shares with the human race a human nature that is not mixed with nor absorbed by his divine nature. Jesus' human and divine natures, however, do not exist separately from one another but are united in one person. The council accepted as expressing orthodox faith the Tome of Leo in which Leo further clarified the union of two natures united in the one person of Jesus.²⁴ Leo writes:

So the proper character of both natures was maintained and came together in a single person. Lowliness was taken up by majesty, weakness by strength, mortality by eternity ... Thus was true God born in the undiminished and perfect nature of a true man, complete in what is his and complete in what is ours ... There is nothing unreal about this oneness, since both the lowliness of the man and the grandeur of the divinity are in mutual relation.²⁵

If we are to understand as the council affirms that Jesus has an authentic human nature in all things but sin, then any advances made by the sciences, particularly psychology and its understanding of consciousness and conscious awareness, are also useful in gaining further insight into the genuine humanity and person of Jesus Christ.

²³ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 1: 86.

²⁴ The council fathers state, "To these [Cyril's second letter to Nestorius and Cyril's letter to John of Antioch] it [the council] has suitably added, against false believers and for the establishment of orthodox doctrines, the letter of the primate of greatest and older Rome, the most blessed and saintly Archbishop Leo, written to the sainted Archbishop Flavian to put down Eutyches's evil-mindedness, because it is in agreement with great Peter's confession and represents a support we have in common." In *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 1: 85.

²⁵ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 1: 78.

It is from this dogmatic background and the scholastic theses concerning Jesus' knowledge that theologians began to hypothesize about the consciousness of Christ. Both the scholastics and modern authors, including Maritain, attempt to maintain two fundamental assertions about Jesus: 1. that Jesus is truly human and possesses human knowledge, and 2. that Jesus is truly divine and possesses divine knowledge. How both of these statements can be reconciled and affirmed as true for the same person – Jesus – is the question for those involved in the controversy of the consciousness of Jesus Christ. As will be seen, those theologians who attempted solutions to the consciousness of Christ outside of this scholastic theory of Jesus' knowledge and the Christological decrees of the Council of Chalcedon oftentimes found themselves at odds with the Magisterium, while those who maintained the traditional scholastic and conciliar distinctions did not.

In the brief modern history of the consciousness of Christ as outlined by Galot, Lonergan, Kasper and Pannenberg, Pannenberg sees the “heated discussion that has broken out in Roman Catholic dogmatics in recent decades about Jesus' consciousness”²⁶ as beginning with Herman Schell in his *Katholische Dogmatik*.²⁷ According to Pannenberg, in an effort to maintain a genuine human psychology in Jesus, Schell held that while the divine person subsists in both natures, those natures remain separated one from the other.²⁸ As a result Schell posits that the humanity of Jesus gains knowledge only through ordinary human means (i.e., human experience) and does not share the benefits of either what the scholastics understood as the beatific vision or what they called infused knowledge, which Schell believed would be incompatible with authentic

²⁶ Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, 328.

²⁷ Herman Schell, *Katholische Dogmatik* 3, 1 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1892), as cited in Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, 328, footnote 8.

²⁸ Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, 328.

human growth in Jesus. Having acquired human knowledge only, however, still leaves open the question as to how Jesus knows that he is divine or the Son of God. Pannenberg notes that in light of this question, Schell answers that Jesus is aware of his being the divine Son of God through an illuminated knowledge in his soul.²⁹ Although Schell avoids using the scholastic distinctions of beatific or infused knowledge, he too admits the presence of a supernatural knowledge in Jesus in addition to his ordinary experiential knowledge. Pannenberg notes, though, that Schell's theory of limiting Jesus' knowledge solely to what he gains through ordinary human experience was subsequently rejected by the Holy Office in 1918.³⁰

Galot, Kasper and Pannenberg all agree that the theologian Déodat de Basly³¹ was the leading proponent of a neo-Antiochene *Homo Assumptus* Christology, which attributed the center of consciousness to the human person of Jesus and not to the person of the Word. Pannenberg refers to Déodat de Basly's position as an "extreme Antiochene" Christology.³² From Galot's perspective, Déodat de Basly understood the man Jesus as being an independent and autonomous loving being aware of himself as a human "I," "because the man Jesus is an autonomous individual, endowed with his own intellect and will."³³ The human "I" in Jesus stands alongside the Trinity, united in an exchange of love. Galot summarizes Déodat de Basly's thought thus:

Déodat de Basly ... situated the Man Jesus (*Assumptus Homo*) vis-à-vis the Triune God as if they were two "autonomous individuals" exchanging a mutual love. In so doing he erected the two natures of

²⁹ Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, 328.

³⁰ Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, 328-329. On 329, footnote 10, Pannenberg cites H. Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, 3645f.

³¹ Galot, *Who is Christ?*, 323-324; Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 243-244; Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, 329; Déodat de Basly, *La christiade française* (Paris, 1927).

³² Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, 329.

³³ Galot, *Who is Christ?*, 323.

Christ, the human and the divine, into two persons. In fact, he conceived these two natures as subjects of activity and love, facing one another after the manner of an “I” and a “you.” In this confrontation, Déodat is actually setting the man Jesus in opposition to the Word, and as a result he can no longer speak of a unity of person or of the Word Incarnate. Such a theory does not respect the Ontological structure of Christ.³⁴

For Déodat de Basly the unity of the human nature in Christ with the triune God is not the one person of the Word as previously affirmed by the Council of Chalcedon. The unifying principle is no longer one of ontology but rather one of an exchange of love between the triune God and the man Jesus. This position of positing a duality between the man Jesus and the triune God (and/or Word) was deemed unacceptable and condemned by Pius XII in his encyclical letter on the commemoration of the fifteenth centenary of the Council of Chalcedon, *Sempiternus Rex*, in 1951.

While there is no reason why the humanity of Christ should not be studied more deeply also from a psychological point of view, there are, nevertheless, some who, in their arduous pursuit, desert the ancient teachings more than is right, and make an erroneous use of the authority of the definition of Chalcedon to support their new ideas. These emphasize the state and condition of Christ’s human nature to such an extent as to make it seem something existing in its own right (*subjectum quoddam sui juris*), and not as subsisting in the Word itself. But the council of Chalcedon in full accord with that of Ephesus, clearly asserts that both natures are united in ‘One Person and subsistence’, and rules out the placing of two individuals in Christ, as if some one man, completely autonomous in himself, had been taken up and placed by the side of the Word.³⁵

While the encyclical explicitly states that one cannot posit in Christ two separate psychological individuals, Kasper observes, “the encyclical leaves it open whether it is

³⁴ Galot, *Who is Christ?*, 330.

³⁵ Pope Pius XII, *Sempiternus Rex Christus*, 30-31 in *The Papal Encyclicals 1939-1958*, ed. Claudia Carlen (Wilmington, N.C.: McGrath Publishing Company, 1981), 4: 209.

possible to recognize a relatively independent psychological human subject (self-consciousness)” in the man Jesus.³⁶

Whereas Déodat de Basly separate the oneness of the ontological person of Christ into two separate individuals, his disciple Léon Seiller³⁷ logically advanced his mentor’s theory of Jesus’ consciousness and, according to Galot, attributed to Christ the man “all the attributes and characteristics proper to the person.”³⁸ In so doing he too separates the human and divine natures but goes further and grants the status of person to both the man Jesus and the divine Word. Lonergan attributes this trajectory in Seiller’s thought to his misunderstanding the *communicatio idiomatum*, through which Seiller does not properly distinguish or unite the acts of the human nature of Jesus from the acts of the divine Word.³⁹ According to Lonergan, when talking about Christ, Seiller believes that it is more accurate to recognize the Word joining himself to the man (*Verbum assumens*) than to recognize a man joined to the Word (*Homo Assumptus*). The man Jesus knows that he is God through the beatific vision although this vision does not make him aware of his

³⁶ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 244. In a corresponding footnote Kasper adds, “It is well-known that there is an interesting difference between the non-official text of the encyclical in the *Osservatore Romano* (13.9.1951, No. 212, p. 2) and the official text in the AAS 43 (1951), p. 638 (DS 3905). Whereas in the non-official text theologians are criticized for assuming, even only psychologically, a human subject in his own right in Christ, this “saltem psychologic” does not appear in the official text. Accordingly in the definitive text only Nestorianism and Adoptionism are condemned, but the question of Jesus’ human self-consciousness is left open.” In *Jesus the Christ*, 270, footnote 36.

³⁷ Léon Seiller, *La psychologie humaine du Christ et l'unicité de personne*, (Rennes & Paris, 1949).

³⁸ Galot, *Who is Christ?*, 324. This position is somewhat modified by Philippe de la Trinité, “A propos de la conscience du Christ: Un faux problème théologique,” *Ephemerides Carmeliticæ* 11 (1960), 1-52. Galot writes, “According to Philippe de la Trinité, the distinction between one divine ‘I’ and two ‘selves’ corresponds to the meaning of the ‘I’, which expresses the metaphysical personality, and to the meaning of the ‘self’ which ‘expresses the content of the psychical states in the context of nature.’ Inasmuch as there are two natures, there are two selves.” In *Who is Christ?*, 326.

³⁹ Lonergan, *The Ontological*, 251-253.

being united to the Word. The Word, however, is aware of himself as being both God and united to the man Jesus. What has occurred in Seiller's work is a division in the ontological unity of the person subsisting in two natures in Jesus Christ into two separate and distinct persons. In the words of Lonergan, "It was hardly surprising, therefore, that this book [*La psychologie humaine du Christ*] was placed on the Index of Forbidden Books" in July of 1951.⁴⁰ While Déodat de Basly's and Seiller's attempts to understand the consciousness of Jesus led them to grant an overt independence of the human nature from the divine nature in Christ, other authors were attempting to understand the consciousness of Jesus by maintaining a closer unity of the two natures in Jesus.

According to Galot and Kasper, Paul Galtier, like Seiller, attempted to understand the consciousness of Jesus Christ from the perspective of his human nature being enlightened by the beatific vision.⁴¹ For Galtier, according to Kasper, "consciousness belongs to nature, not to person."⁴² Galot notes that Galtier, like Déodat de Basly, attributed to the man Jesus a conscious human "I" that is identical with his human nature, but unlike Déodat de Basly, Galtier affirmed that the actions of the human "I" are also to be attributed to the person of the Word.⁴³ Thus Galtier maintains that the Word appropriates the human conscious activity as his own while at the same time allows the human nature to operate free of any influence.⁴⁴ Hence, in Jesus' human consciousness he is only aware of being human, but through the aid of the beatific vision he perceives

⁴⁰ Lonergan, *The Ontological*, 253.

⁴¹ Galot, *Who is Christ?*, 353-354; Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 244; Paul Galtier, *L'Unité du Christ, être...personne...conscience* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1939). While Pannenberg called Déodat de Basly's Christology radically Antiochene, Galtier could be characterized as holding a more moderate Antiochene Christology.

⁴² Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 244.

⁴³ Galot, *Who is Christ?*, 324-325.

⁴⁴ Galot, *Who is Christ?*, 331.

himself as also being divine. Without the aid of the beatific vision, Jesus would not have been aware of himself as being God's Son because he would have only had a human consciousness and awareness of himself.⁴⁵ Thus in Jesus the psychological subject and center of consciousness is proper to the human nature which is also enlightened by the beatific vision. Galot states that in a controversy with Pietro Parente, Galtier modified his view of Jesus having a purely human "I." In his modified position he instead affirmed that the "I" of Jesus is proper to the divine person, and that his human consciousness was an awareness of his being a psychological self.⁴⁶

Kasper writes that for Parente,⁴⁷ in opposition to Galtier, consciousness does not belong to the human nature of Jesus but rather is proper to the divine person.

P. Parente ... reiterated once more very strictly the traditional Thomist school and, as an indirect consequence, that of Alexandrian theology: the divine I of the *Logos* is the sole centre of operations; there is in Jesus Christ, not only ontologically but also psychologically, only one I, and this one divine I is directly conscious of the human nature.⁴⁸

As Lonergan writes, while Parente holds that consciousness resides pre-eminently with the Word, he also acknowledges the presence of a human consciousness in Jesus. The human consciousness, however, is "modified" in order to perceive

⁴⁵ Galot, *Who is Christ?*, 336. Galot is critical of this position because a vision of the divine is not, in his opinion, the same as conscious awareness (354). Lonergan notes that this same position is held by Herman Diepen, "La psychologie humaine du Christ selon Thomas d'Aquin," *Review Thomiste* 50 (1950): 515-562. Through the beatific vision Jesus knows that he is God, but in his human consciousness all that he is aware of are his human actions. In *The Ontological*, 279-281.

⁴⁶ Galot, *Who is Christ?*, 325-326.

⁴⁷ Pietro Parente, *L'Io Di Cristo* (Morcelliana: Brescia, 1955).

⁴⁸ Kasper, *Jesus the Christ*, 244.

“indirectly and dimly” its union with the Word.⁴⁹ Thus the question, “How does Jesus Christ become aware of his divinity?” (Déodat de Basly, Seiller and Galtier) is for Parente, “How is the Word conscious of his human nature?” Whereas Pannenberg praises Parente for “[achieving] a coherent construction of the vital unity of the God-man,” he is quick to add that he has done so “only at the price of the humanity of his [Jesus’] conscious life.”⁵⁰ Whether or not Pannenberg’s criticism of Parente is accurate, it reveals the difficulties involved in speculating on the question of the consciousness of Christ. While the *Homo Assumptus* theories of the consciousness of Christ tend to over-emphasize and grant too great an autonomy to the humanity of Jesus, Parente, in stressing the divine consciousness and ontological unity of Jesus, seemingly does not respect Jesus’ authentic human nature enough. These five authors are all examples of the difficulties encountered in the mid-twentieth century attempts at articulating a theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ. While attempting to adhere to the conciliar decrees and the scholastic theory of Jesus’ knowledge, many of these theologian’s theories of the consciousness of Jesus did not lead to a consensus, but instead produced a wide range of theories and criticisms.

⁴⁹ Lonergan, *The Ontological*, 277, 279. According to Galot, Bartolome Xiberta, *El Yo de Jesucristo* (Barcelona: Herder, 1954) also maintains this position. In *Who is Christ?*, 281. A similar thesis is held by Anscar Vonier, *The Personality of Christ* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1916). Vonier holds that according to the scholastic tradition, “a person is radically and eternally *sui juris*,” (32) and although he does not discuss consciousness, he replaces the notion with personality (39-43).

⁵⁰ Pannenberg, *Jesus-God and Man*, 329.

Karl Rahner

Rahner's essay "Dogmatic Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ"⁵¹ summarizes the state of the question of the consciousness of Jesus Christ as it stood in 1961 and presents questions for further consideration concerning the future discussion of the consciousness of Jesus, some of which will subsequently be addressed by Maritain in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*. The questions Rahner offers will be examined after briefly assessing the methodology Rahner employs in this article. Rahner's methodology is noteworthy because this dissertation's methodology will closely follow some of Rahner's methodological points, which we will note. Finally, we will examine the solution proposed by Rahner.

There is a twofold importance to citing Rahner's methodology. First, in order to understand the context of the questions he raises concerning the consciousness of Christ, it is necessary to understand his theological perspective. Rahner clearly asserts that he approaches the question of Jesus' consciousness as a Catholic dogmatic theologian. A second and more important reason for citing Rahner's methodology is that this dissertation closely follows his two main methodological points, namely that the question being raised is a dogmatic question and not an exegetical question, and that although a speculative Christological question, it is in harmony with the Church's Magisterium.

⁵¹ Karl Rahner, S.J., "Dogmatic Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ," trans. Karl-H. Kruger, in *Theological Investigations*, (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966), 5: 193-215. For the original German see "Dogmatische Erwägungen über das Wissen und Selbstbewußtsein Christi," in *Schriften zur Theologie*, (Zürich: Benziger, 1962), 5: 222-245. Rahner addresses the concept of the beatific vision in "Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace" in *Theological Investigations*, trans. Cornelius Ernst, O.P. (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1961), 1: 319-346. In this article he understands vision as the presence of God in the human spirit that is more relational and involves more than just an intellectual vision (335-336).

The first methodological point Rahner makes is that he is raising a dogmatic question and not an exegetical question.⁵² Rahner affirms that he has “neither the intention nor the competence to carry out a work of exegesis,”⁵³ but he notes the existence of “a certain tension ... between exegetes and dogmatic theologians”⁵⁴ regarding Jesus Christ’s knowledge and conscious awareness. It seems to me that part of this tension resides in the nature and goal of each discipline and their relation to one another. The task of dogmatic theology is to build upon and make intelligible the Church’s dogmatic formulations. In cases where there is no clear teaching, dogmatic theologians offer possible solutions to questions that are being raised that will help understand or develop the question in accord with Scripture and tradition. As Rahner states, “If one appeals simply to the Church’s *magisterium*, then the dogmatic theologian must be reminded of the fact that it is his very task to show how, and from where, the modern *magisterium* has taken its teaching, since it does not receive any new revelation but only guards and interprets the apostolic tradition and hence must itself have objective reasons for its interpretation of this apostolic tradition.”⁵⁵ Pertaining to the mission of the biblical exegete, however, it is “not demanded of the exegete that he himself, with his historical methods or with a biblical theology based directly on the texts, should be able to arrive at dogmatic statements about the knowledge and self-consciousness of Jesus.”⁵⁶ According to Rahner, the findings of dogmatic theologians and the findings of biblical exegetes should be *compatible* with one another, although a more concrete relationship is

⁵² Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 195, 198-199, 202.

⁵³ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 198.

⁵⁴ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 195.

⁵⁵ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 204.

⁵⁶ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 198.

preferable.⁵⁷ Specifically referring to the consciousness of Jesus Christ, Rahner writes that the “only thing we intend to do in this respect is to offer the exegete a dogmatic conception of Christ’s self-consciousness and knowledge which will perhaps make it easier than it has been in the face of previous conceptions for him to admit that this conception is compatible with his own historical findings. We say: that it is ‘compatible’. For this is all that is required.”⁵⁸

The second noteworthy point of Rahner’s methodology is that he explicitly states his intention to speculate on the consciousness of Christ in harmony with the Church’s teaching office while offering a speculative proposal that may further clarify what has not been explicitly defined or taught. Rahner does this in both explicit and implicit ways. Implicitly, the foundation of Rahner’s speculation is the teaching of Chalcedon, particularly emphasizing the hypostatic union of Jesus Christ.⁵⁹ Explicitly, Rahner is clear to say that what he is attempting is “not intended to be anything more than a conceivable theological conception which is not opposed to the declarations made by the official *magisterium* about our question. It is simply meant to be a theological conception which seems to make sense because it seems to prove itself to be deducible from dogmatic presuppositions which are certain.”⁶⁰ Regarding the beatific vision Rahner states that both dogmatic theologians and exegetes “are not permitted to doubt the binding, although not defined, doctrine of the Church’s *magisterium* which states that the

⁵⁷ For example see Karl Rahner and Wilhelm Thüsing, *Christologie - Systematisch und Exegetisch*, Quaestiones Disputatae, vol. 55 (Freiburg: Herder, 1972). The book is based on a class that Rahner and Thüsing taught together. Particularly relevant to the consciousness of Christ are thesis 17-20, 22-23 (pages 26-29, 30-34).

⁵⁸ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 198. He makes the same point again on the following page.

⁵⁹ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 205-206; see also 210, footnote 11.

⁶⁰ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 199.

human soul of Jesus enjoyed the direct vision of God during his life on earth.”⁶¹ Rahner thus makes it clear that he intends to speculate on a still open theological question while also respecting the received tradition of the councils and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, i.e., the beatific vision. With this methodology in mind, what are the questions he considers to be open concerning the consciousness of Jesus Christ?

Rahner begins his essay by stating the theological foundation to the question concerning the consciousness of Jesus Christ as indicated by the manualist tradition. He writes:

Theological tradition attributes a knowledge to Jesus as man which embraces and exhausts all past, present and future reality, at least to the extent in which these realities are related in some way to Christ’s soteriological task ... This theological tradition furthermore attributes to Jesus—from the very first moment of his human existence—the possession of the direct vision of God as it is experienced by the blessed in heaven.⁶²

The first question for Rahner is *how* Jesus is consciously aware of this vision in his humanity. Rahner writes that when Jesus is understood as having an unqualified and absolute knowledge of all things and all times, “Such statements sound almost mythological today when one first hears them; they seem to be contrary to the real humanity and historical nature of Our Lord.”⁶³ The next two questions Rahner raises are directly related to this first question. In all three questions Rahner’s inquiries concern the meaning of Jesus’ living in and having an authentic human nature along with his having the beatific vision.

The second question that Rahner asks involves a clarification of “consciousness”

⁶¹ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 215.

⁶² Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 193-194.

⁶³ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 194-195.

and its application to Jesus. What is human consciousness? How is human consciousness understood when specifically applied to the man Jesus? For Rahner, in order to understand how Jesus could be conscious of the vision of God in his soul, it is important to acknowledge that human consciousness is a complex and multifaceted reality. Rahner explains:

Human consciousness is an infinite, multi-dimensional sphere: there is reflex consciousness to things to which we attend explicitly; there is conceptual consciousness of objects and a transcendental, unreflected knowledge attached to the subjective pole of consciousness; there is attunement and propositional knowledge, permitted and suppressed knowledge; there are spiritual events in consciousness and their reflexive interpretation; there is non-objectified knowledge of a formal horizon within which a determined comprehended object comes to be present...It cannot be our job to draw up an empirico-psychological or transcendental scheme of these different ways in which something may be present in consciousness. The point just touched on is merely meant to indicate the fact of this multiplicity of possible forms in which a reality can be present to consciousness.⁶⁴

Here Rahner makes an important point for understanding the consciousness of Jesus Christ. Any speculation concerning the consciousness of Jesus must be aware that human consciousness is a complex reality with immense possibilities. It seems to me that this also raises a very important anthropological point. To enter into a discussion of the consciousness of Jesus Christ is to enter into a theologically complex reality that does not simply involve an ordinary human being, but rather enters into the colossal reality of the God-man.

The third question Rahner raises involves the meaning of Jesus' having the "beatific vision" in his soul from the moment of his conception. Concerning Jesus'

⁶⁴ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 200.

beatific vision, Rahner writes, “it is far too easily taken for granted as self-evident that direct contact with God must always be beatific”⁶⁵ in the same manner as the blessed in heaven. Rahner does not doubt that as a result of the hypostatic union in Jesus there is “direct contact” between the two natures in Christ. However, Rahner asks, “[Is] it certain that what is meant, in the tradition of theology, by the consciousness of Jesus is really intended to convey an idea of beatitude by direct union with God over and above this union [i.e., hypostatic union] itself?”⁶⁶ If there is already a real union between the two natures in Jesus, is it also necessary to postulate that he additionally has the beatific vision as well? In Rahner’s view the hypostatic union itself would be the most radical actualization of human nature without the need for the addition of the beatific vision. Nonetheless, Rahner summarizes the various explanations of Jesus’ having the beatific vision and divides the solutions into two categories. Either the beatific vision has been viewed as an external addition to Jesus’ human nature, or it has been viewed as being an integral part the internal make-up of the God-man.

The external solutions have understood the beatific vision as “really an additional perfection and gift granted to Jesus, a perfection which is not ontologically bound up with the Hypostatic Union but which at the most is connected with it by a certain moral necessity.”⁶⁷ According to Rahner, those who view the beatific vision of Jesus in this manner also ascribe perfections to Jesus “which are not absolutely incompatible with his earthly mission, especially if this perfection can be proved to be—or at least probably

⁶⁵ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 202-203.

⁶⁶ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 203.

⁶⁷ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 204.

be—a help or a more or less necessary presupposition for his teaching authority.”⁶⁸ On the other hand, those who offer an internal explanation of Jesus’ having the beatific vision understand it to be the direct result of the hypostatic union. In this view Jesus has the beatific vision in his human nature because of his union with the Logos and the divine nature. Rahner views Thomistic epistemology and metaphysics as the basis for the internal view, where “something which exists is present to itself, to the extent in which it has or is being.”⁶⁹ Applying this methodology to the hypostatic union, Rahner writes:

The hypostatic Union implies the self-communication of the absolute Being of God—such as it subsists in the Logos—to the human nature of Christ which thereby becomes a nature hypostatically supported by the Logos. The Hypostatic Union is the highest conceivable—the ontologically highest—actualization of the reality of a creature, in the sense that a higher actualization would be absolutely impossible.”⁷⁰

The humanity of Jesus would be consciously aware of this union because “what is ontologically higher cannot be lower on the plane of consciousness than what is ontologically lower.”⁷¹ Herein Rahner locates one of the current problems in understanding Jesus’ consciousness and his having the beatific vision.

When we hear about Christ’s direct vision of God, we instinctively imagine this vision as a vision of the divine essence present before his mind’s eye as an object, as if the divine essence were an object being looked at by an observer standing opposite it ... we pass equally unconsciously and naturally to the thought that this divine essence offering itself and viewed in this way as an object of vision from without, is like a book or mirror offering, and putting before Christ’s consciousness, more or less naturally all other conceivable contents of knowledge.⁷²

⁶⁸ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 204. Rahner finds the external solution to Jesus’ beatific vision lacking in both Scripture and the Tradition of the Church. Unfortunately he does not specifically mention any particular author of either the external or internal solution to Jesus’ having the beatific vision.

⁶⁹ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 205.

⁷⁰ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 205.

⁷¹ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 206.

⁷² Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 207.

Understanding the beatific vision and Christ's consciousness in this manner brings us back to the initial statement of Rahner's quoted at the beginning of this section, namely, that such a conception of Jesus makes the Incarnation seem more like a myth than a reality. Rahner does not deny that Jesus is consciously aware of his divinity, but he does significantly nuance how he understands the beatific vision and its relation to Jesus' conscious awareness.

In evaluating the consciousness of Jesus Christ, the main question that Rahner asks is that if in his human consciousness Jesus is fully aware of the beatific vision, can we still affirm that Jesus' humanity is still genuinely human? Specifically, Rahner questions Jesus' human free will and the Paschal Mystery in light of such a conception of the beatific vision and Jesus' conscious awareness. Rahner poses the question thus:

In view of the data provided by the historical sources regarding Christ's death-agony and feeling of being forsaken by God in his death on the Cross, can one seriously maintain—without applying an artificial layer-psychology—that Jesus enjoyed the beatitude of the blessed, thus making of him someone who no longer really and genuinely achieves his human existence as a '*viator*'?⁷³

Likewise, Rahner writes that if the human consciousness of Jesus were immediately aware of the divine essence in an unqualified manner, how can one then make sense of the historical consciousness of Jesus presented in the Gospels? According to Rahner, the Gospels present the consciousness of Jesus as being “the consciousness of the one who questions, doubts, learns, is surprised, is deeply moved, the consciousness of the one who is overwhelmed by a deadly feeling of being forsaken by God.”⁷⁴ Rahner emphasizes

⁷³ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 203.

⁷⁴ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 207.

that great caution should be used when the reality of the Gospel narratives is overshadowed by a theological concept, i.e., the beatific vision.

Rahner's solution to the question of the consciousness of Jesus Christ seeks to maintain the traditional teaching of Jesus having the beatific vision in light of the aforementioned questions. Rahner believes that the human nature of Jesus, by virtue of the hypostatic union, is uniquely aware of being God's Son through a subjective religious awareness much like other men.⁷⁵ Rahner postulates that the beatific vision in Jesus' soul should not be understood as a direct vision of God but rather as a spiritual awareness of the divine presence, albeit in Jesus this unique awareness springs from the depths of the hypostatic union. "This means, however, that this really existing direct vision of God is nothing other than the original unobjectified consciousness of divine sonship, which is present by the mere fact that there *is* a Hypostatic Union."⁷⁶ Jesus does not "look" at the divine essence as though he were gazing upon something external to himself as an object of his attention. Rather, he is spiritually aware of himself as united to the Logos.

What necessitates such an understanding of the beatific vision is Rahner's desire to maintain Jesus' likeness with humanity and the "genuine human nature of the Son as essentially similar to our own ... not to be degraded into a myth of a God disguised in human appearance."⁷⁷ In maintaining the authenticity of Jesus' human nature, Rahner writes that as Jesus grows and matures into adulthood, so too does his awareness of his union with the Logos mature and becomes clearer within his human consciousness. In Rahner's opinion, "just as there is this objectively reflexive process of becoming

⁷⁵ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 208-209.

⁷⁶ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 208.

⁷⁷ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 213.

conscious of what has always been already understood consciously but without knowing it and in an unsystematic and unobjectified manner, so it is also the case of Christ's consciousness of divine sonship and his basic condition of direct presence to God."⁷⁸

A second point Rahner makes regarding Jesus' awareness of being united with the Logos concerns the freedom of the man Jesus.

A philosophy of the person and of the freedom of a finite being, a philosophy of history and of decisions, could undoubtedly show with comparative ease that the fact of challenge, of going into the open, of confiding oneself to the incalculable, of the obscurity of origin and the veiled nature of the end—in short, of a certain kind of ignorance—are all necessary factors in the very nature of self-realization of the finite person in the historical decision of freedom.⁷⁹

Rahner highlights that the Greek concept of the person, which views ignorance as an imperfection that needs to be overcome, is behind the mentality of those theologians who want to attribute knowledge of all things to the man Jesus. Instead, Rahner insists that ignorance should not be understood in a negative manner because in his view genuine human freedom always involves some degree of not knowing.⁸⁰ Rahner makes this point when he writes:

Thus, freedom in the open field of decisions is better than if this room for freedom were filled with knowledge of such a nature as to suffocate this freedom ... this basic condition is precisely that knowledge which, rather than cluttering up, opens up the room for freedom ... the objective perception of every individual object right down to the last detail would be the end of freedom.⁸¹

That Jesus is aware of his union with the Logos and his divine Sonship does not necessitate a direct knowledge in his human consciousness of all things and all times. To

⁷⁸ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 211.

⁷⁹ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 202.

⁸⁰ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 201-202.

⁸¹ Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, 5: 214.

have such knowledge, according to Rahner, would be a contradiction to a genuine freedom in Jesus and would instead impel him to do that which he understands in his heightened spiritual awareness.

While Jesus is aware of his union with the Logos, as he makes choices he comes to realize more fully the mandate of his mission as Son and Savior which is already tacitly present to him in his transcendent religious experience rooted in the hypostatic union. With each successive free choice Jesus makes, he opens up further possibilities to himself while closing off others, all the while making authentic and real human choices. Stated positively, it is ignorance which assures a real freedom in the human action and consciousness of Jesus. If Jesus has a total knowledge of all things and all times, he would not make free human decisions. Instead, his human nature would be the passive instrument of the Logos. Rahner's solution to the question of the consciousness of Jesus is to affirm that Jesus has a real awareness of the Logos in his human consciousness but not in the traditionally understood manner of beatific vision which includes a complete and total knowledge of all things. Rahner maintains the reality of the hypostatic union while proposing a possible solution to the consciousness of the man Jesus which allows for him to make genuine free choices especially in relation to his suffering and death.

In summary, Rahner's article makes several points that are important for this dissertation. First, it shares his methodological principles. This method includes examining the question of the consciousness of Jesus Christ from the perspective of dogmatic (i.e., systematic) theology and not from an exegetical perspective, and addressing the question from the perspective of Catholic dogmatic theology.

In regard to the beatific vision and the consciousness of Christ, the three fundamental questions raised by Rahner are also important for our study. In summary, Rahner asks: 1. How is Jesus aware of the beatific vision in his human intellect and soul?, 2. What is meant by consciousness?, and 3. What do we mean by “beatific vision”? Perhaps these three questions can be summarized in the following question: Is it possible to maintain that Jesus experiences genuine intellectual growth and a real human freedom while also maintaining the presence of the beatific vision in his soul? Such is the state of the question as presented by Rahner just prior to the publication of Maritain’s *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*. Maritain’s small book is important because it attempts to answer the question of intellectual growth and freedom in Jesus while affirming the theory of Jesus’ having the beatific vision.

B. The Biblical Question, Luke 2.52

General Inquiry

As previously stated this work is not primarily one of biblical exegesis. To paraphrase Rahner, I have neither the intention nor competence to carry out a detailed work of exegesis on all the biblical texts which seem to indicate real growth or limitation in Jesus’ humanity. Rahner does indicate, however, that the scholarly findings of exegetes and the work of systematic theologians ought to be compatible with one

another.⁸² One of the underlying questions of Maritain's thesis, as will be seen, involves his disagreement with Aquinas' interpretation of Luke 2.52. The full range of New Testament texts that show growth or limitations in Jesus' knowledge and conscious awareness is too vast to be dealt with at length here.⁸³ However, the key text from Luke's Gospel cannot be overlooked. Consequently, the aim of this section is twofold: first to show what various exegetes have to say concerning Luke 2.52, and secondly to indicate in particular what the American Catholic exegete Raymond E. Brown has to say concerning this passage within the broader vision of his writings.

Most biblical commentaries interpret Luke 2.52 in light of the larger story which encompasses verses 41-52. The story, unique to Luke's Gospel, tells of the Holy Family's trip to Jerusalem and the subsequent losing and finding of the boy Jesus in the Temple by the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph.⁸⁴ Concerning verse 52 most exegetes see a parallel with verse 40, "The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the

⁸² On this point see Gerald O'Collins, S.J. and Daniel Kendall, S.J., *The Bible for Theology: Ten Principles for the Theological Use of Scripture* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1997). O'Collins and Kendall's fifth principle is that theologians should "prefer, all things being equal, the line taken by widely respected, centrist biblical scholars or at least a majority of them. In reflecting on the scriptural texts, theologians ought not to plunge forward by themselves and ignore what professional exegetes have to say" (25).

⁸³ See Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1994). In Chapter 4, "What Can be Discerned about Jesus" (31-59), Brown discusses many biblical texts which imply limitations in Jesus' knowledge (i.e., Mark 5.30-33, Luke 2.52, and John 7.38), including the Scriptures and religious ideas of Jesus' time in addition to cases where he exhibits extra-ordinary knowledge of events or people.

⁸⁴ Samuel Oyin Abogunrin, "Luke," in *The International Bible Commentary: A Catholic and Ecumenical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. William R. Farmer (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1998). Abogunrin helpfully places the parallels between the infancy narratives of the Matthean Gospel side by side with the Lucan Gospel (1376). Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacra Pagina, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1991), regards Jesus' being left behind for three days, pointing out that the text indicates that the "boy remained behind because of his own choice and not because of his parents' neglect" (3: 59).

favor of God was upon him” (influenced by I Sam 2.26?), although not all agree whether the two verses serve as an inclusion to or as the end of separate stories.⁸⁵ For example, Mark Coleridge, utilizing narrative criticism, points out the obvious similarities between the two verses in which both refer to Jesus (v. 40-child, v. 52-Jesus), to an increase (v. 40-grew and became strong, v. 52-increased), to his gaining wisdom (v. 40-filled with wisdom, v. 52-wisdom and stature), and finally both refer to his grace, i.e., favor (v. 40-upon him, v. 52-with God and men).⁸⁶ Coleridge believes that the goal of the narrative is to show that Jesus has now entered the “public arena” for the first time as an independent agent and will be the object of the narrative for the rest of Luke’s story.⁸⁷ According to this, verse 52 is best understood as the summation of the Temple story and points out the obvious, namely, that the boy Jesus continued to grow into adulthood.

There is no question that verse 52, however, indicates “progress” or “advancement” in Jesus.⁸⁸ Johnson notes that among the moral philosophers of the evangelist’s day, the Greek *prokoptein* (advancement, progress) “had technical force for

⁸⁵ See J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971). “Semantically the whole of this verse is closely similar to v. 40, and part of it to I:80a ... in the discourse structure all three verses have the same function, viz. to mark the end of a narrative by a general statement, summarizing a development stretching over several years” (155). On this same point see S. MacLean Gilmour, *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. George Arthur Butterick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1952), 68.

⁸⁶ Mark Coleridge, *The Birth of the Lukan Narrative: Narrative as Christology in Luke 1-2* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993), 210. Coleridge writes, “... narrative criticism is more concerned with the work of the evangelist as artist, which is not to say it ignores the theological question. It simply approaches it differently” (16).

⁸⁷ Reiling and Swellengrebel, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke*, 155. “This is the first time that the name [Jesus] occurs without a qualifying opposition” (155). Coleridge, *The Birth of the Lukan Narrative*, 211, 213. On this point see Jerome Kodell, O.S.B., “Luke,” in *The Collegeville Bible Commentary*, ed. Diane Bergant and Robert J. Karris (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1989), 936-980. “At his presentation, Jesus was unable to speak for himself, others interpreted his identity and mission for him. Now he proclaims the meaning of his life” (942-943).

⁸⁸ Reiling and Swellengrebel, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke*, 155.

growth in the moral and intellectual life.”⁸⁹ It can be posited, however, that Jesus’ growth is presented as a genuine advancement of ordinary human physiological development⁹⁰ and wisdom⁹¹ and not necessarily as a reference to his being divinely self-aware (although this would render verse 49 as either contextually awkward or unintelligible). Referring to this verse Scott Hahn and Mitch Curtis note the “human development of Jesus was a process of building character and acquiring experiential knowledge that kept pace with his physical and psychological growth.”⁹² Maintaining the real humanity of Jesus and his “growing” does not in any way take away from his divine identity as revealed in the Annunciation scene (1.26-38). Joseph Fitzmyer makes this point in his commentary on Luke’s Gospel when he writes:

Furthermore, in certain circles of systematic theology today, people are seeking to substitute for a “christology from above” a so-called christology from below. Say what one will about the legitimacy of this distinction and of the later understanding of Jesus, one has to realize that the Lucan infancy narrative, like that of Matthew, knows only a “christology from above.”⁹³

The problem pointed out by Fitzmyer is one that relates directly to Luke 2.52 and how it

⁸⁹ Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 60. See also G. Stählin, “Prokopé,” trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, Abridged (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 939-942. Stählin adds to the definition “cultural progress, or advance in virtue” (939), but notes that in Luke 2.52 “... the stress is on spiritual progress and (as in 2.40) the controlling concept is that of favor with God reflected in favor with men. Luke never follows up on the progress of Jesus, and the verse offers no basis for speaking about his growth in self-awareness or his moral development” (940).

⁹⁰ J. Schneider, “Hēlikía,” trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, Abridged (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 308. Schneider favors “years” for Luke 2.52 instead of “age” (308).

⁹¹ U. Wilckens and G. Fohrer, “Sophía,” trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, Abridged (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 1062. “When Luke 2.40 says that Jesus grows in wisdom, this reflects OT usage (cf. 1 Sam. 2:26); the reference is to knowledge of the law and a pious mode of life.” Wisdom in Luke 2.52 can be understood in the same manner.

⁹² Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, *The Gospel of Luke*, The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001), 25.

⁹³ Joseph Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)*, The Anchor Bible, (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1981), 28: 447.

needs to be understood and interpreted. From the exegetical perspective the verse clearly indicates a growth of some kind in Jesus, but the question remains how this particular verse fits into the larger whole of any given Christology, be it biblical, systematic or both. N. T. Wright fittingly points out that the claim of historical objectivity by exegetes is “hopelessly outdated,”⁹⁴ and I would argue that this also applies to systematic theologians as well. As will be seen in Maritain’s *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, Maritain disagrees with St. Thomas’ glossing over Luke 2.52 because it fails to fit his overall Christological perspective. Needless to say, the works of the exegetes examined here concerning Luke 2.52 leaves open the possibility for systematic theologians to probe more deeply into the question of the consciousness of Christ.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ N. T. Wright, "Jesus' Self-Understanding," in *The Incarnation: An Interdisciplinary Symposium of the Incarnation of the Son of God*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, S.J. and Gerald O'Collins, S.J. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 49-50. On this point see Joseph Fitzmyer, S.J., *Scripture & Christology: A Statement of the Biblical Commission with a Commentary* (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), “Christology and Historical Research,” section 1.1.3 (6-7, 62-66). See also Ben Witherington, III, *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997). Witherington traces the third quest for the historical Jesus through the works of such well known authors as John Dominic Crossan, Marcus Borg, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, John P. Meier, James D. G. Dunn, and N. T. Wright, among others, and finds that many of these authors define their methodological parameters in such a way as to find a Jesus that is consistent with their own methodology.

⁹⁵ In *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*, Brown points out dogmatic statements need not be found explicitly in the New Testament to be biblically based. He writes, “On a broader level...in Roman Catholic thought there is no need to torture biblical texts in order to find in NT times an awareness of church doctrines articulated in later centuries, even though those doctrines cannot be seen to contradict the NT. We should be alert to lines of development from the NT to a subsequently defined doctrine so that it is clear that the church is interpreting revelation rather than imposing extrinsic dogma: yet doctrine may stem from later Christian insights into what was involved in the mystery revealed in Christ” (30, footnote 32).

Raymond Brown

Raymond Brown is a modern exegete who pays attention to systematic questions. Brown examines Luke 2.41-52, “The Boy Jesus in the Temple Speaks of His Father,” in his most detailed work on the infancy narrative of Luke and Matthew’s Gospels, *The Birth of the Messiah*.⁹⁶ Much of Brown’s treatment of the terms, vocabulary and expressions of the passage as a whole, and verse 52 in particular,⁹⁷ are harmonious with what has already been noted. The principal contribution that Brown makes is his examining the story in light of its being a transition from the infancy narrative as a whole (chapters 1-2) to the rest of the Gospel, and in light of Luke’s overall Christological perspective.

While the story of the finding of the boy Jesus in the Temple follows after his presentation as an infant in the Temple by Mary and St. Joseph (Luke 2.22-40) and precedes his adult baptism by John the Baptist (Luke 3.21-23), in Brown’s view the Temple scene “can scarcely be called a section of the *infancy* narrative.”⁹⁸ Although the Gospel writer has intertwined some sections of story (the previously noted verse 40 with verse 52), Brown believes this was previously an independent story from that which

⁹⁶ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 471-496. In his *Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997) he spends a little over a full page on the same material (234-235).

⁹⁷ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 478. For example, Brown notes the definite connection between Luke 1.80, 2.40 and 2.52, each of which builds upon the verse that precedes it (494). The only substantial difference is his treatment of grace, which he believes is best understood as “a basic goodness manifested in a life that is harmonious with God’s commandments” (495).

⁹⁸ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 480. See Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 235. “No matter what the origin of the story of Jesus at age twelve, by placing it between the infancy and public ministry accounts, Luke has constructed a most persuasive Christological sequence” (235). Whereas in the annunciation an angel declared Jesus as God’s Son (1.35), and God’s voice asserts this at the baptism (3.22-23), in the Temple scene Jesus himself declares that God is “my Father” (2.49). See also Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 481.

precedes it (i.e., the gradual expansion of verses 1.80, 2.40 and 2.52).⁹⁹ According to Brown, the content, tone and chronology all point to this being a separate story inserted by the evangelist with other pre-ministry Jesus stories and then adapted to act as the transition piece between the infancy stories and the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.¹⁰⁰ Brown also views this as an important Christological development by Luke.¹⁰¹ He sees a definite correlation between this childhood story of Luke's Gospel with other similar stories from the Old Testament (i.e., Samuel and Daniel) and non-canonical writings (i.e., *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*).¹⁰² Nonetheless, while much can be said about Jesus' growth in wisdom, age and grace, for Brown the "center of the story is not the boy's intelligence but his reference to God as his Father in vs. 49."¹⁰³ While it is undisputable that Jesus was born and had a childhood like any other, "in Luke those historical reminiscences serve as the occasion for the articulation of a revelation apprehended by post-resurrectional faith, namely, the divine sonship."¹⁰⁴ This leads Brown to emphatically state:

And so, whether one is liberal or conservative, one must desist from using the present scene to establish a historical development (or lack of development) in Jesus' self-awareness. It is not possible to argue from vs. 49 that Jesus as a boy knew he was the Son of God. It is equally impossible to argue from vs. 52 (which is a standard description of growth) that Jesus grew in human knowledge. At most one can argue that Luke's appreciation of Jesus did not cause him to see any difficulty in stating that Jesus grew in wisdom and God's favor, and that Luke's

⁹⁹ Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 234. See also Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 494.

¹⁰⁰ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 481-482.

¹⁰¹ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 481-482, 495. Like the majority of exegetes, Brown holds that Mark's Gospel is the earliest written Gospel ("Marcan primacy") (26-29). He points out that for both Luke and Matthew the Christological importance of the infancy narratives (and the Temple scene in particular for Luke) is to reveal Jesus as God's Son earlier than his baptism in the Jordan by John the Baptist (Mark 1.9-11), something Brown considers a development in Christological thinking (which operates in a "backward" manner).

¹⁰² Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 480-482.

¹⁰³ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 483.

¹⁰⁴ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 483.

Christology did not cause him to see any difficulty in affirming that, already as a boy, Jesus was God's Son.¹⁰⁵

Brown, however, acknowledges that questions relating to Jesus' growth in knowledge and grace "are problems of systematic theology rather than of exegesis."¹⁰⁶ In his short work, *Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing the Church*, he asserts, "all modern christology is based on the theory that the human knowledge of Jesus was limited,"¹⁰⁷ but "a limitation of human knowledge does *not* mean that Jesus was not God; it means he was man."¹⁰⁸ While "ignorance" seems to have a negative connotation in modern languages and was viewed in a negative manner by the scholastics, Brown points out that while such questions relate to the New Testament, they are better addressed as questions of systematic theology and philosophy.¹⁰⁹ From the biblical perspective, however, Brown notes that aside from being sinless (Heb 4.15), within the New Testament "[no] other exception is made in Jesus' likeness to us; and so we might assume that Jesus was like us in having limited knowledge."¹¹⁰ Interestingly enough, however, Brown does ask a philosophical question related to the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus:

If Jesus seems to have known who he was throughout his whole recorded life, why would knowing his divine identity have prevented growth in his

¹⁰⁵ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 483.

¹⁰⁶ Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 483, footnote 18.

¹⁰⁷ Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing the Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 35, footnote 27.

¹⁰⁸ Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*, 28.

¹⁰⁹ Brown, *Biblical Reflections*, footnote 27, 35. See also Brown, *Responses to 101 Question on the Bible* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), 101. On the negative view the scholastics had of ignorance see Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*, 28.

¹¹⁰ Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology*, 28. In *Jesus God and Man: Modern Biblical Reflections* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1967), Brown writes, "Unless we understand that Jesus was truly human, we cannot comprehend the depth of God's love. And if theologians should ultimately come to accept limitations of Jesus' knowledge that we have seen reflected *prima facie* in the biblical evidence, then how much the more shall we understand that God so loved us that He subjected Himself to our most agonizing infirmities ... a Jesus for whom the future was as much a mystery, a dread, and a hope as it is for us ... this is a Jesus who would have gone through life's real trials" (104-105).

comprehension of how that identity interacted with a human life where growth, experience, the events of the ministry, and indeed his death, brought increased understanding of the human situation?”¹¹¹

Specifically referring to Luke 2.41-52, Brown writes, “Luke is giving us a perceptive theological insight into history: there was a continuity from the infant Jesus to the boy Jesus to the Jesus of the ministry to the risen Jesus.”¹¹²

Utilizing Brown’s exegesis of this passage, we can now ask if the question posed by Rahner, that biblical exegesis and systematic theology need only be compatible with one another, holds true vis-à-vis Luke 2.52. Brown answers that the passage in question is ambiguous and that the biblical text does not answer the question of Jesus’ knowledge or consciousness positively or negatively. He also notes that such a question is best addressed by systematic theologians.¹¹³ Thus Luke 2.52 does not definitively answer whether or not there is or is not a real intellectual growth in Jesus.

¹¹¹ Brown, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*, 100. On the previous page Brown points out that “there is never a scene in the Gospel portrait where he [Jesus] discovers something about himself that he did not know before” (99).

¹¹² Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*, 494.

¹¹³ See Brown, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Bible*, 91. In speaking of the Virginal Conception Brown writes, “But since both Testaments are the product of believing communities, I see no contradiction in allowing the ongoing life of believing communities to serve as an interpretive element, casting light on the obscurities of the biblical record. I would much rather do that than force the biblical evidence either by insisting that it is totally clear and probative, or by insisting that it disproves when at most is obscure” (91). In utilizing this same principle for Jesus’ knowledge and consciousness, there is room for a development in the understanding of his growth in knowledge as present in Luke 2.52.

C. Jacques Maritain: Intellectual and Personal Life

Since there are already several detailed expositions of Maritain's personal life and intellectual achievements available, it is not my intention to duplicate the work of others here.¹¹⁴ Instead, the modest intention of this section is to briefly illuminate the most important aspects of Maritain's life and thought in order to give the reader some foundational insights to the author behind *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*.

Jacques Maritain was born in Paris on 18 November 1882, the son of Paul Maritain and Geneviève Favre. His maternal grandfather had been a leading figure in French politics in the nineteenth century and, in the words of one biographer, "had been...among the most representative of the great intellectual and political families of liberal and republican France."¹¹⁵ Jacques' mother, the illegitimate child of an adulterous affair, repudiated her Catholic faith before the birth of her children, Jacques and his older sister Jeanne. Instead, she chose to raise her family in a social and intellectually liberal

¹¹⁴ For a good biography of Maritain that highlights his personal and intellectual life in summary form see Henry Bars, "A Maritain Bio-Bibliography," trans. Anthony O. Simon, in *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 15-23. For a very condensed account of Maritain's life and thought see Joseph W. Evans, "Introduction," in *Jacques Maritain: The Man and His Achievement*, ed. Joseph W. Evans (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), ix-xii. The best detailed evaluation of Maritain's personal life is Ralph McInerny, *The Very Rich Hours of Jacques Maritain* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003). See also his *Art and Prudence: Studies in the Thought of Jacques Maritain* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), "Preface," ix-xv, and "The Intellectual Vocation of Jacques Maritain," 1-16. For a good evaluation of the progression of Maritain's thought spanning the course of his lifetime see Jude P. Dougherty, *Jacques Maritain: An Intellectual Profile* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003). See also Jacques Maritain, *Notebooks*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (Albany, New York: Magi Books, Inc., 1984), which is an edited version of Maritain's memoirs. Two books by Raïssa Maritain, *We Have Been Friends Together*, trans. Julie Kernan (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942) and *Adventures in Grace*, trans. Julie Kernan (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., Inc., 1945) offer many beautiful insights into the Maritain's early life together and friendships prior to the Second World War. Raïssa's private journals were published posthumously in one volume as *Raïssa's Journal*, ed. Jacques Maritain (Albany, N.Y.: Magi Books, Inc., 1974). The journal gives added insights into the private life of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain.

¹¹⁵ Evans, *Introduction*, ix.

household. Far less is known about his father, whom McInerny refers to as a “hazy figure.”¹¹⁶ After his parents’ divorce Maritain was raised by his domineering mother, with his father’s involvement greatly limited.¹¹⁷

At the age of sixteen, Maritain began studying rhetoric at the Lycée Henri IV. Within a year he was also taking classes at the Sorbonne in Paris, formally entering the university two years later in 1901. Maritain studied both philosophy and science at the Sorbonne, passing the *agrégation* exam in philosophy in the spring of 1905. The most defining moment in Maritain’s life, both personal and intellectual, occurred when the young university student met Raïssa Oumansov, a non-practicing Russian Jew.¹¹⁸

Engaged a few years after their first meeting, the couple was married by the end of 1904 and would enjoy close to six decades of married life together as husband and wife.¹¹⁹ At the end of 1906 Raïssa’s sister Vera permanently took up residence with her sister and brother-in-law and, in McInerny’s estimation, became the Maritain’s

¹¹⁶ McInerny, *The Very Rich Hours*, 8.

¹¹⁷ In *The Very Rich Hours* McInerny writes that Maritain “tells us so little of his antecedents and boyhood” (7). It is purely conjectural as to why this is the case. It should be noted, however, that at the time Maritain began writing publicly, he was already a fervent convert to the Catholic faith. Seen in this light, the less than respectable aspects of his lineage, including his mother’s illegitimate birth, his parents being among the first legal divorcés in France, and his father’s suicide when he was twenty one, probably play a large part in his aversion to family reminiscence.

¹¹⁸ R. Maritain, *We Have Been Friends*, 40-42. Raïssa writes that very soon after meeting Jacques in the winter of 1900, “We soon became inseparable” (41). The reader will note that from the time Jacques met Raïssa, any discussion of the one almost inevitably involved the other. McInerny notes that while biographers have disagreed on how much Raïssa influenced Jacques, by his own accounts (i.e., *Notebooks*, Preface, 4) she was highly influential to him in spiritual and intellectual matters: “The aid and the inspiration of my beloved Raïssa have penetrated all my life and all my work.” Even in death Jacques gives precedence to his wife, having their grave-marker inscribed with Raïssa’s name and dates in large letters, and in smaller letters on the lower right corner “And Jacques.” See William Bush, “Raïssa Maritain...et Jacques,” in *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 57. He adds, “...Jacques Maritain did, in fact, and particularly in his later years after Raïssa’s death, say quite clearly just what he tells us once and for all on the tombstone: he owed everything to Raïssa and regarded himself as but an appendage, an afterthought, a name tacked on in small print on her life, just as the tombstone indicates.”

¹¹⁹ The Maritains were married on 26 November 1904, and Raïssa died 4 November 1960.

“secretary, research assistant, nurse.”¹²⁰ Perhaps the most extraordinary event in the Maritain’s marriage occurred on 2 October 1912, when in the Cathedral at Versailles, Jacques and Raïssa took a vow to live the remainder of their marital life as brother and sister.¹²¹ This vow of marital chastity between Jacques and Raïssa can only be understood in light of the single most important aspect of their life together—their Catholic faith. “The vow was not based on any contempt for nature ... but in their course toward the absolute and their desire to follow, at any price, while remaining in the world, one of the counsels of the perfect life in order to clear the way for contemplation and union with God.”¹²² The Maritains, however, did not begin their marriage as Catholics, but came to the faith after near-death despair.

Jacques Maritain’s first intellectual affiliation was not with religion but politics. In *Notebooks* he recalls the influence of the family cook’s husband, who in the absence of a father figure “watched over my childhood.”¹²³ The man, François Baton, openly discussed socialism with the young Maritain and provided him with a daily edition of the local socialist newspaper. Maritain writes, “at about thirteen or fourteen I had become a Socialist.”¹²⁴ As providence would have it, Jacques’ early socialist tendencies led to his meeting Raïssa outside a classroom at the Sorbonne. While Jacques was soliciting

¹²⁰ McNerny, *The Very Rich Hours*, 29. Maritain devotes an entire chapter to Vera in *Notebooks*, fondly remembering the strength and spirituality of the woman who formed a third of the Maritain’s “little lay community.” Maritain tells of her prayer life (205-212) and the final sufferings of bone cancer which took her life (212-217).

¹²¹ McNerny, *The Very Rich Hours*, 54-55. This fact was initially revealed when Jacques privately published and distributed *Raïssa’s Journal* among friends. McNerny writes, “This extremely private decision was of course kept secret throughout their marriage, but as an old man, Jacques decided to reveal it in the privately circulated *Journal of Raïssa*. The reaction of friends prompted him to remove it from the public edition” (54-55). While the permanent vow was made in October 1912, through the counsel of their spiritual director it was preceded by a temporary vow 1911.

¹²² McNerny, *The Very Rich Hours*, 54.

¹²³ Maritain, *Notebooks*, 7.

¹²⁴ Maritain, *Notebooks*, 7.

signatures in protest of the Russian government's treatment of socialist students, he approached the young Russian woman and began a relationship that would change his life.

As the young couple's relationship blossomed both became more and more dissatisfied with their academic studies. The story of their "suicide pact" is well known, and Raïssa devotes seven pages to it in *We Have Been Friends Together*.¹²⁵ Raïssa recalls that "after two or three years of study," she and Jacques had accumulated "a rather considerable amount of specialized scientific and philosophical knowledge. But this knowledge was undermined by the relativism of the scientists, by the skepticism of the philosophers."¹²⁶ Raïssa recalls the "metaphysical anguish" that both she and Jacques felt as a consequence of not being able to grasp the truth. She writes:

On this particular day, then, we had just said to one another that if our nature was so unhappy as to possess only a pseudo-intelligence capable of everything but the truth, if, sitting in judgment on itself, it had to debase itself to such a point, then we could neither think nor act with any dignity. In that case everything became absurd ... If we must also give up the hope of finding any meaning whatever for the word truth, for the distinction of good and evil, of just from unjust, it is no longer possible to live humanly. I wanted no such part in such a comedy. I would have accepted a sad life, but not one that was absurd.¹²⁷

Before finishing their walk that day Raïssa recalls the mutual decision she and Jacques

¹²⁵ R. Maritain, *We Have Been Friends Together*, 72-78.

¹²⁶ R. Maritain, *We Have Been Friends Together*, 73. See also Peter Redpath, "Romance of Wisdom: The Friendship Between Jacques Maritain and Saint Thomas Aquinas," in *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 91-113. Redpath writes "Jacques Maritain's friendship with wisdom and with Aquinas must be understood within the context of his reaction to the relativism, skepticism, and moral nihilism that were the consequences of the antimetaphysical and reductionistic spirit of his early teachers of philosophy" (93).

¹²⁷ R. Maritain, *We Have Been Friends Together*, 75-76.

made to commit suicide if after “extending credit to existence” they could not ascertain a deeper meaning to life, the truth. “We wanted to die by a free act if it were impossible to live according to the truth.”¹²⁸ Attending the lectures of Henri Bergson¹²⁹ temporarily alleviated the self-imposed death sentence, but it was the eccentric Catholic author, Léon Bloy, who beginning in 1905 presented the Maritains with an answer to their intellectual angst—the Catholic faith.¹³⁰

The “metaphysical anguish” the Maritains experienced in their university studies was lifted by the spiritual truths they found in the writings of the saints and spiritual masters of Catholicism.¹³¹ Within a year of meeting Bloy, Jacques, Raïssa and Raïssa’s sister Vera were baptized in the Roman Catholic Church, an affiliation that became the

¹²⁸ R. Maritain, *We Have Been Friends Together*, 78.

¹²⁹ Bergson affirmed the mind’s ability to know the truth, and very soon Maritain became a well known proponent of Bergson’s philosophy. See McNerny, *The Very Rich Hours*, 16-18. Raïssa dedicates an entire chapter of *We Have Been Friends Together* to Henri Bergson and the impact he had on both her and Jacques (79-103). Jacques would later write a book highly critical of Bergson, *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison and J. Gordon Andison (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955). In the Foreword to the English Edition he writes, “*La Philosophie Bergsonienne* was my first book; it was published forty years ago when I was young, and did not hesitate to rush in where angels feared to tread” (5). In the Preface to the Second Edition he adds, somewhat apologetically, “What makes the reading of the early text somewhat painful to me today is the youthful turgidity, the uncompromising bombast of its style” (12). While Maritain was critical of Bergson’s thought, both he and Raïssa remained personally devoted to Bergson throughout their lives.

¹³⁰ On the relationship of Léon Bloy and Jacques Maritain see Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, “Léon Bloy and Jacques Maritain: *Fratres in Eremo*,” in *Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend*, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 71-90. The Maritain’s first experience of Léon Bloy was through his novel, *The Woman Who Was Poor: A Contemporary Novel of the French Eighties*, trans. I. J. Collins (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1947). The original French edition was published 1897. Both were profoundly affected by the entire story, especially its final line: “There is only one sadness, not to be a saint.”

¹³¹ On this time in Jacques and Raïssa’s life see *We Have Been Friends*, Chapter 6, “The Call of the Saints” (141-179).

most defining aspect of their lives.¹³² Soon after, through the advice of her spiritual director, Raïssa began reading the *Summa Theologiae* and found immediate joy and the truth she had been seeking. “Everything, here, was freedom of spirit, purity of faith, integrity of the intellect enlightened by knowledge and genius.”¹³³ It would take more than a year before Jacques began reading the *Summa*, and his reaction mirrored Raïssa’s. “Finally! Thanks to Raïssa, I begin to read the *Summa Theologica*. As it was for her, it is a deliverance, an inundation of light. The intellect finds its home.”¹³⁴ A lifetime of study and scholarship began for the man who would eventually be known as one of the foremost Thomists of the twentieth century.¹³⁵

Maritain spent the majority of his life as an educator, teaching philosophy at several different universities. His first teaching post was at the Collège Stanislas in Paris

¹³² When the Maritains entered the Catholic Church on 11 June 1906, their fidelity was absolute even when their personal opinions differed from that of the Church’s hierarchy. For example, Jacques wrote a book on the apparitions of the Virgin Mary in La Salette, France, to two shepherd children. While the Maritain’s inherited a devotion to Our Lady of La Salette from Bloy, the Church’s hierarchy remained cautious because one of the “secret messages” entrusted to the shepherdess Melanie began with a scathing critique of the French clergy. After presenting his book to the proper officials in Rome with the hope of receiving approval to publish the manuscript, Maritain accepted the negative response he received shortly thereafter. To this day the manuscript has not been published. See *Notebooks*, Chapter 3, 81-99.

¹³³ R. Maritain, *Adventures in Grace*, 16. Raïssa began reading the *Summa* in 1909 as noted by Jacques in *Notebooks*, 51.

¹³⁴ Maritain, *Notebooks*, 65. The Maritain’s were so convinced that Thomism was the answer to the intellectual crisis of their time that they formed the “Thomist Circles,” which encouraged its members to read and disseminate St. Thomas’ writings. Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange acted as the group’s spiritual director, offering yearly retreats for the members of the circles. See Maritain, *Notebooks*, Chapter 5, “Thomist Study Circles and their Annual Retreats,” 133-185.

¹³⁵ Yves R. Simon, “Jacques Maritain: The Growth of a Christian Philosopher,” in *Jacques Maritain: The Man and His Achievement*, ed. Joseph W. Evans (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963) writes that while Maritain was a Thomist he “was the first non-scholastic among the disciples of St. Thomas” (4). By “scholastic” Simon means a method, language, and cultural form, all of which Maritain willingly modified in order to integrate Thomism with modernity. Perhaps Dougherty says it best: “He [Maritain] was not a textual exegete, but a speculative philosopher who thought *ad mentem divi Thomae*.” In *Jacques Maritain*, 1.

(1912-1914), but he soon took a post at the Institut Catholique in Paris in 1914, which he kept until the outbreak of the Second World War. Maritain spent the duration of the war in the United States, leaving to represent the French government as its Ambassador to the Vatican after the liberation of Paris in 1944. He would return to the United States to teach at Princeton University in 1948, and retire from full time teaching responsibilities in 1952.

What is interesting is that Maritain did not view himself as a teacher, but instead understood his role of being an educator as one of practical necessity. “What am I, I asked myself then. A professor? I think not; I taught by necessity. A writer? Perhaps. A philosopher? I hope so.”¹³⁶ After the death of both Raïssa and Vera, Jacques lived with the Little Brothers of Jesus in Toulouse until his death on 28 April 1973. Over the course of his life, he wrote more than fifty books and received numerous honors.¹³⁷ Perhaps the best summation of Maritain’s life comes from Maritain himself, where he indicates the relationship between his pursuit of intellectual and personal interests: “*Unless one loves the truth, one is not a man. And to love the truth is also to love it above everything, because we know that Truth is God Himself.*”¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Maritain, *Notebooks*, 1954 Preface, 3.

¹³⁷ Jude P. Dougherty, *Jacques Maritain: An Intellectual Profile* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003) observes that Maritain received, among others, the Medal of the French Resistance, the *Grand Prix* of Literature from the French Academy, the French National Grand Prize for letters, and was named Commander of the Legion of Honor and a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great (Introduction, 3).

¹³⁸ Jacques Maritain, *The Peasant of the Garonne: An Old Layman Questions Himself About the Present Time*, trans. Michael Cuddihy and Elizabeth Hughes (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 85. See also McNerny, *Art and Prudence*, 2-3. McNerny rightly points out that Maritain was interested in intellectual truth as well as a life of sanctity.

D. Michael Polanyi: Intellectual and Personal Life

Much like the previous brief exposition of Jacques Maritain's life the intention of this section is to offer a similar account for the life and thought of Michael Polanyi.¹³⁹

Michael Polanyi was born on 11 March 1891, in Budapest, Hungary, the fifth of six children born to Mihály and Cecilia Polanyi.¹⁴⁰ From a very early age Polanyi exhibited a fine intellect, being multilingual by the age of six.¹⁴¹ Although both of his parents were of Jewish descent, it does not seem that religion played a part in the family's daily life.¹⁴² During Polanyi's childhood his father's company afforded the family a very comfortable lifestyle. However, the family's wealth was lost in part because of the family's Jewish ancestry so that by the time Polanyi entered the gymnasium in 1900, he required the assistance of a scholarship for poor Jewish students.¹⁴³ He graduated from the

¹³⁹ The best available work on the life and thought of Polanyi is the recently published William Taussig Scott and Martin X. Moleski, S.J., *Michael Polanyi: Scientist and Philosopher* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). The book was originally written by Scott and then edited and corrected for publication after his death by Moleski. Moleski writes, "The book placed before you is not the book Bill wrote, nor is it the book that I would have written if I had started fresh and worked alone" (Preface, viii). One of the many benefits of this book is the inclusion of a chronological listing of all Polanyi's publications (327-350). There are several other good introductions to Polanyi's life and thought including Richard Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery: An Introduction to the Thought of Michael Polanyi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); Harry Prosch, *Michael Polanyi: A Critical Exposition* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1986); and Drusilla Scott, *Everyman Revived: The Common Sense of Michael Polanyi* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995). For a precise account see Martin X. Moleski, S.J., *Personal Catholicism: The Theological Epistemologies of John Henry Newman and Michael Polanyi* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of American Press, 2000), 49-60.

¹⁴⁰ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 10. The authors note, however, that when Polanyi was born, "family life was hectic enough so that his birthday was not recorded until the next day, so that he celebrated March 12 as his birthday." It should be noted that Polanyi's original Hungarian name was Mihály Lazar Pollacsek.

¹⁴¹ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 10. Polanyi became fluent in English, French, German and Hungarian.

¹⁴² William T. Scott, "The Question of Religious Reality: Commentary on the Polanyi Papers," *Zygon* 17 (March 1982), 85.

¹⁴³ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 12-15. Polanyi attended the Minta Gymnasium which was founded "as a practice teaching school for the training of future professors" (15).

gymnasium in 1908, and later that year entered the University of Budapest as a medical student, earning his degree in 1913.¹⁴⁴

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Polanyi volunteered to serve as a medical officer in the Hungarian Army. Although he had not done the required year-long internship, he was accepted into the army and permitted to practice medicine.¹⁴⁵ It was also in 1914 that Polanyi published his first article concerning his theory of adsorption, which was later accepted as a Ph.D. thesis at the University of Budapest.¹⁴⁶ He passed his written examinations for the doctoral degree in 1916, but his defense was delayed until 1918 as a result of the ongoing war and because of internal difficulties in his thesis.¹⁴⁷ The degree was finally awarded to Polanyi in 1919.¹⁴⁸ What is interesting is that Polanyi's theory of tacit knowledge seems to have already been present to him in germ form at the time of doctoral thesis. Although Polanyi insisted that his thesis was

¹⁴⁴ Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery*, 32.

¹⁴⁵ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 33.

¹⁴⁶ Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery*, 32. Polanyi continued working on the topic throughout the war, primarily during several convalescences in Budapest for diphtheria. The theory of adsorption involves measuring the way a gas reacts when it is in contact with the surface of a solid. The theory states that gases adhere more easily to the surface they are in contact with depending on the pressure they are under. Thus changing the pressure changes the rate of adsorption of a gas to a solid. See Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 24-25.

¹⁴⁷ While Polanyi's conclusion was deemed correct, his theory supporting his conclusion was not. Thus, he had to re-work those areas of his dissertation that dealt with the mathematical theory which served as the foundation to his theory of adsorption. When his director asked how such an occurrence had happened, Polanyi emphasized that a conclusion could be correct although the argument behind it was not, at which his director "scoffed." See Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 43.

¹⁴⁸ Polanyi would later write, "I doubt that I could have got my theory of adsorption passed by the referees of any scientific journal had I presented it five years later than 1916. I was lucky enough to profit by the relative ignorance of referees in 1916, and also by the complete ignorance of the professor of theoretical physics at the University of Budapest, who accepted the substance of my theory as a Ph.D. thesis in 1917." In Michael Polanyi, "The Potential Theory of Adsorption," in *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 123-37.

correct, had experiments been done at the time his theory would not have been verifiable.

Subsequently, Polanyi would probably not have received his degree. Gelwick writes:

Both Haber and Einstein opposed Polanyi's theory on the grounds that he had displayed a total disregard for the new knowledge of the electrical concept of interatomic forces. Polanyi persisted with further evidence at a later meeting, but his theory was rejected again as a failure. If Polanyi had not gone on immediately to prove himself in other work in physical chemistry, the opposition to his theory would have ended his scientific career. Still, the most striking point to the story is the fact that Polanyi's theory was right and is in use today. The evidence to confirm the theory began to appear in 1930, and others went on to establish what Polanyi began.¹⁴⁹

After completing his degree in physical chemistry, Polanyi moved to Germany to escape the rising anti-Semitism in Hungary. At this time in his life, Polanyi was baptized a Roman Catholic in October 1919, "though he never participated in any other Catholic sacraments."¹⁵⁰ It is unclear whether Polanyi was baptized at this time out of a desire to conceal his Jewish roots or out of a genuine desire to identify himself with Christianity. Although he embraced Christian worship as an Anglican in the late 1940s,¹⁵¹ later in his life Polanyi did not associate with any particular church.¹⁵²

Shortly after moving to Germany, Polanyi met Magda Kemeny, a graduate

¹⁴⁹ Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery*, 33.

¹⁵⁰ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 55.

¹⁵¹ Scott, "The Question of Religious Reality," 85.

¹⁵² While Harry Prosch asserts Polanyi was not a Christian later in his life (see his "Polanyi's View of Religion in *Personal Knowledge: A Response to Richard Gelwick*," *Zygon* 17 [March 1982]: 470), Scott asserts that Polanyi most likely believed in some "preexisting reality" although Polanyi himself remained ambiguous about his own personal religious convictions (see "The Question of Religious Reality," 85-86). In a conversation with William H. Poteat later in his life, Polanyi declared, "I don't believe in God, or at any rate, I don't believe in him enough for it to make any difference" (quoted in Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 278). Scott and Moleski, however, sidestep the real issue by emphasizing the "vocational" aspect of Polanyi's life, stating that he "was a complex and reverent person. He took God seriously" by understanding his calling to be a seeker of the truth (291).

student in chemical engineering who was, like Polanyi, Hungarian. The two were married in a civil ceremony on 21 February 1921, the day after her father's funeral in Budapest. The two would be married for fifty-five years and have two sons, with Magda outliving Polanyi by ten years.¹⁵³ The young couple moved to Berlin shortly after their marriage. While living there, Polanyi did research and directed doctoral students in physical chemistry for twelve years. He began his career in Germany at the Fibre Institute and soon after became its acting head. Because of his success working on x-ray diffraction and crystals, he was promoted to the Institute of Physical Chemistry in 1923, where he devoted himself to reaction kinetics. He became a lifetime member of the institute in 1929, and was considered to be one of the finest scientists in the institute.

Polanyi also had the gift of expressing criticism without provoking hostility. He exercised acute physical insight, thinking and speaking in helpful images, rather than arguing by means of calculations. After overcoming his initial shyness, Polanyi earned a reputation in the colloquium for his critical faculties and his ability to clarify disagreements. After listening to a difficult lecture, Polanyi would often take the podium and give a lucid summary and critique of what had been said.¹⁵⁴

Polanyi was also a courteous scientist, delaying the publication of an article he had written so that a doctoral student could publish the same findings first and receive the credit.¹⁵⁵ It is also during this time in Germany that Polanyi began thinking about topics outside of his scientific expertise, especially economics. In 1932 the University of Manchester, England, invited Polanyi to fill the chair of Physical Chemistry, a post he initially turned down. With the rise of Hitler, increasing anti-Semitism and the burning

¹⁵³ Of Polanyi's two sons, George and John, the younger followed in his father's footsteps as a scientist and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1986 (Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 207). Magda Polanyi died 17 February 1986.

¹⁵⁴ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 85.

¹⁵⁵ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 127. This occurred in 1932.

of the Reichstag in Germany, Polanyi reconsidered the offer and moved his family to England in September 1933.¹⁵⁶

It was shortly after his move to the University of Manchester that Polanyi began studying economics more thoroughly, eventually producing a film on the benefits of the theory of Keynesian economics.¹⁵⁷ His interest in economics grew to such a degree that he would be absent from the laboratory for days at a time while writing or studying economic topics. By 1941 he was writing on economics and non-scientific issues so much that he had to hire a secretary to type all of his notes for him, although his newfound interests did not prevent him from being elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society for his scientific achievements in 1944.¹⁵⁸

While his interest in economics never left him, by 1942 Polanyi was devoting a great deal of time to the consideration of epistemological questions. In the Forward to Polanyi's *The Logic of Liberty*, Stuart D. Warner writes, "Though Polanyi continued writing scientific articles until 1949, their numbers began to diminish by the mid-1930s as he turned his intellectual energies to reflections about things human."¹⁵⁹ There are two main reasons for this shift in Polanyi's thought.¹⁶⁰ The first reason is comprised of two closely related aspects concerning the nature of science.

¹⁵⁶ Because most of the scientists at the institute in Berlin were Jewish or of Jewish ancestry, like Polanyi, the institute dissolved when Hitler came to power (see Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 142-143).

¹⁵⁷ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 121, 158, 179. The film was put out for the general public, and although it received good reviews from economists, the outbreak of World War II made other issues more pressing for both the government and the general public. Polanyi also published a book on economic theory, *Full Employment and Free Trade* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1948).

¹⁵⁸ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 193.

¹⁵⁹ Michael Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty: Reflections and Rejoinders* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998), Forward, x. The work was originally published in 1951.

¹⁶⁰ This point will be further explicated in Chapter 3.

On the one hand, Polanyi was dissatisfied with the idea that science was the only field that could establish facts in a purely “objective” manner. On the other hand, Polanyi was disturbed by communism’s utilitarian view of science—that science should serve the well being of a classless society and not the scientist’s pursuit of truth. In 1946 Polanyi published *Science, Faith and Society* in which he began to address these very issues.¹⁶¹ The second reason that Polanyi began thinking about epistemological questions is related to the first but addresses society and not the scientific laboratory. The scientific method and its ideal that “only that which is provable is true” started to be applied to other aspects of society, including religion and moral values, with destructive consequences.¹⁶² The rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe during his lifetime was, in Polanyi’s opinion, the natural consequence of the erosion of objective moral ideals such as truth and justice.¹⁶³ As will be discussed in Chapter 3, in answer to this erosion of society, Polanyi’s epistemology attempts to show that all knowledge is dependant on the individual’s personal acceptance of established facts which pre-date him, much of it remaining beyond “proof” in the strict sense of the word. This will be made clearer in Chapter 3 but is mentioned now to show the reasons behind Polanyi’s moving away from scientific matters and into the area of epistemology.

¹⁶¹ Michael Polanyi, *Science, Faith and Society: A Searching Examination of the Meaning and Nature of Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1964). The book was originally a series of lectures that he modified for publication.

¹⁶² Scott, *Everyman Revived*, 7.

¹⁶³ In *The Logic of Liberty*, Polanyi writes, “The ideal of a free society is in the first place to be a *good* society; a body of men who respect truth, desire justice and love their fellows.” In “Scientific Convictions,” 36. As a clarification to this he adds, “. . . if truth is not real and absolute, then it may seem proper that the public authorities should decide what should be called truth. And if justice is not real and absolute, then it may seem proper that government should decide what shall be considered just or unjust . . . We have here a full justification of totalitarian statehood.” In “Foundations of Academic Freedom,” 58.

By the late 1940s it was apparent to the administration at the University of Manchester that Polanyi's interests and writings had moved away from the sciences and into the humanities. In 1948 the University offered him a chair in the social studies department teaching economics, which Polanyi gladly accepted. Soon after being moved from one department to another, Polanyi was invited to give the Gifford Lectures at the University of Aberdeen. Although Polanyi had delayed giving the lectures several times, with the help of Marjorie Grene, he finished preparing the lectures and delivered them in 1952.¹⁶⁴ While the lectures went well and were eventually re-worked and published in 1958 under the title *Personal Knowledge*,¹⁶⁵ the "substantial controversy" that Polanyi thought his ideas would create never materialized.¹⁶⁶

The same year that *Personal Knowledge* was published, Polanyi gave the Lindsay Memorial Lectures at the University College of North Staffordshire, applying his theory of tacit knowing to human history. The lectures were published the following year as *The Study of Man*.¹⁶⁷ In the Preface to *The Study of Man* Polanyi writes, "The whole series can accordingly be read as an introduction to *Personal Knowledge*"¹⁶⁸ even though the book post-dates *Personal Knowledge* and is an application of its ideas. Polanyi continued

¹⁶⁴ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 203-222. Grene spent the spring of 1952 working with Polanyi and is credited with helping him develop his philosophical skills, especially the correct use of technical philosophical language.

¹⁶⁵ Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974). This work was originally published in 1958.

¹⁶⁶ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 221. Andy F. Sanders, *Michael Polanyi's Post-Critical Epistemology: A Reconstruction of Some Aspects of 'Tacit Knowing'* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988) writes that the main controversy that philosophers have with Polanyi is that "controversial issues are sometimes treated without much reverence for the philosophical tradition" by him (Introduction, i).

¹⁶⁷ Michael Polanyi, *The Study of Man* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959). In Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 232, the author's clarify that this work is not so much an anthropological study as it is a study of history.

¹⁶⁸ Polanyi, *The Study of Man*, Preface, 9.

to think and write about his epistemological theory, receiving the honor of being elected a Senior Research Fellow at Merton College, Oxford University, in 1959. During this time Polanyi's epistemology was beginning to be noticed in a host of academic fields, especially in the United States, but remained largely ignored by philosophers in Europe. In the spring of 1964, Polanyi was invited by the religion department to be a visiting professor at Duke University and was so well received by the faculty and students that Scott and Moleski call this semester in America "the high point of his career as a philosopher."¹⁶⁹

In 1966 Polanyi published *The Tacit Dimension*,¹⁷⁰ a summary account of his epistemological theory of tacit knowing that shows a degree of clarification in his thought not present in *Personal Knowledge*. Scott and Moleski claim that *The Tacit Dimension* was the beginning of Polanyi's interest in spirituality,¹⁷¹ and it is true that in the final decade of his life, Polanyi was seemingly more interested in applying his epistemological theory to religious questions than to scientific ones. His final book, *Meaning*,¹⁷² explicitly dwelt with religious themes and was published in collaboration with Harry Prosch in 1975. In the final few years of his life, Polanyi continually tried to get assistance from friends and disciples to help publish and further disseminate his thought.

¹⁶⁹ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 256.

¹⁷⁰ Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1983). This work was originally published in 1966.

¹⁷¹ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 262.

¹⁷² Michael Polanyi and Harry Prosch, *Meaning* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1977). This work was originally published in 1975. Scott and Moleski address the difficult question of whether or not Polanyi wanted *Meaning* published and considered it his own thought (*Michael Polanyi*, 285-292). The text is a composite of lectures he gave at the University of Chicago and the University of Texas in 1969 and several other lectures he gave in 1970-1971. The book is certainly Polanyi's own thought and he did consent to its publication. It seems that by the time Prosch had finished the volume for publication, Polanyi's mental faculties were declining to such an extent that he could not remember what parts of *Meaning* were his own.

William T. Scott recalls the last time he visited with Polanyi in 1974, stating, “we [Scott and his wife Ann] sensed his sadness at the loss of his full powers and the consequent frustration that his work would remain incomplete.”¹⁷³ The man who spent decades thinking and writing about human knowledge spent the final days of his life in a nursing home, dying 22 February 1976, one day after his fifty-fifth wedding anniversary.

¹⁷³ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, Epilogue, 293.

CHAPTER 2

Maritain's Christology

Introduction

In 1948 Jacques Maritain resigned his post as the French Ambassador to the Vatican and accepted a teaching position at Princeton University at the age of sixty-six. It had been sixteen years since he published his tome on epistemology entitled *The Degrees of Knowledge*,¹⁷⁴ which, according to McNerny, “remains both his major achievement and a convenient summary of his thought.”¹⁷⁵ The trio of Jacques, Raïssa and Vera Oumansov (Raïssa's younger sister) settled into their final decade of life together in Princeton, New Jersey, making yearly trips back to their native France. During this time Maritain continued to teach (through 1952) and published ten more books, including his seminal work on art and epistemology *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*.¹⁷⁶

It was not long after the end of his teaching career and the publication of *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* that the serenity of the devout trio began to decline. In 1954 Jacques had a heart attack, and a few years later Vera also suffered the same malady, after which she was diagnosed with cancer. In less than three years the companion and fellow sojourner succumbed to her illness and returned to God on the last day of 1959.

¹⁷⁴ Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. G. B. Phelan (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). The original French edition was published in 1932.

¹⁷⁵ Maritain, *Degrees*, Introduction, xiv.

¹⁷⁶ Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977). The work was originally published in 1952.

Jacques and Raïssa embarked on the final months of their marriage as they did the first, without the companionship of their devoted sister Vera who had been with them for the past fifty-three years. While in Paris the following summer, Raïssa fell ill and subsequently died on 4 November 1960, leaving Jacques a solitary sojourner for almost another thirteen years.¹⁷⁷

It is during these final years of his life that the well known Catholic philosopher directed his intellectual gaze toward topics of a more explicitly theological nature. McInerny's assertion that "Maritain was a philosopher who metamorphosed into a theologian in his last years"¹⁷⁸ is certainly true in light of his final publications. In the last years of Maritain's life he published *Raïssa's Journal*, *God and the Permission of Evil*, *Notebooks*, *The Peasant of the Garonne*, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, and finally *On the Church of Christ*.¹⁷⁹

This chapter will examine Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Christ in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, beginning with the book's methodology, specifically addressing the distinction Maritain makes between *Jesus-viator* and *Jesus-comprehensor* and the threefold knowledge of Jesus. After these preparatory topics are examined, we will explore Maritain's theory of consciousness and supraconsciousness, followed by a

¹⁷⁷ The "Maritain Chronology" in *Degrees* (xxii-xxviii) incorrectly dates Raïssa's death as 7 July 1960 (xxviii). In Maritain's own account, "At the end of four months of suffering, the 4th of November, 1960, God took her with Him, and I am henceforth alone here on this earth, at least according to the appearances of this visible world." In *Notebooks*, 1.

¹⁷⁸ McInerny, *The Very Rich Hours*, 3.

¹⁷⁹ Jacques Maritain, *God and the Permission of Evil*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1966); Jacques Maritain, *The Peasant of the Garonne: An Old Layman Questions Himself About the Present Time*, trans. Michael Cuddihy and Elizabeth Hughes (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968); Jacques Maritain, *On the Church of Christ: The Person of the Church and Her Personnel*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973).

summary section which will show the unity of the preceding points. Finally, two works that further elucidate some of the points Maritain makes in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* will briefly be examined, namely, *The Degrees of Knowledge* and *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*.

A. On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus

Methodology ... Distinguish

According to Maritain, the subject of the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus Christ was a topic that both he and Raïssa had thought about for many years. The subject eventually came to fruition in two “research-meetings”¹⁸⁰ between Maritain and the superiors of the Little Brothers of Jesus at Toulouse, France, and was later reworked into book form.¹⁸¹ Maritain divides *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* into two sections, the “First Approach” and the “Second Approach.”¹⁸² In the First Approach, Maritain does two things. First, he provides a general outline of the life of Jesus from his birth to his death on the Cross.¹⁸³ Second, within this context he briefly discusses several issues relating to his theory of the consciousness of Christ which he will explore in greater

¹⁸⁰ The French edition reads “deux reunions de recherchè.” See Jacques Maritain, *De la grace et de l’humanité de Jésus* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1967), 7.

¹⁸¹ McInerny in *The Very Rich Hours* (196, 207) McInerny notes that Maritain spent the final years of his life with the Little Brothers of Jesus, professing religious vows with them in 1971. The Little Brothers of Jesus were founded in 1933 and dedicated to the spiritual mission of Charles de Foucauld.

¹⁸² Jacques Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, trans. Joseph W. Evans (New York: Herder and Herder, Inc., 1969). First Approach, “I. From the Virginal Conception to the Death on the Cross,” (11-43); Second Approach, “II. The Heaven of the Soul and the ‘Here-Below’ of the Soul in the God Man,” “III. The Infused Science of Christ,” “IV. From Adolescence to the Death on the Cross,” (47-143).

¹⁸³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 16-27, 30-43.

detail in the Second Approach.¹⁸⁴ The Second Approach builds upon these ideas and is about three times as long. Indeed, at the beginning the Second Approach Maritain writes, “I have proposed up to this point very general views. Now I would like to attempt a second approach, in taking up again my considerations in order to try to complete them in a more systematic manner.”¹⁸⁵ Thus the Second Approach is divided up into three separate sections, each addressing in a more thorough manner what was previously mentioned without much detail.

Although Maritain’s work follows numerous other attempts to understand the consciousness of Jesus Christ as cited in Chapter 1, it is noteworthy that there are only three references in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* to the previous controversy. Maritain mentions Herman Diepen twice¹⁸⁶ and clarifies according to his own theory the often quoted section of Pius XII’s *Mystici Corporis* that refers to Jesus’ soul as having present at once the knowledge of all the members of his mystical body, past, present and future.¹⁸⁷ It is highly unlikely that Maritain would have been unaware of the previous controversies surrounding the consciousness of Jesus Christ, especially in light of the encyclical letter *Sempiternus Rex*, 1951, and the fact that many of the earlier attempts at understanding Jesus’ consciousness were being made on the European stage. So how and

¹⁸⁴ For example, the distinction between Jesus-*viator* and Jesus-*comprehensor* (17-20; 23-24), the threefold knowledge of Jesus (23-25), and finally understanding consciousness in light of the previous two (27-30).

¹⁸⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 47.

¹⁸⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 83, 116. Diepen’s thesis maintains a unity of person in Jesus Christ while affirming a duality of action proper to the nature which is acting. For a concise summary of Diepen’s thought, see Lonergan, *The Ontological*, 121-125.

¹⁸⁷ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 89, footnote 1. Maritain would certainly affirm the teaching of *Mystici Corporis*, that Jesus knows all of the members of his mystical body at once. However, he would distinguish that Jesus does so as *comprehensor* and not as *viator*. Maritain goes slightly further and writes that at the moment of death, Jesus-*viator* crosses into the realm of *comprehensor* and thus sees “each human being” for whom he gives his life, as opposed to only those members of his mystical body as the encyclical states (142).

why does Maritain avoid entering into the particulars of the previous debate over the consciousness of Jesus?

What is interesting about Maritain's approach in entering the question of the consciousness of Jesus Christ is that he avoids the controversy as it stands in his own day but rather engages the controversy as it stood at the time of St. Thomas Aquinas. Instead of challenging or clarifying a modern author and entering into the particulars of the modern debate of the consciousness of Jesus, Maritain takes issue with his intellectual mentor St. Thomas, about whom he published a small work in 1930.¹⁸⁸ In *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* Maritain poses his question and opposition to St. Thomas thus:

First question: from the creation of His [i.e., Jesus'] soul He has had the plentitude of grace, yes; but has this plentitude of grace increased? St. Luke (2, 52) says *yes* ... he grew in wisdom, in age, *and in grace* before God and before men. This is the Gospel. St. Thomas says *no*,—in itself the grace of Christ has not increased; it could increase only according to its effects and its manifestations.¹⁸⁹

The issue, according to Maritain, is that St. Thomas “lacked the philosophical instrument” in his own day to recognize what modern psychology understands to be various levels of human consciousness, albeit this “applies in the case of Christ in a *transcendent and absolutely unique* sense.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Jacques Maritain, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Joseph W. Evans and Peter O'Reilly (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1959). Maritain states that this work is not an exposition of St. Thomas' thought so much as it is a promotion of the Saint himself and some of the more general premises of his thought (15). Maritain, in this book as well as on other occasions, insisted that he was not a neo-Thomist but a Thomist, taking the thought of the Angelic Doctor and integrating its enduring truths as a corrective to modern errors. “*There is a Thomist philosophy; there is no neo-Thomist philosophy.* I am not trying to include the past in the present, but to maintain in the *now* the present of the eternal” (18).

¹⁸⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 17. Maritain softens his criticism later when he writes, “If St. Thomas has not done justice to the text of St. Luke, it is, I believe, for reasons of an accidental order” (53-54). Maritain notes that St. Thomas did not have modern notions of human consciousness to consider in his explanation of Christological doctrines.

¹⁹⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 48-49.

Where St. Thomas is found wanting, Maritain insists, is in his integration of the three degrees of knowledge in Jesus Christ without considering that these different degrees of knowledge may not have been *explicitly present in the human consciousness of Jesus* all at once. For this reason St. Thomas comes into conflict with the text of the third Evangelist and finds a solution that, in Maritain's opinion, is in direct contradiction to the plain meaning of the text itself.¹⁹¹

This is the point which causes difficulty for me, and which I contest: this manner in which St. Thomas treats St. Luke. With St. Augustine and the Fathers of the Church, one can proceed thus: they have but a human authority. But with the Gospel text it is altogether different, because one has to deal there with revelation itself; and very clearly St. Luke is not thinking of the effects and of the works produced; he is thinking of the *grace* and of the *wisdom* themselves, it is all the more clear as he says in the same breath: in wisdom, *in age*, and in grace. The growth in wisdom and in grace is for him in the same case as the growth *in age*.¹⁹²

Subsequently, Maritain adds in a footnote on the bottom of the same page:

Let us not forget that as dear and venerable as are to us the Fathers and the Doctors, and the greatest among them, a million St. Augustines and a million St. Thomases will never make a St. Paul or a St. Luke. If on a given point St. Luke and St. Thomas are truly and really in conflict, the authority of St. Thomas, however high it may be, is nothing before that of St. Luke.¹⁹³

Maritain states that it is not so much his intention to correct the Angelic Doctor on this point as to utilize a new "philosophical instrument" (i.e., consciousness and supraconsciousness) to "extend his [St. Thomas'] movement of thought" and show how

¹⁹¹ See St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 7, a. 12, obj. 3. St. Thomas discusses Luke's Gospel in a question on the grace of Christ.

¹⁹² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 51.

¹⁹³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 51, footnote 4.

fundamental points of St. Thomas' Christological doctrine can in fact be understood in light of the text from Luke's Gospel.¹⁹⁴

However the case may be, I am conscious of being faithful to the spirit and to the principles of St. Thomas in the reflections that I am proposing to you, even when they contradict his letter, and I am convinced that they do but go further in the direction in which he himself was going.¹⁹⁵

What Maritain does in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* is integrate the modern understanding of consciousness with the Thomistic (and scholastic) notion of the threefold knowledge of Jesus, thus advancing St. Thomas' thought in such a way as to eliminate the "conflict" that exists between him and the Evangelist. This is Maritain's intention, but how does he view his small research endeavor on the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus?

On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus is, according to its author, the private opinion of a philosopher hoping to make a contribution that will help further the work of theology.¹⁹⁶ Maritain stresses that, unlike a theologian who utilizes "the light of Faith illuminating Reason in order to enable it to acquire some understanding of revealed mysteries," his role as a philosopher involves using "the light of Reason comforted by Faith in order to do better its own work in intellectual investigation."¹⁹⁷ What Maritain is doing is establishing the methodology of his work by indicating that this particular

¹⁹⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 52. Maritain also states that in St. Thomas' thought (and the "tinged Platonic" thought of his day) it was only necessary "to satisfy the non-temporal *type* of humanity" in Jesus (54), whereas modernity "recognize[es] that *movement of growth*, not only as to the body but as to the things of the soul and spirit, is essential to every *true man*" (48).

¹⁹⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 54.

¹⁹⁶ Maritain states in the first line of *On the Grace and Humanity*, "Shall I hesitate to make this exposition because I will appear to be treading on the flower-beds of theologians, I who am not a theologian, but a mere philosopher?" (11).

¹⁹⁷ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 11.

composition is a work of *speculative philosophy* and has as its stated goal the desire to assist and present to the theologian research that may open up new avenues of thought.¹⁹⁸

While Maritain hopes to make a contribution to the question of the consciousness of Jesus Christ, he does not hesitate to state that the “last word will naturally belong to the theologian.”¹⁹⁹ One might wonder why Maritain places such an emphasis in the opening section of his book on its being a work of philosophical research and not a work of theological investigation (since that is what it clearly seems to be, and which Maritain later acknowledges does in fact involve “a very difficult *doctrinal* recasting”).²⁰⁰

The obvious answer to this question is that Maritain is a philosopher and so enters the question of the consciousness of Jesus Christ as such. While this is a reasonable answer to the question, it falters when one considers that Maritain is also considered to be one of the foremost Thomists of the last century. Although he was not a theologian by training, it would be hard to argue that he was not a competent Thomist, and as such, competent in both Thomistic philosophy *and* theology.

However, a more probable answer as to why Maritain presents his thoughts on the consciousness of Jesus Christ as a work of speculative philosophy and not as a work of theology (by questioning St. Thomas and not engaging in the modern discussion) can be found in the history of the question in the decades preceding Maritain’s conferences and subsequent book on the subject. One theologian after another found himself under scrutiny or censure by Rome for various theological and doctrinal deficiencies in his

¹⁹⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 11-12, 48. Maritain indicates that he is pursuing this topic “Because I love the Little Brothers of Jesus, and because I would like very much to tell them certain things which I believe truly important on the plane of research, and which others than I could perhaps develop more fully” (47).

¹⁹⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 12.

²⁰⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 47. Italics added for emphasis.

writings on the consciousness of Jesus Christ during this ecclesiastical epoch. A summary review of that history will make this point more clearly.

Schell's limiting Jesus to having only experiential knowledge gained him the attention of the Holy Office in 1918. Seiller divided the ontological unity of Christ, an action that caused his book, *La psychologie humaine de Christ*, to be placed on the Index in July of 1951. Moreover, just a few months later the encyclical letter *Sempiternus Rex* condemned those theologians who emphasized the human nature of Christ to the point of making the man Jesus a human person in his own right and not ontologically united to the Word of God (Déodat de Basly and Seiller). With this in mind, it should be clear why Maritain would emphasize the speculative nature of *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* by indirectly entering the debate on the consciousness of Jesus Christ from a philosophical perspective.

Earlier in his life Maritain had written a book on Our Lady of La Salette that was never published, even posthumously, because neither the Pontiff nor the appropriate Roman Curial office would consent to its publication. Maritain's obedience to that decision, even in death, should be taken as an indication of his disposition towards the hierarchical Church he deeply loved throughout his Catholic life. If he was unwilling to cross Roman sensibilities over devotion to Our Lady of La Salette, then it is unlikely he would do so over such a controversial question as the consciousness of Jesus Christ in the waning years of his life.

Maritain is cautious in both the presentation and the method of *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* precisely because the issue of the consciousness of Jesus Christ had proved to be such a volatile topic, and because Maritain certainly would not have wanted

his name added to the list of Schell, Seiller and Déodat de Basly. If anything, Maritain's stratagem of presenting his thesis as contra St. Thomas while stressing the philosophical nature of his work shows the depths to which he understood the complexity and controversy involved in the question of Jesus Christ's consciousness among theologians in his day.

Comprehensor and Viator

Throughout each successive section of *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, Maritain makes two fundamental points from which his investigation of the consciousness of Jesus Christ emerges. The first point is his understanding the soul of Jesus as existing simultaneously under two different states, namely that of *comprehensor* and *viator*. The second point from which Maritain bases his discussion of the consciousness of Jesus Christ is his division of the life of Jesus into eight successive stages.²⁰¹ The second point is directly related to the first and shows the trajectory of the life of Jesus-*viator*. Maritain points out, however, that his division of the life of Jesus into eight stages is applicable only to the human life of Jesus as *viator* and not as the divine person of the Word.²⁰² That having been stated, a closer look at the distinction between *comprehensor* and *viator* will help make this point clearer and establish a working vocabulary from which Maritain will discuss the consciousness of Jesus Christ.

²⁰¹ Maritain refers to "eight stages" (16) in the life of Jesus Christ but then subsequently lists seven, dividing 5 into two connected but distinct aspects of Jesus' life. This will be made clearer after the present discussion.

²⁰² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 16.

When Maritain discusses Jesus' soul as existing under the two states of *comprehensor* and *viator*, he is utilizing a distinction already present in the scholastics, including the Angelic Doctor.²⁰³ As a matter of fact, Maritain first mentions the distinction between these two states in the soul of Jesus when he is formulating his initial disagreement with St. Thomas over Luke 2.52.²⁰⁴ Perhaps it would be easier to explain these two states by setting Christ aside for a moment and looking at these distinctions in the context of a Saint—Thomas Aquinas himself. When St. Thomas dies and is rewarded for the grace of a holy life, we say that he “goes to heaven” and is now in the presence of God. This heavenly reward of divine presence is the completion of life's faith journey and explains what the state of *comprehensor* is. St. Thomas no longer lives by faith, “believing that which he cannot see,” but instead sees the God he believes in directly. While still alive, however, St. Thomas was in the state of way journeying towards God, i.e., as *viator*. For St. Thomas to be *comprehensor* is for him to cease being *viator*.

By definition then, St. Thomas cannot be both *viator* and *comprehensor* at the same time, that is he cannot be journeying towards God (as *viator*) if he is already present to God (as *comprehensor*). Saying that St. Thomas is *comprehensor* is tantamount to saying that he enjoys the beatific vision of God, he “sees” God as he is.²⁰⁵ It seems that St. Paul parallels these two states when he writes, “At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror [as *viator*], but then face to face [as *comprehensor*]. At present I know partially

²⁰³ St. Thomas specifically discusses Jesus as both *comprehensor* and *viator* in *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 15, a. 10.

²⁰⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 17.

²⁰⁵ By definition human beings are finite and limited and thus do not see the divine essence in its totality. Therefore, to “comprehend” does not mean that the human seer fully grasps the divine essence. Rather, seeing God “face to face” is the biblical explanation which parallels the systematic understanding of the beatific vision, i.e., 1 John 3.2.

[as *viator*]; then I shall know fully [as *comprehensor*], as I am fully known” (I Cor. 13.12). In summary, during his life on earth we say that St. Thomas is journeying toward God and is thus in the state of way or is a *viator*. After his death he ceases to be a journeyman and is now present to God being in the state of *comprehensor*.

With this clarification in mind, let us return to Maritain’s discussion of Jesus Christ and examine a little more closely what he understands these distinctions to mean when applied to Jesus as concurrently existing under the two states of *comprehensor* and *viator*. According to Maritain, when he refers to Christ as *comprehensor*, he means,

Jesus had from the creation of His soul a Vision of God that was all that which there is of the most perfect; but to this perfect Vision there was lacking a complementary perfection which is connatural to it,—the state of beatitude or of glory,—the state which Christ, the Word Incarnate, renounced from the instant that He became incarnate and was *viator*, as He renounced many privileges of His divinity itself.²⁰⁶

In other words, the state of *comprehensor* in the human soul of Jesus is a unique result of the hypostatic union of the Word subsisting in a human nature.²⁰⁷ This unique privilege accorded to the human soul of Jesus, namely that he has the beatific vision and is thus *comprehensor*, begins at the creation of his soul. According to Maritain, the state of *comprehensor* will not express itself fully until Jesus’ death on the Cross.²⁰⁸ However, as *viator*, the human faculties of Jesus function in a truly human manner with the exception of infused knowledge. As *viator*, Jesus lives an authentic human life in that he is a journeyman like any other human being. After Jesus dies on the Cross and is raised from

²⁰⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 23. Thus Jesus’ perfections are as perfect as possible to a human nature.

²⁰⁷ Maritain writes, “Let us note, in passing, that He was *comprehensor*, by reason only of an exigency proper to the hypostatic union, but that He was *viator* by reason of the very motive of this union, by reason of the very motive of the Incarnation [i.e., victory over sin]” In *On the Grace and Humanity*, 57.

²⁰⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 22-23, 24, footnote 7. See also 137-138.

the dead this changes, and his human nature and faculties are completely ruled by the state of *comprehensor*.²⁰⁹ Thus, while Jesus is *viator* in the here-below of his soul during his earthly life, he is simultaneously *comprehensor* in the heaven of his soul.

Nonetheless, once Jesus enters into death in his humanity, he forever ceases to be in the state of *viator* and subsequently exists only in the state of *comprehensor*. In Maritain's own words, one of the things that he is attempting to do in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* is to reconcile St. Thomas and the Gospel of Luke. He says, by pushing

further the distinction between the state of *comprehensor* and that of *viator*, and in placing in an interior world absolutely inaccessible to consciousness all that which was proper to the state of *comprehensor*, one arrives at new views which permit us to save at the same time the truths to which St. Thomas adhered and that which is in my opinion the obvious meaning of St. Luke.²¹⁰

In doing these two things Maritain is coming closer to a fuller understanding of the consciousness of Jesus Christ.

While Jesus as *comprehensor* enjoys the beatific vision, Maritain writes that this needs to be understood in a nuanced manner. In Maritain's opinion, there are two limitations that Jesus experiences in having the beatific vision. The first limitation Maritain refers to is one of nature, namely that the humanity of Jesus is finite and, as such, is unable to fully comprehend the divine essence. Jesus' limited, *finite* human nature would not be capable of fully grasping the *infinite* essence of God. Maritain notes that St. Thomas explains the meaning of *comprehensor* in *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 12, a.

²⁰⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 22-23, 24.

²¹⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 17. Maritain adds, "St. Thomas thought that he had to exclude all growth properly so called of grace, of charity, of wisdom in Jesus during his earthly life. And the matter seems to me grave, because, once again, growth is characteristic of the *verus homo* in the state of way" (52).

7, in which he states that Jesus is “*perfectus comprehensor*.” In Maritain’s opinion, St. Thomas’ explanation is “true but expressed in an unfortunate vocabulary” because as *comprehensor* Jesus “saw but did not *comprehend* the divine essence (this is impossible to any creature).”²¹¹ Along this same line of argument, Maritain adds that Jesus would not be able to articulate or express that which he sees in the beatific vision because the vision is conceptually inexpressible by a finite nature.²¹² The second limitation that Jesus encounters in having the beatific vision is that while the state of *comprehensor* involves both beholding God and the connatural state of beatitude (or glory) for the Saints who have died, in the human soul of Jesus the state of *comprehensor* does not include beatitude or glory.²¹³ Maritain explains that this absence of beatitude is the result of a voluntary renunciation by the Word in becoming Incarnate, supporting his position by citing the Philippians hymn of 2.6-11.

What is unique to Maritain’s consideration of Jesus is the manner in which he understands the interaction between the two simultaneous states of *viator* and *comprehensor* in Jesus’ soul.

I admit, therefore, these two worlds in the soul of Christ, corresponding to the two simultaneous states of *comprehensor* and of *viator* in which He found himself. I think that there was clearly a certain communication between these two states and these two worlds ... But I think that there was also *a certain incommunicability* between them, which caused that the *content* of the supraconscious heaven of the soul was retained, could not pass into the world of consciousness, except, as I indicated in the first approach, by mode of general influx, and of comforting, and of participated light.²¹⁴

²¹¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 23.

²¹² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 60, 72. As a human example one might cite the difficulty the mystics experience in conceptualizing their experiences.

²¹³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 23. For this reason Maritain states that Jesus is not “blessed,” he is *comprehensor* (86).

²¹⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 59.

While Maritain's major contribution to the discussion of the consciousness of Jesus Christ is his distinction between consciousness and supraconsciousness, his theory is rooted in this fundamental distinction of Jesus' soul existing concurrently as *viator* and *comprehensor*. This approach to the consciousness of Christ will be examined at length and is mentioned presently only to show the importance of why Maritain devotes so much time to distinguishing in Jesus between the states of *viator* and *comprehensor*. While this point is fundamental to *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, a second important clarification Maritain makes is his division of the life of Jesus into seven distinct stages.

When dividing the life of Christ into the various chronological stages, Maritain is clear that these are proper to the finite human nature of Jesus as man and not to the eternal person of Word.²¹⁵ It is only the humanity of Jesus that experiences a progression through time which Maritain insists is a "perfect *unity* of the *movement* of the life of Christ."²¹⁶ While in his humanity (as *viator*), he follows the progression of life that any human person would follow, i.e., birth, childhood, adult life, death etc. Nonetheless, there remains an intrinsic underlying unity to his life. For Maritain this unity is the direct result of the hypostatic union and the beatific vision in his human soul (as *comprehensor*). It is in this context that Maritain proposes the seven stages of the life of Jesus from which he bases his discussion of Jesus' consciousness. Because they are an intrinsic element of Maritain's arguments in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, a

²¹⁵ One of Maritain's cursory tangents is his lament that most of the faithful have no clear understanding of the acts of the eternal Logos and those of the human nature of Jesus, thus indiscriminately attributing divine things to the humanity of Jesus. See *On the Grace and Humanity*, 29, 52-53.

²¹⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 12.

cursory review of these stages will be helpful to the reader.

The first three stages all involve the life of Jesus prior to the beginning of his public ministry, namely his conception and birth in Bethlehem, his childhood, and lastly the hidden adult life at Nazareth.²¹⁷ This is followed by two stages: the public ministry and subsequent death of Jesus. The latter Maritain subdivides as two separate but related aspects of the one stage, the Cross and the Resurrection. The final two stages involve Jesus' exercising his universal kingship before the final consummation of the world and after the final consummation of the world. As Jesus moves through the early stages of infancy to his adult life, death and Resurrection, the state of *viator* moves closer and closer to the state of *comprehensor*.²¹⁸ Maritain explains this trajectory of Jesus' life by utilizing "the principle of the asymptote."²¹⁹

Maritain makes use of the geometric principle of the asymptote and applies it to the person of Jesus as *viator* and *comprehensor* specifically in his discussion of whether or not grace increases in the human nature of Jesus.²²⁰ It seems clear, however, that Maritain understands the principle in a manner that allows for its application to other aspects of the human life of Jesus, explicitly applying it to the sufferings of Christ in the final section of the book.²²¹ The geometric principle of the asymptote states that an oblique line bends along a horizontal x-axis and a vertical y-axis but never reaches or crosses either of the two.²²²

²¹⁷ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 16. The seven stages are all initially listed on this same page.

²¹⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 137.

²¹⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 64.

²²⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 63-67.

²²¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 137.

²²² For a summary explanation of the theory of the asymptote see J. Richard Byrne, *Modern Elementary Geometry* (New York: McGrath-Hill Book Company, 1970), 276-277.

On a standard graph as the asymptote approaches the vertical-horizontal intersection, the distance from either axis is at its greatest. Concurrently, as the asymptote moves along either axis away from the 0, 0 intersect point the distance between the asymptote, and either the horizontal x-axis or the vertical y-axis diminishes. Maritain's application of this principle to the life of Jesus can be conceptualized in the following manner. The horizontal x-axis represents Jesus' soul in the state of *comprehensor*, already experiencing the beatific vision. At any given point along this vertical x-axis, Jesus-*comprehensor* already has the fullness of grace and knowledge possible. The vertical y-axis represents the human life of Jesus in the state of *viator*. At any given point along the y-axis (the various stages of Jesus' life), Jesus-*viator* has the fullness of grace and wisdom proper to that particular point in his life.

Hence, as a twelve year old boy, Jesus-*viator* has the fullness of grace and wisdom proper to his human capacity at that age and point in life. Nonetheless, both his grace and knowledge will still increase over time in proportion to his human and intellectual growth. Maritain states, however, that to attribute to the baby Jesus as *viator* things proper to the baby Jesus as *comprehensor* would place us "in the presence of a kind of fairy-story marvel which is unworthy of Christ and contrary to the *verus homo*."²²³ In utilizing the principle of the asymptote, Maritain is able to state two concurrent things about Jesus Christ. First, at any given point along the horizontal x-axis as *comprehensor*, Jesus' humanity has the fullness of grace and wisdom possible (recall that this is the heaven of the soul of Jesus which experiences the beatific vision). Secondly, Maritain is able to affirm that there is a genuine increase in grace and wisdom

²²³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 19.

as the man Jesus moves along the vertical y-axis as *viator*, all the while increasing as it gets closer to union with the horizontal x-axis under the state of *comprehensor*.

While in the geometric definition the asymptote approaches but never touches either axis, Maritain asserts that there is a convergence of the vertical y-axis of Jesus-*viator* with the horizontal x-axis of Jesus-*comprehensor*. At the convergence of these points, the charity, grace, and knowledge present in Jesus' human soul becomes infinite.²²⁴ According to Maritain, this moment occurs as Jesus is dying on the Cross and utters his final words.²²⁵ At the union of these two states, Jesus ceases being a *viator* and his human soul hereafter exists solely in the state of *comprehensor* with his human faculties illuminated immediately and directly by the light of the beatific vision.²²⁶ This helps to clarify the distinction between the two states of *viator* and *comprehensor* in the soul of Jesus, a fundamental point in Maritain's theory of the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus Christ. An examination of Maritain's understanding of the threefold knowledge of Jesus will help further elucidate this point.

²²⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 138. Maritain offers his reader the "Thomas-*Summa*" example in order to clarify this point. The horizontal x-axis would be the *Summa* as conceived in the mind of St. Thomas. Insert any Thomist scholar along the vertical y-axis and, as they increase in understanding the *Summa* the oblique line moves closer to the horizontal x-axis. Nevertheless, any given scholar of St. Thomas, regardless of how much he learns will never achieve a union with the horizontal x-axis of St. Thomas' own knowledge of the *Summa*.

²²⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 137. Maritain writes, "the sixth and seventh Words ... is precisely the point where the ascending oblique straight line of which I spoke at the beginning [of the book], and which symbolizes the constant growth in grace and in charity all through the earthly life of Christ as *viator*, meets the horizontal straight line which symbolizes the supreme and unsurpassable perfection ... of this same grace and of this same charity of Christ as *comprehensor*."

²²⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 24.

The Threefold Knowledge of Jesus Christ

The final distinction to be made as a prelude to exploring Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ is the way in which he understands the threefold knowledge of Jesus Christ, namely the beatific vision, infused knowledge and experiential knowledge.²²⁷ In reading through *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, one immediately notices that Maritain devotes a good deal more of his attention to discussing the infused knowledge of Jesus than he spends on either Jesus' beatific knowledge or experiential knowledge, the latter being hardly mentioned at all although Maritain does affirm it.²²⁸ It seems that this disparity has more to do with the content of each concept in light of the previously discussed states in Jesus' soul and Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Christ. Whereas the beatific vision is proper to Jesus-*comprehensor* and experiential knowledge is proper to Jesus-*viator*, infused knowledge bridges the chasm between the two states. Hence, infused knowledge makes accessible within the human faculties of Jesus-*viator* what is present in the beatific vision and would otherwise be inexpressible and beyond human comprehension. A brief explanation of how Maritain understands these three types of knowledge will make this clearer.

Maritain understands the beatific vision of Christ largely in harmony with the scholastics, in particular St. Thomas. He understands the beatific vision of Jesus as being synonymous with "beatific love," as unlimited in nature, is simple and unexplainable, and is the fullness of divine truth.²²⁹ All of these explanations are present in the scholastic theory of the beatific vision.²³⁰ Maritain affirms that Jesus has the beatific vision from

²²⁷ See above, 3-6.

²²⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 81-87, esp. 81-82.

²²⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 71-73, 107.

²³⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 103.

the creation of his soul but distinguishes that the vision is proper to the “celestial” part of his soul as *comprehensor* and not “here-below” of his soul as *viator*.²³¹ The illumination from the beatific vision in Jesus enlightens all things for him as both *comprehensor* and *viator*, but the vision is only accessible, although in different degrees, to these states of Jesus’ soul through the mediation of infused knowledge.²³²

For Maritain infused knowledge is to be distinguished in Jesus according to its presence in either the state of *comprehensor* or *viator*. According to Maritain, infused knowledge in Jesus-*comprehensor* is absolute and totally enlightened by the beatific vision but is nonetheless necessary for a created intellect to comprehend the beatific vision. However, as *comprehensor*, this knowledge remains incommunicable to and above the sphere of Jesus-*viator*.²³³ Recall that for Maritain, the beatific vision directly enlightens the heaven of the soul of Jesus-*comprehensor* only. Nonetheless, without infused knowledge the vision would remain “superfluous” to the human intellect of Jesus Christ even in the elevated state of *comprehensor*.²³⁴ Of itself the beatific vision is far too vast and inexpressible for the human intellect to “use” in making value-judgments or gaining concrete knowledge. It is through the mediation of infused knowledge that the “light” of the beatific vision is transformed in such a way that it becomes accessible to the human intellect and soul of Jesus. Infused knowledge acts as the “exchange agency”

²³¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 23. Later in the work, Maritain cites that even as an intra-uterine child, Jesus enjoys the beatific vision in his soul, albeit in the heaven of his soul and not in the here-below of his soul (89-90). See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 9, a. 2, obj. 3.

²³² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 101-102. See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 9, a. 2, obj. 1.

²³³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 94.

²³⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 96-97, footnote 15.

between the beatific vision and the human soul, under both states, of Jesus.²³⁵ While all things created and uncreated are present in the beatific vision and consequently present to the soul of Jesus through the beatific vision, even so, without infused knowledge neither state in Jesus' soul would benefit from the beatific vision.²³⁶ Maritain does not spend much time explaining infused knowledge in Jesus-*comprehensor* other than noting its absolute, perfect content and concurrent presence with the beatific vision. Infused knowledge in the state of *comprehensor* makes intelligible to the human intellect of Jesus what is otherwise unintelligible as the beatific vision. However, as *comprehensor*, such knowledge remains above the consciousness of Jesus-*viator* and will not be exercised directly by Jesus until the Paschal Mystery.²³⁷

In Jesus-*viator* infused knowledge is not total and absolute but limited in scope and governed according to his conceptual and experiential knowledge. However, Maritain states, “The case of the infused science is thus, in my view, the only case where something in the here-below of the soul of Christ [as *viator*] was immediately ruled by His Beatific Vision, because produced by God *using the latter as instrument*.”²³⁸ Maritain clarifies that infused knowledge in the state of *viator* grants Jesus divine certitude specifically as “required by His mission as Revealer.”²³⁹ Maritain holds that

²³⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 103. Along these lines Maritain insists that it is infused knowledge that enlightens the human mind of Jesus, making the inexpressible beatific vision expressible within his the human intellect (119). In other words, infused knowledge makes the beatific vision “understandable” to the human faculties by using mental images and concepts (97, 127).

²³⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 97.

²³⁷ Maritain indicates that as *comprehensor*, infused knowledge remains just as incommunicable to Jesus-*viator* as the beatific vision (94). However, in the glorified Christ, infused knowledge as *comprehensor* (in the state of glory) becomes the ruling principle of all the human faculties of Jesus (137, 142).

²³⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 102, footnote 22.

²³⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 102, footnote 22.

through the mediation of infused knowledge, the soul of Jesus-*viator* is able to participate in the beatific vision in a limited fashion and to understand in a tangible manner things present in the vision.²⁴⁰ How exactly does Maritain understand this to occur in Jesus?

While Maritain writes very little about experiential knowledge in Jesus, it is usually presented in relation to the infused knowledge of Jesus-*viator*. What is unique about infused knowledge in Jesus-*viator* is that it makes use of concepts and knowledge obtained in an ordinary human manner. For example, Maritain notes that Jesus' knowledge of the Hebrew Law and of God the Father is divinely certain knowledge²⁴¹ yet is fundamentally rooted in what he has learned from the Blessed Mother and the teachings of Judaism.²⁴²

Maritain writes, "All that which He [Jesus] expressed to others and expressed to Himself in His consciousness of *viator* required *species expressae*, concepts, notions, which refer either to His experiential science [knowledge], or to His infused science [knowledge], but could not come from the vision."²⁴³ This is a unique understanding of infused science in Jesus-*viator*. If Jesus' human intellect was being enlightened by infused knowledge without utilizing human concepts and ideative forms already present to his mind through experiential knowledge, infused knowledge would not be anymore understandable to the man Jesus than the beatific vision. Hence as *comprehensor*, infused knowledge presents to the mind concepts or ideas *in a human manner* things that do not require any previous experiential knowledge or concepts. Simply put, in either the

²⁴⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 61.

²⁴¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 107.

²⁴² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 119.

²⁴³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 24.

state of *viator* or *comprehensor*, infused knowledge presents to the mind knowledge in a manner harmonious with experiential knowledge and concepts.

In understanding infused knowledge in Jesus in this manner, Maritain is able to maintain two aspects of the mystery of the Incarnation at once. On the human level Jesus is epistemologically truly human. He learns and knows in the same way as the rest of the human race. At the same time by virtue of the hypostatic union, he is also endowed with supernatural gifts and knowledge. While Maritain cites two exceptions to this,²⁴⁴ his general understanding of infused knowledge in Jesus is that it both requires and builds upon his ordinary human experiential knowledge.

Already it has become evident that Maritain consistently addresses the problem of the knowledge of Jesus Christ by remaining rooted in and elaborating scholastic categories as applied to Christology. We are now better prepared to enter into Maritain's discussion of consciousness.

Consciousness and Supraconsciousness

Before looking at the consciousness of Jesus Christ according to Maritain in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, we must first elucidate in a more general manner what he means when he makes use of the terms infraconsciousness, consciousness, and

²⁴⁴ In *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* Maritain indicates two instances during Jesus' life when the partition between the consciousness of the *viator* and the divinized supraconsciousness of the *comprehensor* was let down. The first is the Transfiguration (172, footnote 1) and the second was the moment of death on the Cross (142). In the case of the Transfiguration this was a "miracle," and in the second instance the transition from the state of *viator* to that of *comprehensor*. This will be made clearer below in the discussion of consciousness and supraconsciousness in Jesus.

supraconsciousness. We will then examine how Maritain applies these concepts to Jesus Christ and note how these terms take on a slightly different meaning when used by Maritain for Jesus because the acting subject is a divine person acting through a human nature. Let us begin by first looking at consciousness in general.²⁴⁵ Maritain writes:

Let there be no misunderstanding: when I speak of a *world of consciousness*, I am speaking of a world of which consciousness and the conscious faculties are the seat and, as it were, the sun,—but in this world there is, on the one hand, *below* consciousness, the vast psycho-somatic unconscious of tendencies and of instincts, of sensations not yet elaborated in perceptions, of latent memories, etc., and, on the other hand, *above* consciousness, a preconscious or supraconscious of the spirit, in which are found the agent intellect and the sources of the intuitive activities of the spirit. It is all this that I am calling, in order to simplify, *the world of consciousness*. And this world of consciousness thus defined is the world of each one of us.²⁴⁶

The first aspect of consciousness Maritain mentions, the “*below* consciousness,” he also calls the “*infraconsciousness*.”²⁴⁷ Maritain writes that both *infraconsciousness* and *supraconsciousness* are, “strictly speaking, only logical categories negatively established: that which *is not* conscious, either as above, or as below consciousness.”²⁴⁸ Nevertheless, what he mentions as being a part of the *infraconsciousness* in a person are all natural human functions: tendencies, instincts, sensations, and latent memories. All of these

²⁴⁵ Maritain writes “the explicit and explicitly elaborated notion of the *unconscious* in man” is a philosophical instrument lacking in St. Thomas’ time. In a rare reference he explicitly credits “our modern psychologists” with this elaboration. See *On the Grace and Humanity*, 48-49.

²⁴⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 55. Bertrand De Margerie, *The Human Knowledge of Christ: The Knowledge, Fore-Knowledge and Consciousness, Even in the Pre-Paschal Period, of Christ the Redeemer* (Boston, MA: Daughters of St. Paul, 1980) associates Maritain with those who attempt to understand the knowledge of Christ in psychological terms, specifically citing Maritain’s theory of *supraconsciousness* (28-29). De Margerie does not give a full evaluation of Maritain’s theory, however, and fails to mention its rootedness in the scholastic understanding of the threefold knowledge of Jesus as well as its attempt to reconcile conciliar Christology with the modern understanding of consciousness.

²⁴⁷ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 55, footnote 8.

²⁴⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 49, footnote 2.

remain “below” the level of consciousness in that they are natural happenings in a person that occur without the person directly willing or being consciously aware that they are happening.

Above the level of infraconsciousness is a person’s conscious awareness. According to Maritain, consciousness is “a knowledge wholly experimental and felt, which of itself is obscure and inexpressible in concepts.”²⁴⁹ He also indicates that in “every man in the state of way...the functioning of human nature and of its faculties is *centered on reason*” and by nature is limited and finite.²⁵⁰ Let us briefly synthesize this for clarity. Consciousness involves those things that the acting subject is directly aware of and to which he can deliberately give his attention. At the same time human consciousness is limited and finite. While I am aware of this or that thing and can tell you about this or that thing, it is far more difficult to tell you how *I* am aware, or conscious, of this or that thing. I think what Maritain is indicating here is part of the great mystery of human life. I may be able to express my thoughts, knowledge and feelings to another person, but my subjective conscious awareness will always remain beyond the sphere of someone else’s ability to grasp it. Whatever I may express to another is but a fragment of the totality of my conscious awareness. I can express the content of my consciousness, but not consciousness itself. With this in mind, it is clearer what Maritain means when he affirms that an individual’s conscious awareness is not expressible in concepts.

²⁴⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 116. Along these same lines Maritain writes, “the word ‘consciousness’ connotes a knowledge essentially *experimental* and *perceived* (by reversion on acts); this is an *obscure* knowledge and which of itself is inexpressible in concepts” (115).

²⁵⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 81-82.

The third aspect of the world of consciousness according to Maritain is what he calls supraconsciousness. As indicated in the above quote, supraconsciousness is “*above* consciousness, a preconscious or supraconscious of the spirit, in which are found the agent intellect and the sources of the intuitive activities of the spirit.”²⁵¹ While above consciousness, supraconsciousness nevertheless “functions in us only in the zone of ‘the spirit in its living springs,’ where the world of conscious activity has its hidden source.”²⁵² This “intuitive activity of the spirit” and “spirit in its living springs” is for Maritain a twofold reality. On the one hand, it is a place of unconscious intellectual activity and synthesis. This aspect will be made clearer in the examination of his *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* below.²⁵³ On the other hand, it is also the place of communion between the human soul and God.

Maritain writes, “the spiritual preconscious or supraconsciousness is not only in us the natural sphere of ‘the spirit in its living springs,’ it is also the secret sphere where in virtue of the supernatural gift of God is found the seat of grace, the beginning of eternal life.”²⁵⁴ Maritain includes in this aspect of supraconsciousness not only its being the place of grace but also, albeit in an unformulated way, the place where knowledge of divine truths spring. Maritain cites, by way of example, the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. Because both were taught divine truths directly by Jesus, what was otherwise

²⁵¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 55.

²⁵² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 80.

²⁵³ Maritain himself directs the reader of *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus to Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* for further explanation of his theory of supraconsciousness (49, footnote 2). Romanus Cessario offers a positive evaluation of Maritain’s theory of supraconsciousness as it is applied to Christ. See his “Incarnate Wisdom and the Immediacy of Christ’s Salvific Knowledge,” *Congresso Tomistico Internazionale* 5 (1991): 334-40.

²⁵⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, footnote 2, 49.

unformulated but true in their supraconsciousness later became explicit and present to them in their consciousness awareness.

One can think, as I indicated a few moments ago, that this conversation with the Doctors of the Temple has marked the beginning of the communications through which, once returned to Nazareth, Jesus began to confide to these two loved ones—by what a sublime and gentle initiation in which He spoke from the abundance of the heart ... the secrets of the uncreated Life and those of Redemption. Then Mary *recognized*, in a contemplation filled with wonder (conscious participation, now that Jesus taught her and in proportion as He taught her, of the prophetic illumination received at the Annunciation), that which she *knew* already in the heights of the supraconscious, but which remained there hidden to her conscious thought... And that which I have just said of Mary, it is fitting to hold as likewise true, though in a less elevated plane, of St. Joseph.²⁵⁵

Thus, for Maritain, after the finding in the Temple, Jesus began “to teach them [Mary and St. Joseph] progressively, under the mode of communicable concepts, all the mysteries of revelation (which in another manner, as I indicated also, they knew already, but inexpressibly).”²⁵⁶ While Maritain uses two extraordinary human beings as his example it remains, nonetheless, true for all human beings. Although this example highlights how divine truth, descending from what is otherwise the unformulated supraconsciousness into the realm of consciousness may enter the conscious thoughts with the aid of a word from outside, the theory would also apply to those truths inherent in creation, i.e., goodness and beauty.

These three aspects of the world of consciousness, infraconsciousness, consciousness and supraconsciousness, are for Maritain the three degrees of consciousness present in each human person. When applied to the person of Jesus Christ, Maritain slightly nuances these aspects of consciousness. We have already pointed out

²⁵⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 130-31.

²⁵⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 130, footnote 6.

Maritain's recognition that the modern concept of consciousness was not available to St. Thomas when he was formulating his Christology. Had it been available, Maritain does not believe St. Thomas would have encountered any difficulty in understanding the aforementioned text from Luke's Gospel.²⁵⁷

How does Maritain advance St. Thomas' Christological thought with his theory of consciousness? For Maritain the world of consciousness in the ordinary sense, including the infraconscious and supraconscious, is proper to Jesus-*viator*, what he refers to as the "terrestrial" or the "here-below" consciousness of Jesus.²⁵⁸ As previously noted, however, in Maritain's discussion of the infused knowledge of Jesus-*viator*, Jesus' conscious awareness also includes the supernatural gift of infused knowledge, although in a manner proper to his state and stage of life.²⁵⁹ Nonetheless, Jesus' consciousness operates "freely and deliberately"²⁶⁰ in him as it would for any person,²⁶¹ albeit in a manner absolutely free from sin. However, because Jesus' consciousness as *viator* includes the supernatural gift of infused knowledge, there is in his consciousness a rapid development of his awareness of himself.

It is in regard to this aspect of Maritain's theory of consciousness that there exists a substantial difference between the supraconsciousness in all people and the divinized supraconsciousness particular to Jesus alone. Maritain refers to the divinized

²⁵⁷ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 115.

²⁵⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 56, 58-59.

²⁵⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 116.

²⁶⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 55.

²⁶¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 115. Maritain writes that by Stage 2, the childhood of Jesus, his consciousness had developed to the degree that he was already aware of his divine identity (118). This point will be made clearer below in "Excursus: Jesus' Self-Knowledge ... to Unite."

supraconsciousness in Jesus as the “celestial” or “heaven” of the soul proper to the state of *comprehensor*.²⁶² It is in the divinized supraconsciousness of the soul under the state of *comprehensor* that Jesus sees the beatific vision and is thus “divinized.”

But when I speak of the *world of the Beatific Vision* or of the *divinized supraconsciousness* in the soul of Christ, I am speaking of a world *absolutely proper* to the soul of Christ alone,—world transcendent,—seat from which the Holy Spirit spreads His plentitude over the entire being of Christ,—domain infinitely superior to the “supraconsciousness of the spirit” which forms naturally a part of that which I am calling the world of consciousness.²⁶³

The divinized supraconsciousness in Jesus is “divinized” as a direct result of the heaven of his soul being “enlightened” by the beatific vision.²⁶⁴ This “influx of intellectual light” (i.e., divinization) from the beatific vision is present in the supraconsciousness of Jesus Christ as a general influx or radiance of divine light as well as through the mediation of infused knowledge. Of this Maritain writes:

One can therefore say, if one wishes, but in a manner which needs to be well understood, that an *influx of intellectual light* stemming from the Vision was communicated to the infused science of Christ, and that something of that which He knew through the Vision in His divinized supraconsciousness was communicated to the sphere of the conscious,—not, indeed, according as the ineffable and indivisible *content* of the science of Vision would have been parceled out in communicable *species* and in conscious ideas, but according as the infused science was the *exchange agency* thanks to which the divine gold of the Vision was changed into the coin of the expressible and communicable *species*.²⁶⁵

²⁶² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 56, 58-59.

²⁶³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 55. Maritain stresses that applying “philosophical” concepts such as consciousness “applies in the case of Christ in a *transcendent and absolutely unique sense*” (48).

²⁶⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 101-102.

²⁶⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 102-103.

It is in the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus-*comprehensor* that one can say that Jesus has divine certainty of all things past, present and future.²⁶⁶ This brings us back to Maritain's initial distinction of Jesus' soul existing under the state of *comprehensor* and *viator* as well as the distinction of his threefold knowledge. The divinized supraconsciousness, including infused knowledge as *comprehensor*, remains "beyond" the here-below consciousness of Jesus-*viator*. This is true because, Maritain writes, there exists a partition between the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus under the state of *comprehensor* and the consciousness of Jesus under the state of *viator*. It is in this "partition" between consciousness and the divinized supraconsciousness in Jesus that all of the above-mentioned aspects of Maritain's thought converge and thus require further explication.

The infused knowledge in the heaven of the soul of Jesus-*comprehensor* remains inaccessible to the here-below of the soul of Jesus-*viator*. Since this is such a fundamental point in Maritain's conceptualization of the consciousness of Jesus Christ, I would like to quote him at some length on this point.

During the earthly life of Christ, His infused science, taken according as it found itself, in the sphere of the divinized supraconsciousness, under the state of final consummation,—was strictly *incommunicable*. For in the sphere in question, which was that where reigned the Beatific Vision (a Beatific Vision which did not invade and did not glorify the entire soul, and did not replace the reason as immediate rule of the action of the soul, in short which created in the heights of the soul a sort of closed heaven), all that which was seized behind the veil was perfectly luminous and at the same time perfectly incommunicable, since entirely *supraconscious*.²⁶⁷

However, Maritain adds:

²⁶⁶ On this point Maritain writes in *On the Grace and Humanity*, "In the sphere of the divinized supraconsciousness (where Christ was *perfect comprehensor*), it embraced *all things* absolutely, yes,—in this I am entirely of St. Thomas's opinion" (94).

²⁶⁷ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 94.

I think that there was clearly a certain communication between these two states [*viator* and *comprehensor*] and these two worlds [*consciousness* and *divinized supraconsciousness*]: to be sure, since it is the *same nature* and the *same faculties* which were under the *state* of *comprehensor* and under the *state* of *viator*. Hence this communication ... But I think that there was also a *certain incommunicability* between them, which caused that the *content* of the supraconscious heaven of the soul was retained, could not pass into the world of consciousness, or of the here-below, except ... by mode of general influx, and of comforting, and of participated light. In short, there was, so to speak, a *partition* between the world of the Beatific Vision and that of the conscious faculties,—but translucent partition which let pass, through the light of infused science which participated in the evidence of the vision, as through the virtue and the attractions of the sovereign peace which reigned in the heaven of the soul, a vivifying radiance over all the faculties,—proper climate of unity, of the humble but absolute certitude of self, of the stability, of the impeccability, of the superhuman power of the soul of Christ.²⁶⁸

According to Maritain, the partition separating the two states and worlds of Jesus' soul is, in general, impassable, although there are instances where the partition becomes passable. How does Maritain clarify this seemingly contradictory point? Maritain indicates that whether or not the partition is penetrable depends on what is being communicated and whether the communication is growing toward or descending from the divinized supraconsciousness.

The content of the divinized supraconsciousness does not descend into the here-below world of consciousness except by means of infused knowledge. However, the experiential knowledge and consciousness below the sphere of separation (in the here-below of Jesus' soul) is able to grow toward the realm of the divinized supraconsciousness, especially via Jesus' prayer. While Maritain indicates that the divinized supraconsciousness will in fact completely rule the human faculties of Jesus when he is glorified,²⁶⁹ so long as he is in the state of *viator*, Jesus' finite human nature

²⁶⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 59-60.

²⁶⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 137-138, 142-143.

would not be able to grasp the totality of infused science illuminated by the beatific vision and present to him in the heaven of his soul under the state of *comprehensor*. We have already noted, however, that through infused knowledge under the state of *viator*, Jesus' consciousness participates in the light of the vision in an indirect and limited fashion.²⁷⁰

Maritain indicates that infused knowledge in the here-below of Jesus' soul "did not cease to grow during His whole earthly life. And at each moment of this development it extended itself to all that which Jesus had need to know *at that moment*."²⁷¹ In the consciousness of Jesus-*viator*, infused science, utilizing concepts and ideas experientially acquired, increases in proportion to and with Jesus' intellectual growth but does not fully reach the state of *comprehensor* and the divinized supraconsciousness until the moment of death on the Cross. Even though infused knowledge in the consciousness of Jesus-*viator* is a unique privilege of the hypostatic union and taking its origins in the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus-*comprehensor*, it always operates in a connatural manner with the here-below of Jesus' soul. However, Maritain indicates that the partition separating the two states and two consciousnesses was penetrable at certain moments by Jesus-*viator* through his life of prayer.

It is clear that Maritain wants to maintain the possibility of growth of Jesus-*viator* into the realm of Jesus-*comprehensor* in order to substantiate that the eternal Word, hypostatically united to a human nature, truly "experiences" a human life. Although the here-below of the soul of Jesus-*viator* is comforted by a faint light which

²⁷⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 127.

²⁷¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 96. See also footnotes 13-14 on the same page.

originates in the beatific vision, Maritain insists that Jesus' human existence is otherwise genuinely human. This point is especially important to Maritain's understanding the eternal Word's experience of the Paschal Mystery, where Jesus' conscious awareness gives way at the moment of death to his divinized supraconsciousness, *viator* to the state of *comprehensor*. However, there comes a time in the life of Jesus where this upward penetration of the partition through prayer and the descending comforting of light emanating from the beatific vision is closed off from the here-below consciousness of Jesus-*viator*. Maritain writes:

At that time [the Agony and Passion] Jesus in His prayer could no longer penetrate with His consciousness into the supraconscious paradise of His soul; all experience, through His conscious faculties, of this paradise and of its radiance was refused to Him, it was the night of the spirit at its absolute supreme degree,—at the moment of the Agony as at that of the fourth Word on the Cross: *Ut quid dereliquisti me?*²⁷²

It seems that when Jesus is suffering on the Cross, he is also experiencing in his conscious awareness a “dark night of the soul,” cut off from any direct divine comfort. Maritain has already indicated that the consciousness of Jesus-*viator* only receives a general comforting and infused knowledge in a manner concomitant to his state of *viator* from the radiance of the vision in his divinized supraconsciousness. Beginning with the Agony in the Garden, this comfort and penetration is closed to his conscious awareness. Thus, Jesus enters into the Paschal Mystery in a truly human manner devoid of any special divine comfort, and he experiences death in a connatural manner with the rest of humanity. Nonetheless, while Jesus-*viator* is no longer able to penetrate the partition and enter into the realm of his divinized supraconsciousness, the human experience of agony and suffering is wholly appropriated by the Word. Although the conscious experience of

²⁷² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 134-135.

Jesus-*viator* is closed off from the descending comfort of the divinized supraconsciousness, “the ascending oblique line”²⁷³ of his conscious experiences as *viator* continues to cross the partition to the realm of Jesus’ divinized supraconsciousness. In this way Maritain can truly affirm that the divine Word has suffered and died on the Cross.²⁷⁴

Perhaps an example offered by Maritain will help to make the previous comments clearer concerning the interaction in Jesus between the infraconsciousness, consciousness and supraconsciousness divinized by the beatific vision. Maritain writes:

(Imagine that I am in a cellar and am reading there a book by the light of a candle. To my left, beyond the circle of light of my candle, there is the darkness of the cellar, and if I place my book there I cannot distinguish anything in it, —this is for the infraconscious. And to my right there is a ray of the midday sun which, passing through a window and falling on the surface of some object in the cellar, makes there a zone of dazzling light. If I transfer my book there I can absolutely not read anything there either, I am dazzled by the brightness disproportionate to the strength of my eyes. — This is for the divinized supraconsciousness.)²⁷⁵

The book being read in the light of the candle is tantamount to the consciousness of the reader. To the left of the reader in the darkness of the cellar is that which is below the light of consciousness, the infraconsciousness. To the right of the reader is a bright ray of sunlight which is so radiant that it renders the text unreadable, the divinized supraconsciousness. If the reader places the book in the ray of sunlight, the radiance of the light washes out the text of the book and renders it unreadable. If the blinding light of the beatific vision were not kept separate from the consciousness of Jesus-*viator*, he

²⁷³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 137.

²⁷⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 140. Maritain cites the Second Council of Constantinople’s “scandalous” affirmation that “*Unus de Trinitate mortuus est*” in a human nature (140).

²⁷⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 55-56, footnote 8.

would be unable to experience life in the state of way. Likewise, the infused knowledge he had in his divinized supraconsciousness could only be communicated to his consciousness by using “instrumental concepts formed under the light of the agent intellect.”²⁷⁶

Excurses: Jesus’ Self-Knowledge ... to Unite

It is fitting to conclude this survey of Maritain’s *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* by uniting the various aspects of his theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ by elucidating what Maritain believes Jesus would have been consciously aware of concerning himself. In the realm of the divinized supraconsciousness in the heaven of the soul of Jesus, the knowledge that he has of himself as being a divine person subsisting in a human nature is total and absolute. This knowledge, this evidence means that Jesus does not have the virtue of faith. Maritain writes:

Not having theological faith, it is through the *evidence*,—but *participated*—of the *science of Beatific Vision* that the infused science of Christ caused Him to know the divine things,—His own divinity, His own procession from the Father, His Incarnation, His redemptive Mission, the unity in nature of the three divine Persons, the procession of the Holy Spirit, in short, all the divine Inaccessible which he had to reveal, “tell” to men.²⁷⁷

According to Maritain’s theory, in the heaven of the soul of Jesus, the divinized supraconsciousness under the state of *comprehensor* would include the highest degree of knowledge possible in Jesus’ human intellect. As such, Jesus would not only have divine certainty of all created things but would also have absolute certainty of himself as a

²⁷⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 94.

²⁷⁷ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 104.

divine person, i.e., the second person of the holy Trinity. “Insofar as comprehensor, He knew Himself God through the Vision, *in seeing the divine essence and His own divine Person and the Father with whom He is one.*”²⁷⁸ Through the mediation of infused knowledge, in the divinized supraconsciousness (in the state of *comprehensor*) his created intellect would have been aware of the truth of his divine identity, albeit in vastly different degrees. Recall that Maritain has already indicated, following the scholastics, that the beatific vision is inaccessible to any created intellect and requires some form of mediation in order to be utilized by that intellect. In the state of *comprehensor* and Jesus’ divinized supraconsciousness, the knowledge of his divine person, according to Maritain, would be absolute by virtue of its origin in the beatific vision. But how does this absolute knowledge of himself find its way into the here-below of the soul of Jesus-*viator*?

In the consciousness and here-below of the soul of Jesus, Maritain believes that Jesus’ knowledge of his divine identity would have emerged rather quickly and begun the moment he was aware of himself as an individual being in the world. Maritain does not restrict his theory to trying to explain the intellectual knowledge of Jesus-*viator*. He devotes a special section to Jesus’ consciousness understood in a much broader sense. Maritain first clarifies that consciousness amounts to two kinds of knowledge of self. He writes that the intellectual knowledge that we have of ourselves is not the same as our conscious awareness of ourselves. Intellectual knowledge of self occurs by reflecting on action. Consciousness, however, is “*experimental and perceived (by reversion on acts); this is an obscure knowledge and which of itself is inexpressible in concepts.*”²⁷⁹ Thus we have two kinds of knowledge of ourselves which Maritain clarifies by way of an

²⁷⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 107.

²⁷⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 115.

example. He notes that before he had formed the *conceptual* knowledge of being a man he already had the “obscurely perceived content of the consciousness” of being a man.²⁸⁰ Through a later reflection on this obscure knowledge the agent intellect presents to the intellect the concept of the self *acting* as a man.²⁸¹ Maritain then applies this directly to Jesus. He notes that along with this “obscure and inexpressible” knowledge of himself, Jesus would also experience himself “through the lived experience of His absolute impeccability, of His faultless wisdom, as also through the ineffable memory of that which He had experienced in prayer,—He had consciousness of the fact that He transcended the human condition, and that there was in Him something divine.”²⁸² In his daily *action* Jesus would reflect his divine status without necessarily having this status present in his conscious awareness. Applying Maritain’s personal example to Jesus, being consciously aware of being God is not necessarily the same as being intellectually aware of being God.

Returning to the consciousness of Jesus-*viator*, Maritain indicates that by the time Jesus reached the age of twelve and was found in the Temple by the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph (Luke 2.41-52), Maritain is clear that Jesus “... was in full possession, even conceptual, of His knowledge of the things of God, and of His consciousness of Himself as God.”²⁸³ Addressing the here-below consciousness of Jesus, Maritain writes:

I have already noted that the knowledge through infused science that Jesus had of His own divinity developed during the childhood of Jesus probably very quickly. This is to say that the *consciousness that Jesus had of His own divinity* also developed very quickly in the course of His childhood.

And if this was so, it is not only owing to the natural intuitivity proper to the child, it is also for a more profound reason, because it is

²⁸⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 115.

²⁸¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 115.

²⁸² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 116.

²⁸³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 120.

entirely unthinkable that the fact of *being God* should have one day irrupted into the consciousness of an adolescent who up to that moment would have had consciousness of Himself without being yet informed of such a fact, while on the other hand the idea of God would have already taken form in Him. He would have been simply crushed by such a revelation (before which, besides, He would have taken Himself for a mere man, and,—another impossibility in that which concerns Christ,—would have to that extent been in error).²⁸⁴

Maritain states that Jesus' awareness of his divine identity in his human consciousness originates in his awareness of himself as being a divine person subsisting in a human nature. Maritain writes, "all His human activity, including that of His free will, was the instrument of the divine Word ... just as our activity is the instrument of our created person...and the human consciousness of Jesus held the Word as His own *I* just as our consciousness holds our created person to be our own *I*,"²⁸⁵ adding that "He had thus ... *consciousness* of Himself as of a *divine person*, He had consciousness of being the Word Incarnate."²⁸⁶

While this may seem like a controversial claim to make, recall Maritain's principle of the asymptote as he applies it to growth in the human soul of Jesus under two differing states of *viator* and *comprehensor*. While Jesus experiences the limitations appropriate to any created human nature, he is nonetheless hypostatically united to the divine Word. As such, his human nature is unique because of its union with the Word and also grants him certain privileges particular to his person. The beatific vision is the most obvious privilege unique to the humanity of Jesus under the state of *comprehensor*. According to Maritain's theory, however, as a result of the beatific vision and the corresponding infused knowledge which makes the vision "knowable" in the human

²⁸⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 118-119.

²⁸⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 116, footnote 72.

²⁸⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 117.

intellect of Jesus Christ, at any given point in the asymptote's vertical ascent from birth to death, Jesus would have *the fullness of knowledge and grace possible* at that point along the curve.

With this clarification in mind, Maritain writes, "The knowledge that Christ, insofar as viator, had of His divinity and of His mission and of the other supernatural truths hidden in the glory of God, was the highest knowledge possible of infused science."²⁸⁷ Recall also that for Maritain, the infused knowledge of Jesus-*viator* operates according to his intellectual capacities proper to him at any given point or stage in his life. As a result, Maritain leaves open the possibility of growth in Jesus, including the conscious knowledge he has of himself.²⁸⁸ Maritain writes, "What seems to me, in any case, is that it had already attained its point of perfect maturity at the time when He remained in the Temple,"²⁸⁹ but he immediately adds, "The consciousness that Jesus had of His divinity was to be much higher still at the time of the Last Supper and of the appearance before Caiphas. What I mean is that at twelve years of age, before the Doctors, He had already, with the full consciousness of His divinity, a science of the divine things more perfect and more ample than that of any man here on earth."²⁹⁰ In the here-below of his soul as *viator*, Maritain maintains that Jesus' certain knowledge of himself is the result of infused knowledge stemming from the light of the beatific vision

²⁸⁷ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 114.

²⁸⁸ While Maritain maintains that Jesus continues to grow in knowledge of himself throughout his earthly life, this must be seen in the context of his overall understanding of the dual states of Jesus' soul and his threefold knowledge. Nonetheless, the idea that Jesus could grow in an awareness of himself with age, even in the knowledge of his divine identity, shows the depths of Maritain's Christology. Such a dynamic understanding of human nature is certainly more realistic than one that does not allow growth or change, a rather "flat" view of human nature.

²⁸⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 120.

²⁹⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 120, footnote 75.

and operating within the parameters of his ordinary human knowledge.

In fact, He [Jesus] knew certainly, and in the most perfect manner, His divinity through the Beatific Vision, but the Vision was shut up in the supraconscious paradise of His soul, and, moreover, it was by essence absolutely simple and absolutely *inexpressible* in any idea. It is not, therefore, through the Vision that He could know in the sphere of the here-below of His soul, and know so as to express it to Himself, that He was God. It is on the infused science, itself participating in the evidence of the Vision, that depends this knowledge that Christ as viator had of His divinity (and, at the same time, of His mission).²⁹¹

Maritain's theory of the multi-faceted world of consciousness in Jesus enables him to maintain that, while Jesus-*viator* is aware of his divine identity in his human consciousness, that awareness is still finite and limited (in proportion to the capacity of his human nature) and thus able to increase over time. As has already been stated, this does not mean that at any given time Jesus was not aware of his divine identity. Rather, it affirms that the conscious awareness Jesus has of himself increases in proportion to his experiences and intellectual development. According to Maritain, this increase comes to full fruition when, dying on the Cross, the here-below consciousness of Jesus-*viator* gives way to the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus-*comprehensor*.²⁹² From the moment of death, Jesus' soul is hereafter in the state of *comprehensor* and solely ruled by his divinized supraconsciousness. This brings to an end the possibility of growth in Jesus' human nature, as it would for you or me.

In Maritain's theory of consciousness Jesus is always aware of his divine identity, although in different degrees depending on whether he is referring to the state of Jesus as *comprehensor* (and thus referring to his divinized supraconsciousness) or *viator* (and thus

²⁹¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 107.

²⁹² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 137-138. Maritain states that in death, the partition between the here-below and the heaven of the soul of Jesus vanishes and the soul is immediately ruled by the divinized supraconsciousness proper to the state of Jesus-*comprehensor*.

referring to his consciousness). Even while maintaining real human growth in Jesus' consciousness as *viator*, Maritain firmly maintains that through infused knowledge, he is aware of himself as being a divine person. Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus allows him to concurrently affirm that Jesus is truly God, while at the same time living a truly human existence.

B. Further Works

***The Degrees of Knowledge* (1932)**

The Degrees of Knowledge is considered Maritain's greatest work. As cited earlier, according to McInerny it "remains both his major achievement and a convenient summary of his thought."²⁹³ One would be remiss to enter into a discussion of Maritain's thought without consulting or including *The Degrees of Knowledge* in that discussion. Indeed, Maritain's epistemological tome offers two helpful clarifications to his theory of the consciousness of Christ. However, both of these clarifications, as will be seen, come from the appendices and not the main text itself. The question is, then, how the main text of *The Degrees of Knowledge* relates to the appendices and Maritain's later writings, specifically *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*. Unfortunately, this is a difficult question to answer for the simple reason that even a brief survey of such a large, detailed work is sure to fall short of doing it any real justice and lies outside the stated intention of this work. Fortunately, there is a secondary work that summarizes Maritain's epistemological thought in *The Degrees of Knowledge* in light of his theory of

²⁹³ McInerny, Introduction to Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. G. B. Phelan (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), xiv.

consciousness that we can look to for assistance, James Arraj's "Mysticism, Metaphysics and Maritain."²⁹⁴

Arraj summarizes the progression in Maritain's thought throughout *The Degrees of Knowledge* as being rooted in the fundamental affirmation that being *exists*, and by existing it is able to be *known*.²⁹⁵ Maritain then develops this point to show that through a natural knowledge of things (i.e., being exists) one is led to a metaphysical knowledge of things (i.e., there is more to being than existence). In other words, by affirming that something exists, our "intuition of being" moves from seeing the existence of some thing to a recognition that there is something "more" to that being, its essence.²⁹⁶ Thus Maritain moves his reader from the concrete existence of things to what lies behind them, ultimately coming to God.²⁹⁷ Arraj summarizes Maritain thus:

We have arrived much closer to our goal of understanding Maritain's metaphysical contemplation. It is going to be a contemplation that gazes into the very ontological depths of things where the very what or essence of things shows its deepest face, which is existence. And this existing essence, this existent, draws us further to the center of the mystery of being where God dwells. In the metaphysics of Maritain, as in that of St. Thomas, the question of God is not something added to it from the outside out of some misplaced piety, but it emerges as its absolute center as we pursue the most obvious of facts, the what and that of things, to their final conclusion.²⁹⁸

Arraj further explains that according to Maritain, this metaphysical knowledge of things serves as the basis of both natural and supernatural mysticism. The main difference

²⁹⁴ James Arraj, "Mysticism, Metaphysics, and Maritain: On the Road to the Spiritual Unconscious" (Ph. D. diss., Pontificia Universitate Gregoriana, 1993).

²⁹⁵ Arraj, "Mysticism," 31. Maritain divides *The Degrees of Knowledge* into two parts. The first part examines "The Degrees of Rational Knowledge," and the second "The Degrees of Suprarational Knowledge."

²⁹⁶ Arraj, "Mysticism," 31.

²⁹⁷ Arraj, "Mysticism," 32-33. Cf. Maritain, *Degrees*, 226-232.

²⁹⁸ Arraj, "Mysticism," 42.

between the two is that supernatural mysticism looks at what is concrete in this world—individual beings—through the eyes of faith, while natural mysticism does not.²⁹⁹ More simply, whereas the intellect is able to grasp the existence and the essence of things, it is faith and grace that elevates such knowledge to a mystical contemplation of God.³⁰⁰ Hence Arraj concludes that *The Degrees of Knowledge* begins with knowing things as they are (existence), moves to a metaphysical understanding of things (essences), and then proceeds to the ultimate goal of all human knowing, the contemplation of God.³⁰¹ It is from this basis that one must view all Maritain’s subsequent writings.

So how can we relate Maritain’s epistemological tome to his later writings, in particular *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*? Arraj sees a decisive turn in Maritain’s thinking with the publication of *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. It is at this point that he begins to move from the objective evaluation of knowledge as such to an evaluation of its subjective manifestation, specifically in the artist and poet. Arraj writes, “... but when we reach *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* the emphasis is on the subjectivity of the artist and the creative processes that take place there.”³⁰² This is especially true of the development by Maritain of his psychological theory of the human person, which reaches its most mature expression and development *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*. Maritain has not abandoned his earlier work on epistemology. Rather, he builds on it in his examination of poetic intuition and supraconscious knowing.

²⁹⁹ Arraj, “Mysticism,” 67-68. Cf. Maritain, *Degrees*, 265-266.

³⁰⁰ Arraj, “Mysticism,” 69. Cf. Maritain, *Degrees*, 290-295. Indeed, in Chapter 8 Maritain examines this very point in light of the mystical writings of St. John of the Cross (329-374).

³⁰¹ Arraj, “Mysticism,” 76-77.

³⁰² Arraj, “Mysticism,” 136.

With this brief survey in mind we are contextually better prepared to examine the two clarifications present in the appendices of *The Degrees of Knowledge*.

Even though Maritain's work on epistemology, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, predates *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* by almost three decades, as stated earlier it offers two noteworthy clarifications to Maritain's later theory of the consciousness of Christ. The first clarification *The Degrees of Knowledge* offers Maritain's theory of Jesus' consciousness concerns the manner in which the beatific vision can be known by a created and finite intellect, namely by means of analogous concepts and language. The second clarification concerns the manner in which Maritain seeks to understand the divine person of the Word subsisting in and acting through a human nature in light of St. Thomas' theology and philosophy.³⁰³

As noted previously, in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* Maritain maintains that infused knowledge in the here-below of the soul of Jesus-*viator* utilizes concepts and ideas experientially acquired in order to make intelligible eternal truths emanating from the beatific vision. Infused knowledge in the here-below of the soul of Jesus thus operates in a concurrent manner with his human intellectual capabilities. According to Maritain in his appendices to *The Degrees of Knowledge*, Jesus sees the vision of God (understood in his human intellect by means of infused knowledge) in the heaven of his soul, but nonetheless does not "know" God's essence directly. Rather, Jesus "knows"

³⁰³ The 1954 edition of *The Degrees of Knowledge* included the small supplemental, "Further Elucidations," (458-468) to "Appendix IV: On the Notion of Subsistence."

God's essence in his human intellect through analogy and human concepts.³⁰⁴

Concerning the analogy of being, Maritain writes, "In analogy of attribution there is a *princeps analogatorum* whose notion is included in that of all the other analogates ... because all those analogates are only made known through the diverse relations they have to the supreme analogate [God]."³⁰⁵ While Maritain indicates that anyone can understand the interconnection of things and their relation to the Creator, the effects of sin influence the mind's ability to reason through and know such things. In Jesus, however, the truth of creation as it relates to the Creator is not affected by sin. In this understanding, Jesus' mind is freer, and with the help of infused knowledge, he sees with greatest clarity the interconnection of things in creation as they relate to their Creator. Jesus' unique ability to understand the unity of the created world and its relationship to the Creator is itself related to the particular privilege of having the beatific vision in his human soul under the state of *comprehensor*.

For other members of the human race (under the wages of sin), the analogy of being *may* enable the created intellect to know that "God is" through the analogy of creation and the Creator, but seeing the divine truth of creation and its relationship to God

³⁰⁴ Maritain, *Degrees*, 447, Appendix III. Note well that Maritain is referring to knowledge, not to vision. In the upper realm of the heaven of the soul of Jesus-*comprehensor*, Jesus has the beatific vision and thus "sees" the divine essence. However, although Jesus sees the vision, that is not tantamount to saying that he knows, that is, understands the content of the vision. This is made possible through infused knowledge.

³⁰⁵ Maritain, *Degrees*, 444, Appendix II. Later Maritain states that through the analogy of being, the mind grasps God as the cause of all and as the primal being (453, Appendix III). Maritain holds that the analogy of being is not a simple mental formula that equates knowledge of creation with knowledge of the Creator. Instead, Maritain insists that the intellectual leap from creation to Creator implicit in the analogy of being requires the supernatural aid of grace.

in such a full manner is unique to Jesus alone.³⁰⁶ However, after death it is possible for a created intellect to “see” the beatific vision of God directly, albeit any “knowledge” the mind has comes from infused knowledge, making intellectually accessible what is otherwise inaccessible. In Jesus, however, these two states of experiencing creation and seeing their implicit unity occur at one and the same time.

As a result of this, Maritain states that when Jesus sees the beatific vision in the “sur-conscious or super-conscious,” he has divine certitude of what he sees (since the light of the vision made intelligible through infused knowledge cannot be false). However, in the mode proper to Jesus-*viator*, infused knowledge enables him to know “with *communicable and reflexively conscious knowledge*” his divine identity, mission, creation, etc.³⁰⁷ So how does Jesus communicate the knowledge that he has of the beatific vision mediated through infused knowledge to others? As mentioned previously, whereas the human mind can by analogy come to understand that “God is,” in Jesus such knowledge is already present to him by means of infused knowledge originating in the beatific vision. Note here that the Gospels indicate that in his public ministry, Jesus frequently had recourse to analogous language in order to make divine truths intelligible to others as he understood them in his consciousness and divinized

³⁰⁶ Maritain, *Degrees*, 450-451, Appendix III. Granted, God can illumine the human mind through grace to see the connection, as Maritain notes earlier. However, even this knowledge remains partial and incomplete compared to the unity and totality of the beatific vision.

³⁰⁷ Maritain, *Degrees*, 467-468, Appendix IV.

supraconsciousness.³⁰⁸

In Maritain's view, when one understands Jesus' use of human analogies to convey to others what he knows divinely, one comes to a greater understanding of Jesus' use of parables or even the "Kingdom of Heaven" sayings of Matthew 13. When Jesus declares that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer planting, a mustard seed growing, or yeast leavening, he is translating into finite human language and images infinite truths originating in the beatific vision and present to his mind in the form of infused knowledge. Nonetheless, Maritain is making the point that, while Jesus' analogous language is true, one cannot consider such analogous examples stemming from human conceptual knowledge as being tantamount to a direct understanding of God's essence. In explaining the knowledge we have of God's essence, Maritain writes, "Let us conclude that we should not say, purely and simply: 'We do not know what God is,' but rather, 'We do not know what God is *in Himself*.' Nor should we say purely and simply, 'We know what God is,' but rather, 'We know imperfectly what God is, *without being able to grasp His essence in itself*.'"³⁰⁹

Although in this particular citation Maritain is not speaking of Jesus' awareness, I believe that he would affirm, in a nuanced manner, that it holds true for Jesus' use of analogous language under the state of *viator*. Jesus' created intellect, like any other created intellect, would not have been able to directly grasp the expanse of the divine

³⁰⁸ It is interesting that according to Maritain's theory, the same analogies that Jesus uses to make intelligible to others the heavenly things originating in his divinized supraconsciousness are the same analogies that would make these things intelligible to him in his conscious awareness (blessed with infused knowledge). For Jesus, however, the "radiating light" of the beatific vision affords him divine certitude of the implicit truth of the analogies present to him as *viator*.

³⁰⁹ Maritain, *Degrees*, 453, Appendix III.

essence except through analogous human concepts. Even in the divinized supraconsciousness of the soul of Jesus-*comprehensor*, there would remain an inherent intellectual inability to “know” the divine essence without the assistance of conceptual images. What is peculiar to Jesus as both *viator* and *comprehensor* is that his intellectual knowledge is aided by the light of the beatific vision and thus affords him a greater clarity in understanding the relationship of creation to God and the ability analogously to reveal aspects of the divine to others. Thus, while analogous language is limited and finite, it can help to reveal to created intellects some understanding of God, albeit in a limited, finite manner.

The second point in *The Degrees of Knowledge* that offers some clarification to Maritain’s theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ concerns the way in which Maritain understands Jesus as being the divine person of the Word subsisting in a human nature. Maritain writes:

... the Incarnate Word lives and acts according as He is God, or in virtue of the Divine Nature, within the uncreated Trinity. He lives and acts according as He is man, or by His human nature, among us on earth. In His terrestrial life He has lived and acted in all things by His human nature and its operations—acting also to be sure by His Divine Nature but precisely insofar as it uses, as instrument, the human nature and human operations ... It is by His humanity, or always humanly, always by the exercise of His human operations—moved by the divinity more perfectly than any purely human man could be—that the Son of God has accomplished everything He did here below, has spoken, acted, suffered, accomplished His divine mission.³¹⁰

Throughout *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, Maritain has sought to establish an authentically human theory of consciousness as applied to the human nature of Jesus. At the same time, he respects what he understands to be the unity of the divine person of the

³¹⁰ Maritain, *Degrees*, 467, Appendix IV.

Word to that human nature. Maritain does not deviate from St. Thomas in holding that nature receives (or expresses) the essence of a thing, and that it is the supposit or person who then exercises the nature.³¹¹ In Jesus Christ, however, the eternal Word acts in a different manner according to the mode proper to either the divine or human nature.

A final remark can be made on the subject of the Thomist theory of subsistence or of supposit. It is the supposit that *lives* and *acts* only *by nature*. Hence, it follows that Christ the Person, who is Divine, lives and acts at once in two totally distinct orders: on the one hand, in virtue of the Divine Nature with which it is identical; on the other hand, in virtue of the human nature which it has assumed.³¹²

The human nature of Jesus Christ always operates in a manner connatural to the hypostatic union with the divine person and not as a separate entity artificially joined to the divine nature of the Word. Maritain writes, “Because the subsistence of the Word is an infinite subsistence, It can receive in Itself the human nature of Christ, a created substantial *quo* (without a created personality) which subsists and exists by the Divine Subsistence and the Divine Existence themselves.”³¹³ However, although the human nature is assumed and subsists in the divine person of the eternal Word, when the Word operates through that human nature, he must do so within the confines of that nature’s abilities and limitations. Thus, while the Word’s subsistence is eternal (that is, a divine essence fully in act), as it subsists in the human nature it operates in a manner consistent with the limitations of a nature not fully in act but also in potency. So even though the divine person of the Word can assume a human nature and function according to its limitations, the inverse is not the case, because the finitude of human nature would not allow for an infinite subsistence. In Maritain’s opinion, there is only one personal

³¹¹ Maritain, *Degrees*, 461, Appendix IV.

³¹² Maritain, *Degrees*, 467, Appendix IV.

³¹³ Maritain, *Degrees*, 456, Appendix IV.

existence in Jesus Christ, and that is the eternal Word who also exercises his existence in a human nature.³¹⁴

Maritain is seemingly asserting (in contradiction to theories like Déodat de Basly and other proponents of extreme Antiochene Christologies) that in Jesus, there is a single person who is acting through both the human and divine natures and not two persons acting separately. What has already been made clear in Maritain's theory of consciousness in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* is that there is only one acting subject, the Word, operating in accord with two distinct natures. This point is an essential element to Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ.

In his theory Maritain affirms that there is only one supposit or person (the Word) acting in both a divine and human nature, allowing Maritain to affirm that the Word really "does experience" genuine human activities through that assumed human nature.³¹⁵ Nonetheless, when the divine person of the Word acts in that human nature, he encounters all the limitations proper to a created soul and intellect. This brings into focus the scholastic theory of the threefold knowledge of Jesus and the limitations of the beatific vision and infused knowledge in Jesus' human intellect. It is interesting that in an addition attached to Appendix IV in the 1954 edition of *The Degrees of Knowledge*, one can already see in embryonic form Maritain's fundamental thesis of Jesus' consciousness that will later be laid out in greater detail in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*. Concerning the exchange of knowledge between the divine person of the Word and the assumed human nature Maritain writes:

Hence it follows that the uncreated divine science that He possessed as God did not enter into His human knowledge and His terrestrial life. And

³¹⁴ Maritain, *Degrees*, 463-464, Appendix IV.

³¹⁵ Maritain, *Degrees*, 465-466, Appendix IV.

according as He was man that which pertained to His state as *comprehensor* was reserved, so to say, for heaven by reason of the exigencies of His state as *viator*. Even the share of His human soul in the Divine Life—the beatific vision which it enjoyed here below—remained a paradise above, sealed off from its faculties ... For, indeed, the beatific vision, being of itself strictly ineffable, shone on the highest part of the soul without being expressed in any concept or communicable idea.³¹⁶

As I indicated earlier, Maritain insists that the topic of Jesus' consciousness was one that both he and Raïssa had been thinking about for a long time, and the above-mentioned quote from *The Degrees of Knowledge* shows that the theory articulated by Maritain in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* was already beginning to take form as early as 1954. While these two clarifications from *The Degrees of Knowledge* may seem relatively inconsequential, namely that Jesus' human knowledge is informed by and expresses divine truths through analogous language and concepts, and that there is a single person who acts through both the natures in Jesus, both of these points further elucidate Maritain's theory of consciousness in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*.

In summary it should be noted that Maritain's intention in explicating a theory of knowledge and consciousness in Jesus is not a purely academic endeavor. At the beginning of *The Degrees of Knowledge*, Maritain states that "metaphysics is not the doorway to mystical contemplation. That door is Christ's humanity, for by Him we have been given grace and truth."³¹⁷ In better understanding the humanity of Jesus, one is drawn into a deeper, connatural union with God, something both Jacques and Raïssa sought after their entire lives.

³¹⁶ Maritain, *Degrees*, 467, Appendix IV.

³¹⁷ Maritain, *Degrees*, 13.

Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry (1952)

One of the fundamental questions that Maritain addresses in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* is how the poet or artist is able to synthesize the totality of human experience and create a particular work of art that captures and expresses some mysterious aspect of the created order. In the process of exploring this topic, Maritain continues to build upon the explanation of the spiritual unconscious, which he began in *The Degrees of Knowledge* and brought to full fruition in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*. There are two significant points of synthesis that appear in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* that illuminate his theory of the spiritual unconscious, especially as they relate to his theory of the consciousness of Jesus.

The first point of clarification concerns the way in which Maritain understands the three degrees of consciousness. While he explains in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* the various notions of consciousness, he is far more detailed in his explanations of them in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. Maritain goes to great lengths to explain his understanding of the various states of consciousness, especially supraconsciousness, in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*. The main reason Maritain offers such a detailed explanation of his theory of consciousness is that it is fundamental to his theory of poetic intuition, which we will examine shortly. For the present, however, it is best to let Maritain articulate his theory of the unconscious in his own words.

There are two kinds of unconscious, two great domains of psychological activity screened from the grasp of consciousness: the preconscious of the spirit in its living springs, and the unconscious of blood and flesh, instincts, tendencies, complexes, repressed images and desires, traumatic memories, as constituting a closed or autonomous dynamic whole. I would like to designate the first kind of unconscious by the name of *spiritual* or, for the sake of Plato, *musical* unconscious or preconscious; and the second by the name of *automatic* unconscious or *deaf*

unconscious—deaf to the intellect, and structured into a world of its own apart from the intellect.³¹⁸

What Maritain is here referring to as the “automatic or deaf unconscious,” on the one hand, and the “preconscious of the spirit in its living springs,” on the other, he will later refer to as “infraconsciousness” and “supraconsciousness” in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*. While the automatic, or deaf, unconscious is a fairly straightforward notion and has already been previously examined, his understanding of the preconscious of the spirit requires further explanation. Maritain believes the spiritual unconscious to be the place of intellectual and sensible synthesis along with its being the place of God’s dwelling in the human person. The preconscious of the spirit is rooted in the depths of the human soul where all the soul’s powers, both intellectual and sensible, converge. Although this preconscious of the spirit lies beyond the realm of conscious awareness, it can and does, nonetheless, penetrate into conscious awareness.³¹⁹

Maritain speaks of the preconscious of the spirit as a separate entity from consciousness in a manner consistent with his theory. Maritain discusses the “above” and “below” states thus:

Reason does not only consist of its conscious logical tools and manifestations, nor does the will consist only of its deliberate conscious determinations. Far beneath the sunlit surface thronged with explicit concepts and judgments, words and expressed resolutions or movements of the will, are the sources of knowledge and creativity, of love and suprasensuous desires, hidden in the primordial translucent night of the intimate vitality of the soul. Thus it is that we must recognize the existence of an unconscious or preconscious which pertains to the spiritual powers of the human soul ... a spiritual or musical unconscious which is specifically different from the automatic or deaf unconscious.³²⁰

³¹⁸ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 91-92.

³¹⁹ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 91.

³²⁰ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 94.

Maritain explains this further and likens the synthetic and creative powers of the preconscious of the spirit in the human person to the creative powers of God illuminating the darkness during creation. Maritain writes that we must:

... realize that there exists a deep nonconscious world of activity, for the intellect and the will, from which the acts and fruits of human consciousness and the clear perceptions of the mind emerge, and that the universe of concepts, logical connections, rational discursus and rational deliberation, in which the activity of the intellect takes definite form and shape, is preceded by the hidden workings of an immense and primal preconscious life. Such a life develops in night, but in a night which is translucent and fertile, and resembles that primeval diffused light which was created first, before God made, as the Genesis puts it, “lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night” so as to be “for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years.”³²¹

The preconscious of the spirit is above both the infraconsciousness (the automatic or deaf unconscious) and conscious awareness, yet it does not operate independently from either one of them.³²² Everything sensible and intellectual, whether explicitly or implicitly acquired, becomes a part of the material of the preconscious of the spirit.³²³ Thus, things below conscious awareness in the infraconsciousness and things present within the conscious awareness both “feed” into and sustain the preconscious of the spirit.

Maritain understood that his theory of consciousness was not, in fact, verifiable, although he considered it to be a probable philosophical theory. In explaining his theory of consciousness, he has recourse to St. Thomas’ epistemology, which serves as both an analogy to and an integral part of his theory. Maritain points out that, in St. Thomas, the intellect is a spiritual reality where the Knowing Intellect receives images and such from the senses (as spiritual “germs”) and are then transformed by the Illuminating Intellect

³²¹ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 94.

³²² Maritain indicates in *Creative Intuition* that all three levels of consciousness operate at the same time and interpenetrate one another to various degrees (92).

³²³ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 242- 243.

into concepts.³²⁴ The Knowing Intellect and the Illuminating Intellect, according to Maritain, are philosophical notions that are solidly grounded within the greater context of St. Thomas' epistemological system but remain, nonetheless, speculative explanations of human knowing. Maritain uses this as an example and relates it to what he is doing on a much grander scale concerning his theory of consciousness, especially the preconscious of the spirit. Thus, Maritain writes,

... we possess in ourselves the Illuminating Intellect, a spiritual sun ceaselessly radiating, which activates everything in intelligence, and whose light causes all our ideas to arise in us, and whose energy permeates every operation of our mind. And this primal source of light cannot be seen by us; it remains concealed in the unconscious of the spirit.

Furthermore, it illuminates with its spiritual light the images from which our concepts are drawn. And this very process of illumination is unknown to us, it takes place in the unconscious; and often these very images, without which there is no thought, remain also unconscious or scarcely perceived in the process, at least for the most part.³²⁵

Maritain adds:

Well, if there is in the spiritual unconscious a nonconceptual or preconceptual activity of the intellect even with regard to the birth of concepts, we can with greater reason assume that such a nonconceptual activity of the intellect, such a nonrational activity of reason, in the spiritual unconscious, plays an essential part in the genesis of poetry and poetic inspiration. Thus a place is prepared in the highest parts of the soul, in the primeval translucent night where intelligence stirs the images under the light of the Illuminating Intellect.³²⁶

What makes the preconscious of the spirit different from the Illuminating Intellect is that it is not just an intellectual operation but includes the totality of the human subject, intellectual and emotional, things consciously present to the knower along with things that remain hidden in the unconscious. Although done in a more subtle manner than was

³²⁴ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 97-98.

³²⁵ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 99.

³²⁶ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 100.

the case in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, Maritain uses the modern understanding of consciousness to push further one or more of St. Thomas' thesis.

In the current example, however, Maritain writes, "My contention, then, is that everything depends, in the issue we are discussing, on the recognition of the existence of a spiritual unconscious, or rather, preconscious, of which Plato and the ancient wise men were well aware, and the disregard of which in favor of the Freudian unconscious alone is a sign of the dullness of our times."³²⁷ As we will show momentarily, one must understand Maritain's theory of the spiritual unconscious in order to understand his theory of poetic intuition, the latter being rooted in the former. To summarize then, according to Maritain the preconscious of the spirit (what he will later call supraconsciousness) is that place where all the powers of the human soul converge, the intellectual, imaginative, and sensual.³²⁸ From this convergence springs poetic intuition, our second point.

The second point of clarification concerns the manner in which poetic or creative intuition emerges from the unconscious of the poet, bringing into consciousness things which were previously outside the realm of conscious awareness.³²⁹ This point, it seems to me, is extremely important for understanding how the infused knowledge of Jesus-*comprehensor* comes to be known in the consciousness of Jesus-*viator*. Maritain's theory of poetic intuition is rooted in the recesses of the preconscious of the spirit. Maritain writes, "In poetic intuition objective reality and subjectivity, the world and the whole of the soul, coexist inseparably. At that moment sense and sensation are brought

³²⁷ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 91.

³²⁸ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 107.

³²⁹ For the sake of simplicity all future references to "creative or poetic intuition" will hereafter simply be referred to as "poetic intuition."

back to the heart, blood to spirit, passion to intuition. And through the vital though nonconceptual actuation of the intellect all the powers of the soul are also actuated in their roots.”³³⁰ This intuition, which occurs in the preconscious of the spirit, “... is both creative and cognitive, can be considered especially either as creative, and therefore, with respect to the engendering of the work, or as cognitive, and therefore with respect to *what is grasped* by it.”³³¹ While it seems that poetic intuition by name is geared towards some aspect of artistic making, Maritain indicates that poetic intuition is also a grasping by the poet of some mysterious aspect of creation within the poet’s soul. Maritain writes:

Poetic intuition is directed toward concrete existence as connatural to the soul pierced by a given emotion: that is to say, each time toward some singular existent, toward some complex of concrete and individual reality, seized in the violence of its sudden self-assertion and in the total unicity of its passage in time ... poetic intuition does not stop at this given existent; it goes beyond, and infinitely beyond. Precisely because it has no conceptualized object, it tends and extends to the infinite, it tends toward all the reality.³³²

In an instant of poetic intuition, what occurs in the preconscious of the spirit is not just an existential grasp of this or that thing, but is also a metaphysical glimpse into the objective reality of this or that thing as it stands in relation to the Creator. “Things are not only what they are. They ceaselessly pass beyond themselves, and give more than they have, because from all sides they are permeated by the activating influx of the Prime Cause.”³³³ Such knowledge, however, is not tantamount to a mathematical formula that

³³⁰ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 124.

³³¹ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 125.

³³² Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 126.

³³³ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 127.

can be explained and demonstrated in a cogent manner. Rather, poetic intuition is a more obscure but nonetheless real knowledge.³³⁴

Maritain writes, “Thus poetic experience is, emerging on the verge of the spiritual preconscious, a state of obscure, unexpressed and sapid knowing—the expression of which, when later on it will come about in a work, will also be sapid.”³³⁵ While it is clear that everybody is not an artist or a poet, Maritain insists that although not everybody experiences poetic intuition they have the ability within them. In fact, Maritain rather forcefully asserts that most people “murder” the creative or poetic capacity and inclination within themselves, leaving only a select few to experience it.³³⁶

Perhaps the reason most people fail to experience poetic intuition has more to do with the metaphysical aspect Maritain attaches to it than anything else. He writes that the preconscious of the spirit and poetic intuition

... tends from the very start to a kind of revelation ... but to a humble revelation, virtually contained in a small lucid cloud of inescapable intuition, both of the Self of the poet and of some particular flash of reality in the God-made universe; a particular flash of reality bursting forth in its unforgettable individuality, but infinite in its meanings and echoing capacity.³³⁷

In grasping some inexplicable aspect of creation, the poet also grasps his own mysterious relationship with creation and the Creator. Understood in this manner, the poetic spark is not just a glimpse into the deeper reality of creation but into the deeper reality of the poet’s experience of God in creation. Thus, we see that, according to Maritain, poetic intuition occurs in the recesses of the preconscious of the spirit with those who are docile

³³⁴ Maritain likens poetic intuition and the knowledge that comes from it with connatural knowledge. See *Creative Intuition*, 117.

³³⁵ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 239.

³³⁶ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 123.

³³⁷ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 115.

and open to the metaphysical realities of the world around them. While the preconscious of the spirit (later recast as supraconsciousness) is that aspect within the human soul where the soul's faculties and powers come together, poetic intuition is that moment when they allow for a glimpse into the inner-connection and depths contained within the poet himself and the world around him.

Although the following two quotes are long, it is best to allow Maritain to summarize these two points, the preconscious of the spirit and poetic intuition, from *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, both of which help to clarify aspects of his thought in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*. The first quote captures in a succinct manner his theory of the threefold understanding of consciousness, by considering images:

... there are for the images three possible states of existential conditions. First, they can be part of the "externals of the imagination"—I mean engaged in the ordinary, quotidian, and more or less superficial life of the imagination as centered on sense perception and the needs of our conscious daily activity, as well as of our rational knowledge of the external world (Category number one). Second, they can be part of what we called the automatic or deaf unconscious, where they are cut off from the intellect and engaged in the structures and dynamism of the separate world in which instincts, repressed memories and tendencies, dreams, and libido lead a life of their own (Category number two). Third, they can be part of the preconscious life of the intellect in which they are illuminated by the Illuminating Intellect—either to be used in the genesis of concepts and abstract ideas or to be stirred and activated by poetic intuition (Category number three).³³⁸

Finally, according to Maritain poetic intuition originates in the preconscious of the spirit and makes it possible for the poet to grasp the deeper reality of this or that thing. In a very limited manner some of that intuition emerges from the depths of the preconscious of the spirit into the poet's consciousness. Maritain writes:

Poetic intuition is born in this preconscious, preconceptual activity; it involves an obscure, emotive knowledge, ineffable and

³³⁸ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 325-326.

unconceptualizable in itself. It stirs the intuitive pulsions, both imaginal and emotional, of which I spoke at the beginning, so as to make its mysterious content known or seen in a manner, and brought to consciousness. The images thus stirred are themselves in a state of fluidity—not organized but movable by every wind—and part of the preconscious life of the spirit.³³⁹

From this one can see that for Maritain poetic intuition is a more fluid and abstract knowledge. When applied to Jesus the presence of this kind of non-conceptual knowledge through an instance of poetic intuition would directly influence and effect his actions and encounters with other people. Understood in this manner poetic intuition would also be revealed through the creative actions of the knower. These clarifications allow us to view Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus with more clarity. Before moving to Polanyi's epistemology and theory of tacit knowledge, a synthesis of the previous sections will bring greater clarity to Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Christ.

C. *Synthesis*

Maritain's theory of poetic intuition is directly related to and springs forth from his theory of the preconscious of the spirit (i.e., supraconsciousness) and is of particular interest to our examination of his theory of the consciousness of Christ. Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ has already been examined, including his theory that Jesus' supraconsciousness is unique in him because it is divinized by the light of the beatific vision. It has also been noted that the infused knowledge of Jesus-*comprehensor* and the infused knowledge of Jesus-*viator* are both rooted in the beatific

³³⁹ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 328.

vision. Maritain indicates that infused knowledge in Jesus-*viator* operates in a manner consistent with genuine intellectual and personal growth. Thus, he postulates that at any given point in Jesus' life, infused knowledge operates in a manner connatural with his human intellect and thus grants Jesus the fullness of knowledge possible at any particular point throughout his life, while that knowledge remains limited in mode and extent.

It is in regard to this particular point that Maritain's theory of poetic intuition further clarifies his theory of the divinized supraconsciousness in Jesus. While in Jesus the preconscious of the spirit is divinized and thus has the highest possible degree of clarity, what would otherwise be a rare illumination of poetic intuition is, unimpeded by sin and illuminated by the beatific vision, an intense existential and metaphysical clarity in the supraconsciousness of Jesus-*viator*. In the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus-*comprehensor*, there would be an absolute clarity for Jesus of all things, both as things exist in creation as a part of the created order (existentially) and as they exist in creation concerning their ultimate end and relationship with the Creator (metaphysically).

It has already been pointed out that in Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ, what is in his divinized supraconsciousness is mediated to the consciousness of Jesus-*viator* by infused knowledge. Even so, while poetic intuition would function in Jesus-*viator* according to a limited and finite human intellect, it would still operate in a manner far superior to that of any other human intellect. The reason for this is twofold. First, Maritain has already indicated that the light of the beatific vision, present in the intellect of Jesus, penetrates the partition separating the supraconscious and the consciousness in Jesus. Consequently, the creative or poetic spark within Jesus' supraconsciousness would be accessible to the consciousness of Jesus-*viator* (although in

a limited manner).³⁴⁰ The second reason that this would be unique to Jesus is that, unlike other human beings, Jesus is sinless. Whereas Maritain indicates that, in human beings, poetic intuition is inhibited by the egoism of the poet,³⁴¹ in the sinless God-man there would be no such egoism. Hence, in the consciousness of Jesus, who lives his life completely for the Father and for others, poetic intuition would function freely and without the limitations brought about by sin. Thus, in the consciousness of Jesus-*viator* the existential and metaphysical grasp of things initiated by poetic intuition in his divinized supraconsciousness would penetrate the partition between the two states and grant to him the greatest clarity possible of this or that thing.

Viewing Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* in light of his epistemological theory in *The Degrees of Knowledge* and his theory of art and poetry in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, we are better able to discern the interaction of the threefold knowledge of Jesus within his conscious awareness. It is also clearer to see that the natural progression of Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ, united with his theory of poetic intuition, establishes Jesus as *the foremost poet*, something his wife Raïssa would certainly have appreciated. What remains to be seen is how Polanyi's theory of tacit knowledge helps clarify the manner in

³⁴⁰ Maritain has indicated that the same division holds true for human beings as well. When a creative or poetic intuition occurs in the preconscious of the spirit, it does not automatically well up in to the consciousness of the individual except in an obscure and limited manner. He also indicates that when it does cross the partition and enter into the consciousness of the poet, it is extremely difficult to conceptualize and make known to others. While Maritain considers Dante to be a rare example of someone who could easily conceptualize the things that originate in his preconscious of the spirit, even he did so in a limited manner. What he expressed in his poetry was but a fragment of what was originally in his preconscious of the spirit. Therefore, it is no surprise that in the here-below of Jesus' soul poetic intuition would function in a similar manner.

³⁴¹ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 145.

which Jesus-*viator* grasps and understands in his consciousness and knowledge those things that originate in his divinized supraconsciousness.

Chapter 3

Polanyi's Theory of Personal Knowledge

Introduction

Although Michael Polanyi began his career as a physical chemist, his best known intellectual impact occurred during the latter years of his life while writing philosophy. His epistemological theory of tacit knowledge is particularly relevant to our study. According to Polanyi, tacit knowledge refers to those aspects of human knowing that form a base upon which all our explicit knowledge is built. In some cases, the underlying tacit knowledge we have is able to be brought into our explicit awareness, but in many instances our tacit knowledge remains cognitively unspecifiable. In either case, Polanyi considers what we know tacitly to be real knowledge. It is Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing that we intend to apply to the person of Jesus Christ in light of Maritain's Christology in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*.

Polanyi's views on matters of human awareness and knowledge bear directly upon the question of Jesus Christ's capacity to know himself, as well as our capacity to contemplate his self knowledge. Polanyi's view of scientific knowledge (and his critique of the reductionist methodologies of positivism) sets up his more comprehensive analysis of epistemological questions. This in turn leads to a refined perspective of human psychology which has a great bearing on our inquiry into Christ's special case of self knowledge. Polanyi's epistemological and psychological inquiries lead us directly to a reconstruction of Maritain's aesthetic sense of self awareness, and are therefore an essential insight into the question of Jesus Christ's self awareness.

Before turning to Polanyi's own works, we will first examine an article by Avery Cardinal Dulles on the possibility of using Polanyi's epistemology in theology. Second, it is important to understand the context in which Polanyi developed his epistemological theory. The formation of his epistemology bears the distinct mark of uniting his profession as a scientist with his later writings as a philosopher. As will be shown in the second section of this chapter, Polanyi developed his theory of tacit knowing in response to the ideology of positivistic science on the one hand, and on the other hand in explicating the freedom of scientific inquiry from external forces, namely the Marxist state.

Once we have established the background from which Polanyi developed his theory of tacit knowledge, the third section of this chapter will examine that theory more closely. We will show how the theory of tacit knowing developed in Polanyi's thought from a peripheral role to a more primary role in his epistemology. Finally, several of Polanyi's examples will be presented for clarity along with a synthesis of Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing.

A. Polanyian Epistemology and Theology

The stated purpose of this work is to utilize Polanyi's epistemological theory in order to clarify and further some aspects of Maritain's Christology in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*. Thus we intend to apply Polanyi's epistemology and see if it helps bring clarity to Maritain's theory of the consciousness and knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ. It is not the purpose of this work, however, to apply Polanyi's epistemology

or thought to theology in general or to any area of theological studies other than Christology. While there are several works that have utilized different aspects of Polanyi's thought including his epistemology in various theological contexts, it is not our intention to present or evaluate any one of them here.³⁴² Rather, this section intends to show that Polanyi's epistemological thought is being creatively employed in explicating theological topics and does, in fact, hold future possibilities for theological studies as well. An article by Avery Dulles, "Faith, Church, and God: Insights from Michael Polanyi,"³⁴³ will guide us through this point.

The first point that Dulles makes concerning the potential for using Polanyi's epistemology in theological studies is Polanyi's emphasis on the fiduciary aspect of human knowing, or the fact that all knowing requires an act of faith. Why is this an

³⁴² Of particular note is Joan Crewdson, *Christian Doctrine in the Light of Michael Polanyi's Theory of Personal Knowledge: A Personalist Theology* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellon Press, 1994); John V. Apczynski, *Doers of the Word: Toward a Foundational Theology Based on the Thought of Michael Polanyi* (Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977); and Martin X. Moleski, S.J., *Personal Catholicism: The Theological Epistemologies of John Henry Newman and Michael Polanyi* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000). The basis of Crewdson's work is the indwelling of the Second Person of the Trinity with the humanity of Jesus (286, 290-291), who is then able to transcend his humanity and reach out beyond himself to others (358). Thus, God acts in a personal manner with humanity. Moleski's work shows the similarity between Newman's "illative sense" and Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing. "While Newman treated the tacit dimension as a matter of fact, Polanyi attempted to develop a theory to account for this fact" (96). The final chapter of Moleski's work is fruitful in that he applies Polanyi's epistemological theory to theological issues such as belief in dogmatic theology, revealed religion and the papacy. Finally, Apczynski's work applies Polanyi's notion that in order to truly understand religious belief one must dwell within a religious tradition (174-175). I would note as an aside two theologians in particular whose works and thought have been influenced by Polanyi. One is the Reformed Barthian theologian Thomas Torrance and the other is the Roman Catholic Avery Dulles.

³⁴³ Avery Dulles, "Faith, Church, and God: Insights from Michael Polanyi," *Theological Studies* 45, (1984), 537-550. On 537, footnote 1 Dulles lists theologians who have been influenced by Polanyi but does not cite any of their works. On the same page, footnote 2 he lists the names of those theologians who have written dissertations on Polanyi's thought, citing two works in particular. Dulles addresses three areas where he believes Polanyi's thought can aid theology. Of these three only the first, "Faith and Revelation," involves the application of Polanyi's epistemology. As a result we will only be citing from this first section.

important point? “If this thesis is true, theology, as the work of faith seeking understanding, is not an anomaly among the cognitive disciplines. Religious ideas are acquired, developed, tested, and reformed by methods at least analogous to those pursued in the natural and social sciences.”³⁴⁴ Hence while science evaluates the various physical aspects of creation (i.e., chemistry, biology, etc.), theology addresses the teleological purpose behind creation. In this context the hard sciences and theology do not sit in radical opposition to one another. Rather, they deal with different aspects of the same reality. In both cases, however, the fundamental claims of both require an assent of faith, a belief in the premises that underlie the truth claims of either science or theology. In his introduction to Moleski’s *Personal Catholicism*, Dulles writes, “Polanyi ... mounted a massive critique of the ‘critical program’ in science. In its place he sought to erect a ‘fiduciary program,’ which admitted the priority of belief over all other forms of knowledge.”³⁴⁵ Dulles adds:

He [Polanyi] noted that the great scientific discoveries are regularly made by reliance on antecedent intimations, and are transmitted to others by the personal trust that disciples place in the authority of their masters or that of the scientific community. These great insights, I realized, could be transferred to theological questions such as the nature of prophetic insight, the importance of discipleship, and the authority of tradition. Religious knowledge, I concluded, advances and perpetuates itself by methods akin to those that Polanyi attributes to the scientific enterprise.³⁴⁶

When it is seen in this manner, Dulles notes that not only “is this Polanyian thesis supportive of the credibility of religious statements,” but it also “opens up rich

³⁴⁴ Dulles, “Faith, Church and God,” 537.

³⁴⁵ Dulles, Introduction to Martin X. Moleski, S.J., *Personal Catholicism: The Theological Epistemologies of John Henry Newman and Michael Polanyi* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), x.

³⁴⁶ Dulles, Introduction to Moleski, *Personal Catholicism*, ix.

possibilities for theology to profit from the methodology of the natural and social sciences.”³⁴⁷

A second aspect of Polanyi’s thought which is helpful for theology, according to Dulles, is the application of tacit knowing to apologetics. Dulles indicates that arguing for the truth of Christianity from certain premises, for example the reality of miracles or the divinity of Jesus Christ, is not likely to inspire faith in unbelievers. Focusing on one particular subsidiary aspect of Christianity is no more likely to inspire faith in the whole of Christianity than learning the alphabet will cause one to understand the meaning of a book. The goal of Christian apologetics is to help an individual to reevaluate his or her commitments in light of the whole of the Christian faith. Hence it is “useful for distinguishing between authentic grounds for belief on the one hand, and fraud, illusion, and fanaticism on the other.”³⁴⁸ Through the integration of the numerous subsidiary elements of faith, one comes to believe in God and may also change his personal religious commitment. “In the last analysis, we believe because we responsibly decide to do so on the basis of clues whose existence or evidential force cannot be fully specified.”³⁴⁹ It would seem, then, that the goal of Christian apologetics, and I would add catechesis, is not to “prove” theological statements but rather to show how individual aspects come to bear on some focal aspect of theology, i.e., the Church, Christology and the like, and enable the believer to assent to them. This aspect of Polanyi’s thought is particularly helpful to theology in two ways.

First, it acts as a reminder and a catalyst to explore and understand the subsidiary

³⁴⁷ Dulles, “Faith, Church, and God,” 538.

³⁴⁸ Dulles, “Faith, Church, and God,” 538.

³⁴⁹ Dulles, “Faith, Church, and God,” 538.

elements that go into our focal awareness of any particular theological or dogmatic teaching. Secondly, and this is a very important issue, Polanyi's epistemology establishes that "we know more than we can tell." Applied to theology we can understand that while we are able to concentrate our focal awareness on Jesus Christ, for example, there is far more to knowing him than we could ever tell. The relationship between the believer and Jesus can never fully be explicated or understood by memorizing theological statements. As much as we might learn about Jesus he remains, by and large, a mystery to us. Polanyi's epistemology allows us to comfortably maintain a balance between knowledge and mystery in theology.

Dulles' third and final point about how Polanyi's epistemology can benefit theology concerns Polanyi's understanding of scientific discovery modeled upon the Pauline scheme of faith, works and grace. "This three-step analysis of discovery can, I believe, be profitably transferred to divine revelation."³⁵⁰ In particular, Dulles notes that when this understanding of discovery is applied in a religious context, the one who receives some kind of revelation does not always require further confirmation. The discovery of any given religious truth or revelation is validated by the discovering impulse and "further supported by their inherent intellectual beauty."³⁵¹ Dulles insists that this point is particularly important because it lends credence to personal belief. Citing St. Augustine, Pascal, Newman, de Lubac and Rahner, Dulles indicates that all of these theologians believed in some form of anticipatory knowledge of God. What exactly does this mean? Basically, in order to discover God there must be some inner anticipatory knowledge of God already present in the believer's subsidiary knowledge,

³⁵⁰ Dulles, "Faith, Church, and God," 539.

³⁵¹ Dulles, "Faith, Church, and God," 539.

which is drawn out through the discovery process. Thus we see that Polanyi's epistemological insight regarding discovery is useful in understanding not only revelation but also the substantiation of personal belief. While we may not be able to demonstrate all the subsidiary aspects that contribute to belief, it does not make our belief any less credible. It merely demonstrates the presence of subsidiary knowledge in our focal religious affirmations.

Dulles' appraisal of the possibility of using Polanyi's epistemology in theology is mentioned here in order to demonstrate the feasibility of applying Polanyi to theological issues. Indeed, Dulles writes that "It would be impossible to understand my own theological contributions, such as they are, without being aware of my indebtedness to Newman and Polanyi."³⁵² There remains, however, the issue of Polanyi's personal religious beliefs and their impact on understanding his writings. Moleski writes:

Because Polanyi was very reserved about his religious commitments, it is sometimes difficult to determine exactly where he stood on theological issues. There are ambiguities in his writings which allow strong theistic interpretations (Gelwick, Scott, Torrance, Apczynski, Dulles, and others) as well as atheistic interpretations (Grene, Prosch, Wetherick, Weightman, and others).³⁵³

While there are very divergent opinions as to Polanyi's personal beliefs, it is not necessary to hold the same religious beliefs as Polanyi in order to utilize his epistemological theory of tacit knowing. Moleski makes this clear when he writes, "In affirming Newman's view of the real apprehension of and assent to the dogmas of God, Trinity, revelation, I argue that one may have an epistemology like Polanyi's (as Newman did) but not share his theology."³⁵⁴ It may seem strange that while Polanyi may

³⁵² Dulles, Introduction to Moleski, *Personal Catholicism*, ix-x.

³⁵³ Moleski, *Personal Catholicism*, 142.

³⁵⁴ Moleski, *Personal Catholicism*, 142.

not have explicitly expressed religious belief, he nonetheless articulated an epistemology that upheld forms of knowledge that cannot necessarily be explicitly proven, namely religious truths. Colin Grant writes that “the theological significance of Polanyi’s writings consists precisely in the fact that he offers a way of thinking theologically in a culture which has all but lost that ability through the triumph of the positivistic perspective ... [which] tends to depreciate belief because of the premium it places on knowledge in the sense of formalizable factuality.”³⁵⁵ Polanyi may not have been a religious believer in the Christian sense of the word, but his epistemological theory certainly allows for the validation of theological claims. It seems clear then that Polanyi’s epistemological theory of tacit knowing has numerous uses for theology and this work in particular.

B. Origins of Polanyi’s Epistemology

Before moving into an examination of Polanyi’s theory of tacit knowing, it is important to understand the historical context in which his epistemological theory developed. In so doing, the reader is able to understand more clearly Polanyi’s epistemological theory through an understanding of the controversies from which it emerged. At the same time this also allows the reader to see the gradual transformation of Polanyi the scientist into Polanyi the philosopher. What events, then, precipitated the articulation of Polanyi’s epistemological theory of tacit knowing? The answer is twofold. On the one hand, Polanyi’s theory developed in response to the shortcomings of

³⁵⁵ Colin Grant, "Dynamic Orthodoxy: A Polanyian Direction for Theology," *Studies in Religion* 17, no. 4 (1988), 416.

positivistic science. On the other hand, Polanyi's theory emerged in response to the planning of scientific research, specifically in Soviet Russia.

Polanyi believed that the theory of positivistic science amounted to a "philosophical prejudice." According to the positivistic model of science, only those things which can be experimentally tested and confirmed are "facts." Anything that is unable to be tested and confirmed by experiment lies outside the realm of scientific "fact" and thus cannot be designated as "truth" in the strictest sense of the word. Polanyi indicates that although the positivistic understanding of objectivity in science is widely held as the goal of scientific research, the reality is that all scientists are personally involved in the research they do and the experiments they choose to perform. Thus the goal of scientific research is objective knowledge of the world, but that knowledge is colored by the subjectivity of the individual scientist. Concerning this Polanyi writes,

Yet the prevailing conception of science, based on the disjunction of subjectivity and objectivity, seeks—and must seek at all costs—to eliminate from science such passionate, personal, human appraisals of theories, or at least to minimize their function to that of a negligible by-play. For modern man has set up as the ideal of knowledge the conception of natural science as a set of statements which is "objective" in the sense that its substance is entirely determined by observation, even while its presentation may be shaped by convention. This conception, stemming from a craving rooted in the very depths of our culture, would be shattered if the intuition of rationality in nature had to be acknowledged as a justifiable and indeed essential part of scientific theory.³⁵⁶

What Polanyi seeks to accomplish in his tacit epistemology is a finer balance between the relationship of reality (i.e., objectivity) and the role of the knower who seeks to know that reality (i.e., subjectivity). In effect, Polanyi recognizes that all scientific research and experimentation involves the personal commitments and decisions of the individual

³⁵⁶ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 15-16.

scientist and is not, therefore, strictly “objective.” In other words, while the focal conclusion of some piece of scientific research may authentically grasp some aspect of reality, there are numerous subsidiary components of that knowledge which are subjectively determined. Polanyi insists, however, that his tacit theory was neither objective nor subjective, but in fact, *personal*.

I think we may distinguish between the personal in us, which actively enters into our commitments, and our subjective states, in which we merely endure our feelings. This distinction establishes the conception of the *personal*, which is neither subjective nor objective. In so far as the personal submits to requirements acknowledged by itself as independent of itself, it is not subjective; but in so far as it is an action guided by individual passions, it is not objective either. It transcends the disjunction between subjective and objective.³⁵⁷

Thus one of the goals that Polanyi’s tacit theory seeks to achieve is to bridge the “disjunction” that positivistic science places between the objective and the subjective.

A second question that Polanyi sought to answer in response to positivistic science was an adequate explanation of discovery. This will be discussed in more detail later, but a brief explanation on this point is in order. Based on his personal experience, Polanyi knew that not all scientific “facts” could be experimentally proven. Recall that Polanyi’s doctoral dissertation was initially rejected because he could not substantiate his conclusions.³⁵⁸ Nonetheless, in time his theory was able to be tested and confirmed as true. That he had discovered and knew some aspect of reality without being able to prove his theory made him realize that a scientist could have real knowledge of something that he could not explain fully. Polanyi realized that the process of discovery was filled with numerous unspecifiable aspects. He believed that his philosophy of science, in particular

³⁵⁷ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 300.

³⁵⁸ See Chapter 1, 43, footnote 147.

his epistemological theory of tacit knowing, better explained these unspecifiable aspects of knowledge not accounted for by the positivistic model of science. While Polanyi was concerned to show that there is more to knowledge than the positivist scientific method seemingly allowed, his epistemological theory also developed out of his confrontation with the Marxist ideological control of scientific research current to his historical setting.

The state control and planning of scientific research was not limited to Soviet Russia or communist countries alone but also had its proponents in England in the 1930s and 1940s.³⁵⁹ In response to the movement for planned science, Polanyi helped found “The Society for Freedom in Science” and also joined another group dedicated to social and religious issues, “The Moot.”³⁶⁰ In a private letter to one of the co-founders of the Society, John Baker, an Oxford zoologist, Polanyi indicated that the founding of the Society was the decisive turning point in his life from science to philosophy.³⁶¹ The founding of the Society acted as a catalyst for Polanyi to begin writing about epistemological questions within the context of the defense of pure science. It was in defending pure science from planned science that Polanyi “became aware of the weakness of the position I was defending,”³⁶² and, that he did not have an adequate philosophy of science.

³⁵⁹ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 182-185.

³⁶⁰ Martin X. Moleski, S.J., *Personal Catholicism: The Theological Epistemologies of John Henry Newman and Michael Polanyi* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000) incorrectly dates the founding of The Society for the Freedom of Science as 1938 (52). Moleski is following Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery*, who does not clearly distinguish the origin of the idea for such a society from its actual founding. In any case both works are incorrect. The idea for the Society was presented to Polanyi in the fall of 1940, with its official organization occurring in the summer of 1941. See Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 183-184.

³⁶¹ Scott and Moleski, *Michael Polanyi*, 184.

³⁶² Polanyi, *Science, Faith and Society*, 9.

In planned science, the state attempted to eliminate the notions of “pure” and “practical” science. Science was practiced with the express intention of serving the ideology of the state, namely dialectical materialism, and this forced scientists strictly to explore issues of practical concern only. Science pursued for the sake of knowledge alone (pure science) was abandoned as merely a reflection of class struggle. Thus, the underlying principle of the freedom of the individual scientist to pursue the truth was replaced in Soviet Russia with the understanding that all scientific research must conform to the ideological vision of the state. Polanyi responded to what he saw occurring in Soviet Russia by articulating a philosophy of science that took into account the necessity of the freedom of the individual scientist and the authority of the larger scientific community to direct research accordingly.

The importance of Polanyi’s encounter with Marxism can be seen in the development of his epistemological thinking in two ways. First, it caused him to articulate in a more precise manner a philosophy of science that, while taking into account the authority of the scientific community, still upheld the freedom of the individual scientist to choose and do independent research. Second, while writing about the freedom of the individual scientist, Polanyi was also working out his epistemological theory of tacit knowing in order to explain the personal dimension that is involved in all scientific discoveries, something noted previously.

In defending the freedom of science and explicating a scientific epistemology based on the intuition of the individual scientist, Polanyi began directing his thought more and more toward human knowing in general. We can see that in responding to the positivist theory of science and in highlighting a scientific epistemology based on the

intuition of the individual scientist, two important aspects of tacit knowing had already emerged in Polanyi's thought. In response to the positivists, Polanyi demonstrates that "we know more than we can tell," and in response to the Marxist control of science, he indicates that the freedom of research (and not state control) is the basis of genuine scientific discovery. By the end of the 1940's, Polanyi began to expand these ideas into a more comprehensive epistemological system based on his theory of "tacit knowledge."

C. "Tacit Knowledge"

Personal Knowledge (1958)

While Polanyi was defending the freedom of science and beginning to articulate his theory of tacit knowing during the 1940s, it was the opportunity to give the Gifford Lectures at Aberdeen (1951-1952) which enabled Polanyi to focus his attention solely on epistemological questions.³⁶³ The Gifford Lectures were eventually published as *Personal Knowledge*, considered to be Polanyi's *magnum opus*.³⁶⁴ He continued writing on epistemological themes after its publication, however, and by his own admission had

³⁶³ For a detailed account of the development of Polanyi's epistemological theory in light of scientific and cultural issues, see Prosch, *Michael Polanyi*, Part I "Diagnostics," 13-45. The reader should note that while Polanyi was explicating his epistemological theory, it remains laden with scientific examples. Helmut Kuhn, "Personal Knowledge and the Crisis of the Philosophical Tradition," in *Intellect and Hope: Essays in the Thought of Michael Polanyi*, ed. Thomas A. Langford and William H. Poteat, The Lilly Endowment Research Program in Christianity and Politics (Kingsport, Tenn.: Duke University Press, 1968) writes, "The originality of Polanyi as a philosophical thinker is partly due to the fact that he, unlike the majority of philosophical writers, owes his inspiration to an immediate encounter with facts, problems, and experience rather than to a familiarity with the conflicting solutions offered by the record of past philosophical labors" (112).

³⁶⁴ In *Personal Catholicism*, Moleski cites the various phrases Polanyi used throughout *Personal Knowledge* for what Polanyi will later call "tacit knowledge" or "tacit knowing." Along with these two phrases he also used "tacit coefficient," "tacit assent," "tacit affirmation," "tacit judgments," "tacit endorsements," and "tacit commitments." See 49, footnote 1.

developed his ideas enough to warrant a fresh account of his thought in 1966 published as *The Tacit Dimension*. “This book [*The Tacit Dimension*] is an interim report on an inquiry started more than twenty years ago ... I have continued this inquiry and published some twenty essays...as well as piled up much unpublished writing.”³⁶⁵ By the time *The Tacit Dimension* was published, less than ten years after *Personal Knowledge*, Polanyi could write,

Viewing the content of these pages from the position reached in *Personal Knowledge* and *The Study of Man* eight years ago, I see that my reliance on the necessity of commitment has been reduced by working out the structure of tacit knowing. This structure shows that all thought contains components of which we are subsidiarily aware in the focal content of our thinking, and that all thought dwells in its subsidiaries, as if they were parts of our body.³⁶⁶

Polanyi had highlighted the idea of commitment in *Personal Knowledge* as a response to the possibility that his theory of knowledge might be dismissed as subjective. Polanyi writes, “It is the act of commitment in its full structure that saves personal knowledge from being merely subjective.”³⁶⁷ Thus Polanyi affirmed that we (the subject) can truly know the world of which we are a part (objectivity), but the manner in which we investigate the world is always deeply personal and based on the various intellectual commitments we choose to accept. William T. Scott defines Polanyian commitment as the act “... in which a person accepts a proposition as true, enters into a relation of trust, adopts a value, or decides on a priority as central to all personal action.”³⁶⁸ In

³⁶⁵ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, Introduction, ix.

³⁶⁶ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, Introduction, x.

³⁶⁷ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 65.

³⁶⁸ William T. Scott, "Commitment: A Polanyian View," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 8, no. 3 (October 1977), 192. Scott shows that for Polanyi all commitments are personal and come from within ourselves. He cites the first sentence of the section on commitment from *Personal Knowledge*, “I [Polanyi] believe that, in spite of all the hazards involved, I am called upon to search for the truth and state my findings” (299).

committing ourselves to an intellectual position, we then perceive the world from that particular perspective. This is an important aspect of Polanyi's thought, because it specifies that we view the world and make judgments about it according to the structures of the particular commitments that we make. For example, if a person is committed to the structure of science, that person will judge all knowledge according to a scientific paradigm:

Science is a system of beliefs to which we are committed. Such a system cannot be accounted for either from experience as seen within a different system, or by reason without experience. Yet this does not signify that we are free to take it or leave it, but simply reflects the fact that it *is* a system of beliefs to which we are committed and which therefore cannot be represented in non-committal terms.³⁶⁹

Our commitments, according to Polanyi, determine the framework through which we actively engage our minds in relation to the world, and thus have a direct impact on the manner in which we come to understand the world around us and its meaning.³⁷⁰

Any act of factual knowing presupposes somebody who believes he knows what is being believed to be known. This person is taking a risk in asserting something, at least tacitly, about something believed to be real outside himself. Any presumed contact with reality inevitably claims

³⁶⁹ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 171. Polanyi also wrote, "Holding, as I do, this conception of science and accepting science as true, I must call science a belief which I share." In "The Stability of Beliefs," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 3, no. 11 (November 1952), 219. In *Personal Knowledge* Polanyi writes that it is impossible to avoid the personal aspect of our commitments. "Throughout this book I am affirming my own beliefs, and more particularly so when I insist, as I do here, that such personal affirmations and choices are inescapable, and, when I argue, as I shall do, that this is all that can be required of me" (209).

³⁷⁰ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 311-12. Polanyi claims that all knowledge involves some aspect of belief or trust, what he calls the "fiduciary element" of tacit knowing. He makes this point in several places of *Personal Knowledge*, esp. 198, 266-267, 286, 322-324; see also his "Faith and Reason," 238-239. In both of these works Polanyi cites his agreement with St. Augustine that "it is necessary to believe in order to understand." On this see Jerry H. Gill, *The Tacit Mode: Michael Polanyi's Postmodern Philosophy* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2000), 147. While St. Augustine's fundamental belief was in the Christian faith, modernity would be committed more to a rationalist structure. In either case, Polanyi would point out that both have established a fiduciary framework from which they evaluate all things. On St. Augustine's impact on Polanyi see Patrick Grant, "Michael Polanyi: The Augustinian Component," *The New Scholasticism* 48 (1974).

universality. If I, left alone in the world, and knowing myself to be alone, should believe in a fact, I would still claim universal acceptance for it. Every act of factual knowing has the structure of commitment.³⁷¹

Gelwick notes that commitments involve tacitly held aspects in the same manner as any other kinds of knowledge that we have. “Notice how odd it is that the act of commitment is both to what we do not see (the subsidiaries) as well as what can be seen (the focus of our attention).”³⁷² Like knowledge, our commitments involve tacitly held aspects, which are not always explicit and present to the knower. From this it is clear that one of the key elements of Polanyi’s epistemology in *Personal Knowledge* was his understanding tacit knowledge in relation to the commitments an individual knower commits himself to. By his own admission, however, in later works (especially *The Tacit Dimension*) Polanyi focused his attention primarily on his theory of tacit knowing, instead of viewing it secondarily and in relation to his understanding of commitment. For our purposes, however, although *Personal Knowledge* is Polanyi’s original epistemological work, his more focused thought concerning tacit knowledge, specifically as found in *The Tacit Dimension*, will be used to explain his understanding and concept of “tacit knowledge.”³⁷³

³⁷¹ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 313.

³⁷² Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery*, 71.

³⁷³ Another article in which Polanyi succinctly summarizes his tacit program is "The Logic of Tacit Inference," in *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969). The article was originally published as "The Logic of Tacit Inference: Address to the International Congress for the Philosophy of Science in Jerusalem," *Philosophy* 41 (January 1966). In *Knowing and Being* (138) the article is incorrectly dated 1964.

The Tacit Dimension (1966)

Marjorie Grene, one Polanyi's most dedicated students, went so far as to make the claim that

Polanyi's unique contribution to philosophy is the theory of tacit knowing, the thesis that all knowledge necessarily includes a tacit component on which it relies in order to focus on its goal whether of theoretical discovery and formulation or practical activity. It was this insight, expressed in the section on "Two Kinds of Awareness" in *Personal Knowledge* and elaborated in the first lecture of *The Tacit Dimension* and in some of the papers collected in *Knowing and Being*, that constituted, in his thought, a major break with the tradition and a possible foundation for a new turn in the theory of knowledge and, *a fortiori*, in philosophy as such.³⁷⁴

In addition to her claim that Polanyi's epistemology stands on the threshold of revolutionizing philosophy (and epistemological studies in particular), Grene indicates that in Polanyi's thought there are two different but wholly interrelated ways of knowing the world. Before addressing this two-fold knowing (the focal and the tacit), one must first understand what Polanyi means when he discusses "knowledge." For Polanyi, knowledge is not just concrete facts and formulations, but includes both "practical and theoretical knowledge."³⁷⁵ Theoretical knowledge is best understood as "intellectual" knowledge, namely those things which require *thinking* to accomplish. Examples of this would be the intellectual construction of mathematical formulae, the interpretation of historical facts, strategizing through a game of chess, problem solving and the like. According to Polanyi, practical knowledge includes those things that are not solely intellectual endeavors but instead are "skills, whether artistic, athletic, or technical."³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ Marjorie Grene, "Tacit Knowing: Grounds for a Revolution in Philosophy," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 8, no. 3 (October 1977): 164. Grene refers to *Personal Knowledge*, 55-57.

³⁷⁵ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 7.

³⁷⁶ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 6.

Practical knowledge involves the integration of both mind and body.³⁷⁷ Throughout his writings Polanyi gives many different examples of this kind of knowledge. The most frequent example he uses is the use of a hand tool, for example a hammer or a walking stick. Also included in this would be playing a musical instrument such as a piano, or dancing a choreographed dance. While these acts involve a degree of intellectual integration, e.g., knowing the correct use of a hammer or a piano, there is also a degree of bodily integration in these kinds of knowledge. Indeed, Polanyi writes, “Our body is the ultimate instrument of all our external knowledge, whether intellectual or practical.”³⁷⁸ Nonetheless, for Polanyi, knowing how to dance correctly is as much a form of knowing (knowing how) as computing complex mathematical formulae. While this is a rather broad definition of knowledge, the main thrust of Polanyi’s epistemological theory is that all human knowing, both theoretical and practical, involves elements of knowledge that are tacitly held. A closer look at Polanyi’s theory of tacit knowledge will clarify this point.

When Polanyi writes about tacit knowledge, he is referring to that element of human awareness that is not specifiable or the object of our immediate awareness, what

³⁷⁷ For the sake of clarity, I will point out that in Polanyi’s epistemology, all knowledge is something we “do” in that it involves a bodily encounter with the world that is then intellectually integrated by the mind and given meaning. We know the world by actively being a part of it and dwelling within it. On this point see Apczynski, *Doers of the Word*, “Personal Indwelling,” 74-79.

³⁷⁸ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 15. On the role of the body and knowledge see Michael Polanyi, “On Body and Mind,” *The New Scholasticism* 43, no. 2 (Spring 1969): 195-204.

he calls *subsidiary awareness*.³⁷⁹ Elements of subsidiary knowledge could remain subconscious for numerous reasons. They might be elements of knowledge that we have integrated so well that we simply “do” or “know” them responsively, or they may be clues so subtle that we are not aware of their bearing on our focal awareness. Of his program of tacit knowing, Polanyi writes, “it is a mistake to identify subsidiary awareness with unconscious or preconscious awareness, or with Jamesian fringe awareness. What makes an awareness subsidiary is the *function it fulfills*; it can have any degree of consciousness, so long as it functions as a clue to the object of our focal attention.”³⁸⁰ While our focal attention or awareness is drawn to one particular object, in Polanyi’s estimation, the way we understand that object is the result of an integration of other tacitly held knowledge. By way of a simple example: when I look at a clock I am *focally aware* of what time it is based on what the clock indicates. At the same time, however, I am also *subsidiarily aware* of numerous other elements that give meaning to my focal awareness. While not all subsidiary knowledge is able to be expressed, in many instances elements of it can be expressed and drawn into our focal awareness. In my focal awareness of reading the time, it is my subsidiary awareness of numbers, electricity, machinery, minutes, hours and days along with many other elements that give meaning to my focal awareness, i.e., the particular time of day. Edward Moss remarks that one of the

³⁷⁹ Concerning our consciousness of subsidiary elements of knowledge, Grene writes that subsidiary knowledge “could range from preconscious or subconscious to any degree of consciousness.” See her “Tacit Knowing,” 168. See also Polanyi’s “Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading,” in *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 194-195; and “The Structure of Consciousness,” in *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), 212. For a critical application of Polanyi’s epistemology within a psychology of consciousness see Edward Moss, *The Grammar of Consciousness: An Exploration of Tacit Knowing* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1996).

³⁸⁰ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 95-96.

most useful ways that Polanyi formulates his theory of tacit knowing is by means of what he calls the “triad” of tacit knowing.³⁸¹ Simply stated, a person (A) integrates subsidiary clues (B) in his attending to a focal point (C). Thus A moves through B in order to understand the meaning of C.

However, if for some reason my attention is drawn away from my focal awareness and shifts to one of the underlying subsidiary elements, the meaning of the larger whole is lost, at least temporarily.³⁸² “Scrutinize closely the particulars of a comprehensive entity and their meaning is effaced, our conception of the entity is destroyed.”³⁸³ For example, if the machine breaks, the electricity goes out, or if I look at a clock showing military time, my awareness will move from the integrated whole to one of its subsidiary parts. I might be able to “solve” the problem, e.g., plug in the clock, fix the machine, or count with my fingers to 18.00 hours and thus regain the focal meaning of the time on the clock. Polanyi calls this process “tacit reintegration,”³⁸⁴ or a “from-to” integration of the subsidiary clues. Polanyi writes:

... in an act of tacit knowing we *attend from* something for attending *to* something else; namely, *from* the first term *to* the second term of the tacit relation. In many ways the first term of this relation will prove to be nearer to us, the second further away from us. Using the language of anatomy, we may call the first term *proximal*, and the second term *distal*.

³⁸¹ Edward Moss, *Grammar of Consciousness*, 1. Polanyi articulates this example in “Sense-Giving and Sense-Reading,” 182.

³⁸² In *Personal Knowledge* Polanyi writes, “Subsidiary awareness and focal awareness are mutually exclusive” (56). Once we move our focal awareness to some aspect of our subsidiary knowledge, what was previously subsidiary knowledge now becomes our focal awareness.

³⁸³ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 18. Polanyi writes that sometimes attending to the subsidiary elements of a comprehensive entity allows for a greater understanding of that entity. Thus, a close philological study of the words of a poem when re-integrated may reveal a deeper meaning than what was originally perceived. However, “it is important to note that this recovery never brings back the original meaning” (19).

³⁸⁴ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 19.

It is the proximal term, then, of which we have a knowledge that we may not be able to tell.³⁸⁵

In the example of telling the time, the “proximal” or “from” element are the tacit factors that make telling time possible: number meaning, understanding a working machine, electricity and the like. The “distal” or “to” element is the unity of these elements into a meaningful whole, namely, that the clock indicates a particular time. Thus the meaning of a thing is always projected away from ourselves, i.e., our subsidiary knowledge bears upon something outside of us and has a particular meaning even as it stands independent from us. Walter Van Herck summarizes Polanyi’s tacit program and the various terms he uses in the following diagram:³⁸⁶

first term	-	second term
proximal	-	distal
subsidiary	-	focal
from	-	to
tacit	-	explicit

The first column represents the clues that are nearest to the knower, and the second column represents the unity of those clues outside or beyond the knower. The combination of these two forms of knowing, those in the first column and those in the second, are the foundational aspects of Polanyi’s tacit program of human knowing where meaning is derived from the parts as they make up the whole. In summary, Polanyi writes:

Since tacit knowing establishes a meaningful relation between two terms, we may identify it with the *understanding* of the comprehensive entity which these two terms jointly constitute. Thus the proximal term represents the *particulars* of this entity, and we can say, accordingly, that

³⁸⁵ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 10.

³⁸⁶ Walter Van Herck, "The Role of Tacit Knowledge in Religion," *Society & Discovery: The Polanyi Society Periodical* 26 (1999-2000), 23.

we comprehend the entity by relying on our awareness of its particulars for attending to their joint meaning.³⁸⁷

Polanyi believed the distinction between focal and subsidiary awareness as a way of explaining human knowledge was an original approach to epistemological studies. Grene writes that in reading the first part of *The Tacit Dimension*, one finds a “clear, relatively economical, well-articulated statement of what should be the conceptual instrument for a one hundred and eighty degree reversal in the approach of philosophers to the problem of epistemology.”³⁸⁸ In his tacit theory of knowing Polanyi has formulated an epistemology that seemingly bridges the gap between the subjective knower and the objective reality known. Through an examination of the individual subsidiary clues that make up our focal awareness of some thing, a knower is more fully able to grasp the whole truth of that thing which is external to himself. With this basic understanding of subsidiary and focal awareness in mind, a closer examination of the four aspects of tacit knowing will help to further clarify Polanyi’s tacit epistemology.

Four Aspects of Tacit Knowledge

Polanyi divides tacit awareness into four progressive types: the *functional*, the *phenomenal*, the *semantic* and the *ontological*.³⁸⁹ Each of these four types of tacit awareness brings more clearly into focus some aspect of how tacit knowing is brought to bear on our focal awareness and knowledge of things. In each of these four aspects, however, Polanyi is not only emphasizing the manner in which tacit knowing bears upon

³⁸⁷ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 13.

³⁸⁸ Grene, “Tacit Knowing,” 168.

³⁸⁹ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 10-13.

our explicit knowledge, but also the fact that it is always involved in every aspect of human knowing. Before discussing this final point, a clarification of the fourfold division of tacit awareness is in order.

The functional structure of tacit knowing is when we focus our attention from the subsidiary particulars to their joint meaning. Examples of this may serve to make this clearer. In the case of face recognition (physiognomy), we attend from certain features of the face (subsidiary elements) to the cohesive entity of the face itself (focal awareness). “We are attending *from* the features *to* the face, and thus may be unable to specify the features.”³⁹⁰ Polanyi likens the ability of recognizing a face to a skill that involves a combination of muscular acts in order to achieve some unified purpose. Much like face recognition, which brings to bear numerous particulars on the face, in the skilled movement of a dancer or an athlete there are a whole range of muscular movements that make up the dance or athletic act, which an athlete would most unlikely be unable to specify. Thus, in the functional structure of tacit knowing, we attend from the subsidiary particulars, as they bear upon a pattern or thing, to the thing which we recognize, that is, we see the subsidiary particulars within our focal awareness.

Polanyi insists the functional aspect of tacit knowing occurs when we integrate the various subsidiary clues into a focal awareness without being aware of the subsidiary clues themselves. Consequently, we are not *deducing* that something is, rather, we *know* something is by our *integration* of its subsidiary clues.³⁹¹ In the case of recognizing a particular face, the difficulty in specifying *how* we do this is obscured by the fact that the subsidiary particulars are present *within* the face itself. Simply put, the functional aspect

³⁹⁰ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 10.

³⁹¹ Polanyi, “The Logic of Tacit Inference,” 138-140.

of tacit knowing is our attending *from* the particulars as they give meaning *to* the integrated whole. This is the most rudimentary aspect of tacit knowing.

In the act of attending *from* the subsidiary elements *to* the focal element, Polanyi indicates that in recognizing an entity as a whole, we are conversely able to integrate and recognize the particulars which bear upon it. He calls this the *phenomenal* structure of tacit knowing. Polanyi writes, “We may say, in general, that we are aware of the proximal term [i.e., subsidiary awareness] of an act of tacit knowing in the appearance of its distal term [i.e., focal awareness]; we are aware of that *from* which we are attending *to* another thing, in the *appearance* of that thing.”³⁹² In the case of the phenomenal structure of tacit knowing, we recognize the subsidiary particulars and integrate them as they appear in our focal awareness. For example, a skilled art critic can look at a painting closely and discern the various brush strokes and colors in a more subtle manner than an untrained observer viewing the same painting. At the same time the art critic will have a deeper appreciation of the painting because he recognizes how the subsidiary aspects bear upon the focal presentation of the work itself.

Returning to Polanyi’s example of physiognomy, he would say that we are able to recognize a particular nose or facial feature in terms of its relation to the whole face. This is also true for athletic skills. Being able to integrate the proper motion, force and feel of kicking a soccer ball are all phenomenal aspects of a well placed shot. Accordingly, in the *functional* structure of tacit knowing, we attend from the features of a face to the face itself, and in the *phenomenal* structure of tacit knowing we are able to discern the features in light of the whole face. Both of these aspects taken together make

³⁹² Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 11.

up the *semantic* aspect of tacit knowing, the third part of the structure of tacit knowing.

The *semantic* aspect of tacit knowing, Polanyi explains, occurs when we integrate the previous two aspects of tacit knowing in such a manner that we are able to recognize the subsidiary particulars as they bear on the whole and understand the *meaning* of the particular thing. Seeing a face in a crowd may mean nothing to us. However, if we see the face of a friend in a crowd, that particular face will have meaning to us. In this case we integrate the subsidiary parts as they bear on the whole, and thus see the joint meaning that they have in the face of our friend. Polanyi also uses the example of a blind man using a walking stick to “see” where he is going. The subsidiary aspects of using a walking stick are many: the muscular ability to hold the stick, the sensory feelings in the hand from the point of the stick, etc. To a person who is not familiar with the use of a walking stick, these particular feelings and skills would be meaningless. However, to a blind man who relies on the stick to “see” the various subsidiary particulars (the different sensations in the hand) as they bear upon the whole (what is before the man), those sensations have great meaning. Polanyi indicates this shows “that all meaning tends to be displaced *away from ourselves*.”³⁹³

While the various subsidiary aspects of a particular entity dwell within the knower, their bearing on that particular entity gives it meaning as it stands outside the knower. This gives greater clarity to Polanyi’s distinction of subsidiary elements as the proximal aspect of knowledge, while the focal aspect is the distal. Although the subsidiary clues are known by the knower proximally, when they are intellectually integrated they attain a meaning as they come to bear on some thing outside of ourselves.

³⁹³ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 13.

Gelwick summarizes this point thus:

Meaning lies in the distal term or terms. This is the one that we are usually studying. The meaningfulness of the distal term depends, however, upon the proximal clues upon which it relies. Meaning cannot exist by itself. It requires a person who can integrate clues into coherent patterns that he or she can see as meaningful.³⁹⁴

Put more simply, the *semantic* aspect of tacit knowing occurs when the subsidiary particulars are unified within the knower's focal awareness of an entity, and brings about the deeper meaning of that particular entity.

The fourth and final aspect of tacit knowing that Polanyi presents is the unification of the three previous aspects of tacit knowing in what he calls the *ontological* aspect of tacit knowing. The fact that we are able to know something by integrating its subsidiary clues into a meaningful encounter with that thing indicates, Polanyi insists, an encounter with something that is *real*. In moving from the subsidiary aspects of tacit knowing and coming to focal awareness of that thing, we not only grasp that particular thing and its meaning, but we are also able to comprehend the reality of its existence. We have already indicated that, for Polanyi, all knowing presupposes a knower who bodily encounters the world and really comes into contact with the world. At the very least, the mind depends on the subsidiary aspect of our bodies being in and encountering the world around us. The fact that a knower derives *meaning* from some thing is also an indication that it is *real* and *exists*. This does not mean that our knowledge of a thing as being real is the same as having an absolute knowledge of that thing. Indeed, Polanyi writes:

This capacity of a thing to reveal itself in unexpected ways in the future I attribute to the fact that the thing observed is an aspect of reality, possessing a significance that is not exhausted by our conception of any single aspect of it. To trust that a thing we know is real is, in this sense, to

³⁹⁴ Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery*, 74.

feel that it has the independence and power for manifesting itself in yet unthought of ways in the future.³⁹⁵

For Polanyi then, while we may grasp the reality of some given entity, that does not mean we have grasped everything there is to know about it. The *ontological* aspect of tacit knowing affirms the reality of a given thing, as well as the fact that different things in this world contain a meaning far deeper than we may presently be able to grasp. Polanyi believed, however, that his epistemological theory of tacit knowing not only explained how we come to know the meaning of some particular thing (i.e., its *semantic* aspect), but also the fact our focal awareness comes to bear on some aspect of a real thing (i.e., its *ontological* aspect). Hence the first three aspects of tacit knowledge, the *functional*, *phenomenal* and *semantic* all unite to form a joint meaning in the *ontological* aspect of tacit knowing. Now that we have explained Polanyi's four aspects of tacit knowing, a closer examination of a few of his frequently cited examples and the role discovery played in the formation of his epistemological theory is in order.

Discovery and Tacit Knowledge

I have already cited a few examples utilized by Polanyi that indicate where something that is known focally is not necessarily able to be explicated in its subsidiary particulars, that is, the subsidiary particulars are not always able to be drawn into focal awareness. In each of these cases, what is present in the focal awareness have subsidiary elements that remain unspecifiable even when the knower tries to make them the object of focal awareness. According to Polanyi, while one or more of the subsidiary elements

³⁹⁵ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 32.

of human knowing may remain beyond the knower's ability to articulate them, nonetheless those subsidiary aspects have been integrated by the knower and now bear upon all of his explicit knowledge. On this point Grene writes:

Polanyi's distinction between subsidiary and focal awareness permitted the enunciation and elaboration of the thesis that all knowledge, however precise and however impersonal in its formulation, is grounded in clues that the knower must already have assimilated and of which he can be at best only subsidiarily aware.³⁹⁶

Polanyi admits the influence Gestalt psychology had on the development of his theory of tacit knowing, specifically the phenomenological and semantic aspects.

Gestalt psychology has demonstrated that we may know a physiognomy by integrating our awareness of its particulars without being able to identify these particulars, and my analysis of knowledge is closely linked to this discovery of Gestalt psychology. But I shall attend to aspects of Gestalt which have been hitherto neglected ... I am looking at Gestalt, on the contrary, as the outcome of an active shaping of experience performed in the pursuit of knowledge. This shaping or integrating I hold to be the great and indispensable tacit power by which all knowledge is discovered and, once discovered, is held to be true.

The structure of Gestalt is then recast into a logic of tacit thought, and this changes the range and perspective of the whole subject. The highest forms of integration loom largest now. These are manifested in the tacit power of scientific and artistic genius.³⁹⁷

The premise of Gestalt psychology, namely that "perception is a comprehension of clues in terms of a whole"³⁹⁸ which we naturally integrate in a *meaningful way*, does resemble Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing in that subsidiary elements of knowledge give meaning to what we bring into our focal awareness.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁶ Grene, "Tacit Knowing," 168.

³⁹⁷ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 6.

³⁹⁸ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 97.

³⁹⁹ It should be noted that although there are striking similarities between Polanyi's tacit theory and the general premise of Gestalt psychology, in *Personal Knowledge* Polanyi insists that "my evaluation of this material is so different from that of Gestalt theory, that I shall prefer not to refer here to this theory" (55).

In this context one can more easily understand the transition in Polanyi's thought from the central notion of commitment in *Personal Knowledge* to tacit knowing in *The Tacit Dimension*. In the former work Polanyi held that intellectual commitments directly affect how we come to know a given entity. Hence one could say that our intellectual commitments acted tacitly as part of and within our subsidiary awareness and correspondingly determined the *semantic* and *ontological* aspects of our focal awareness. In the later work, there is a marked shift in Polanyi's thought. He suggests that it is more our *tacit awareness* of things that we have interiorized that determines the *semantic* and *ontological* aspects of our focal awareness. When we incorporate some aspect of knowledge, because we hold it to be *true*, Polanyi would say that we have integrated something real within ourselves and now dwell with it, what he calls indwelling.⁴⁰⁰ Therefore, any given entity we had once attended to focally *or* some entity tacitly acquired now becomes an integrated aspect of our knowledge base and correspondingly becomes another subsidiary aspect in relation to any other thing which comes into our focal awareness. This shift in Polanyi's thought seems to have occurred as he attempted to move away from a more subjective approach to knowledge based on commitment to one which more fully integrated his belief that all knowledge is rooted in tacitly held beliefs. We indwell those things that we hold to be true because we believe in the truth

⁴⁰⁰ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 16-18. Likewise, Polanyi likens the act of indwelling to the moral principle of interiorization. Once we interiorize the maxim of charity, for example, we act charitably to others because we have integrated the teaching of love of neighbor. Thus we no longer *focally* say, "I should be kind to my neighbor," but instead are kind to our neighbor because of our *subsidiary* understanding of charity (17). Of indwelling in Polanyi's theory Gelwick writes, "That our knowledge is always a form of indwelling is one of the revolutionary aspects of Polanyi's theory leading to a new paradigm. It overthrows centuries of dichotomies that have separated mind and body, reason and experience, subject and object, the knower and the known." In *The Way of Discovery*, 70.

of the meaning they reveal to us as real entities (the *semantic* and the *ontological* aspects of tacit knowing).

While in Polanyi's earlier writings on epistemology he puts a greater emphasis on the act of personal commitment, in his later works he puts a greater emphasis on that fact that what we have already accepted as true now comes to bear on all our knowledge in a tacit manner. At this point Polanyi makes the bold assertion that "strictly detached, objective knowledge" is a fallacy because all explicit knowledge involves, to lesser or greater degrees, some element of tacitly held knowledge. In regard to this aspect of Polanyi's theory, Gelwick writes, "... it is the very process of tacit knowing that functions to guide us to any knowledge at all. Tacit knowing is not just a psychological precondition or background, but it is an integral part of the logic of knowing."⁴⁰¹

In order to demonstrate this point Polanyi focuses on scientific discovery. In defending the freedom of science from state control, one aspect of Polanyi's argument is that scientific research and discovery largely depend on the interests and talents of the individual scientist working within the greater body of science. By the time he wrote *The Tacit Dimension*, Polanyi had had almost twenty years to grapple with the very problem of discovery in science and to explicate an epistemological basis for it. While in his early writings he understood that the freedom of inquiry was fundamental to scientific discovery, working out his theory of tacit knowing helped him to articulate two things simultaneously about his philosophy of science and his epistemology. First, the process by which discovery occurs, and secondly, that all knowledge builds upon tacitly held presuppositions. Let us examine these points more fully.

⁴⁰¹ Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery*, 71.

Polanyi indicates the basis of scientific discovery lies in the ability of a scientist to recognize a good problem.⁴⁰² How does one recognize a good problem? Polanyi points out that to see a problem is to see something that lies hidden, something that has yet to be discovered. “To see a problem that will lead to a great discovery is not just to see something hidden, but to see something of which the rest of humanity cannot have even an inkling.”⁴⁰³ Polanyi indicates that while this seems to be a contradiction, that something unknown is in fact known, Plato had already wrestled with this very problem in the *Meno*. “He [Plato] says that to search for the solution of a problem is an absurdity; for either you know what you are looking for, and then there is no problem; or you do not know what you are looking for, and then cannot expect to find anything.”⁴⁰⁴ Plato’s solution to this problem is that discovery is merely the remembering of something from a past life. While Plato’s solution to this dilemma does not satisfy Polanyi, it does show that “problems nevertheless exist, and discoveries can be made by solving them, we can know things, and important things, that we cannot tell.”⁴⁰⁵ Polanyi believed that his epistemological theory of tacit knowing solved the problem presented by Plato in the *Meno*. To demonstrate this point Polanyi uses the example of a scientist’s seeking a good problem in order to discover something previously unknown. Polanyi discusses the process as follows.

A scientist is formed and trained through years of careful study and is then apprenticed to a well respected and successful scientist. Throughout these long years of

⁴⁰² Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 21-25.

⁴⁰³ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 22.

⁴⁰⁴ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 22. See Plato, *Meno* 85 e, in *Plato: The Collected Dialogues*, ed. Huntington Cairns and Edith Hamilton, Bollingen Series 71 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 370-371.

⁴⁰⁵ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 22.

study and learning, a wealth of scientific information has been explicitly learned, tested, and accepted as true (i.e., it has been indwelt by the knower). At this point Polanyi holds that the role of authority and the necessity of docility in the student are fundamental to the learning process.

We have seen that tacit knowledge dwells in our awareness of particulars while bearing on an entity which the particulars jointly constitute. In order to share this indwelling, the pupil must presume that a teaching which appears meaningless to start with has in fact a meaning which can be discovered by hitting on the same kind of indwelling as the teacher is practicing. Such an effort is based on accepting the teacher's authority.⁴⁰⁶

At some point the wealth of past knowledge and experimentation leads the young scientist to begin postulating his own potential research paths. Thus, from some intuition or intimation that springs forth from some aspect of his previously learned scientific knowledge, the young scientist will come to pursue some unknown question that interests him. What is focally present to the scientist (in various levels of clarity) is substantiated by subsidiary clues that remain unspecifiable. So, while a scientist may have a "hunch" about a given scientific problem, he may not be able to fully articulate the subsidiary aspects of that hunch. According to Polanyi, in committing himself to the solution of a question that he tacitly holds to be true, a scientist also knows that he is seeking some unknown, hidden truth. "The creative thrust of the imagination is fed by various sources. The beauty of the anticipated discovery and the excitement of its solitary achievement contribute to it in the first place."⁴⁰⁷ Polanyi adds:

My account of scientific discovery describes an existential choice. We start the pursuit of discovery by pouring ourselves into the subsidiary

⁴⁰⁶ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 61. Polanyi makes a very similar point in *Personal Knowledge* when he discusses connoisseurship (54-55) and the skillful use of tools (58-59).

⁴⁰⁷ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 79.

elements of a problem and we continue to spill ourselves into further clues as we advance further, so that we arrive at discovery fully committed to it as an aspect of reality.⁴⁰⁸

What makes this pathway to discovery unique is that one scientist may not “see” the same problem his colleague sees, because they both may not be approaching the question with the same tacit knowledge from which the intuitive question has arisen.⁴⁰⁹ What is also interesting is that the solution itself may be tacitly known and surmised to be true *until it is explicitly discovered*. Polanyi writes:

The pursuit of discovery is conducted from the start in these terms; all the time we are guided by sensing the presence of a hidden reality toward which our clues are pointing; and the discovery which terminates and satisfies this pursuit is still sustained by the same vision. It claims to have made contact with reality: a reality which, being real, may yet reveal itself to future eyes in an indefinite range of unexpected manifestations.⁴¹⁰

When a scientist grasps some hidden problem and is guided towards a possible discovery, he has integrated various tacitly held clues in a comprehensive manner. This then emanates from the scientist in the form of a good question. The question becomes the object of the scientist’s focal awareness along with the knowledge that a solution lies just beyond the horizon of the scientist’s awareness. One can see how tacit knowledge is revealed in two aspects of the articulation of a problem and the possibility of a discovery. On the one hand, tacitly held knowledge comes into focus as the intuition that there is some real entity that lies behind some unknown aspect of reality. On the other hand, the

⁴⁰⁸ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 80.

⁴⁰⁹ Nonetheless, in the final section of *The Tacit Dimension*, Polanyi indicates that there must be some degree of symbiotic affinity between different scientists and research questions. Polanyi writes that the value of a scientific contribution within the greater body of scientific knowledge depends on the “*exactitude*, its *systematic importance*, and the *intrinsic interest of its subject matter*” (66). Although there is a degree of personal influence in choosing and pursuing a problem, there still remains a degree of professional oversight between scientists. Polanyi calls this “the *principle of mutual control*” in scientific research (72).

⁴¹⁰ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 24.

presentation of the problem which springs out of an intuition is itself tacitly held, i.e., it remains an unspecifiable aspect except in the articulation of the problem which may lead to its discovery.

The role that Polanyi believes tacit knowledge plays in the process of a discovery also reveals his belief that tacitly held knowledge is involved in all human knowing. In the recognition of a problem and the development of some hypothesis that may solve the problem, there is already an acceptance and a commitment to numerous other tacitly held things. Even something as simple as the language utilized in the formulation of a problem reveals a tacitly held belief that what is being investigated can in fact be known and communicated to others and that it is worthy of their belief too.

Polanyi indicates that scientific research (and all knowledge) is thus *personal*, i.e., it is “neither subjective nor objective.” Polanyi explains, “In so far as the personal submits to requirements acknowledged by itself as independent of itself, it is not subjective; but in so far as it is an action guided by individual passions, it is not objective either. It transcends the disjunction between subjective and objective.”⁴¹¹ While an individual scientist may articulate and pursue a particular problem that he believes will expose some unseen aspect of reality, he does so with the intention of discovering something that anyone and everyone can enjoy as well.

To hold such knowledge is an act deeply committed to the conviction that there is something there to be discovered. It is personal, in the sense of involving the personality of him who holds it, and also in the sense of being, as a rule, solitary; but there is no trace in it of self-indulgence. The discoverer is filled with a compelling sense of responsibility for the pursuit of a hidden truth, which demands his services for revealing it. His act of knowing exercises a personal judgment in

⁴¹¹ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 300.

relating evidence to an external reality, an aspect of which he is seeking to apprehend.⁴¹²

In seeking to discover something, a scientist always does so by inserting his personal convictions and beliefs into his work, *especially his perception* that there is a problem to be known and solved.⁴¹³ Therefore, Polanyi is able to affirm the conviction of positivist science that reality can really be known. Unlike the positivists, however, Polanyi holds that in coming to know something there is always some personal element of the discoverer in the discovery process.⁴¹⁴ Once a thing has been discovered, the subsequent affirmation by other scientists confirms the validity of that particular thing and the possibility that other undisclosed aspects of the discovered reality remains to be revealed in the future. What was once the intuitive and tacitly held belief of a single scientist becomes, when validated and accepted by others, one small part of accepted scientific truth and may now become some tacitly held aspect of another scientist's future discovery. For this reason Polanyi's epistemological theory opens new grounds for understanding how we know and how we discover new things in the world. While Polanyi's epistemological theory of tacit knowing springs from his profession as a scientist, the nature of his theory lends itself to being applied to other academic

⁴¹² Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 25.

⁴¹³ In *The Tacit Dimension* Polanyi writes that when a scientist decides on a question to research and test, he does so with universal intent. "I speak not of an *established* universality, but of a universal *intent*, for the scientist cannot know whether his claims will be accepted ... To claim validity for a statement merely declares that it *ought* to be accepted by all. The affirmation of a scientific truth has an obligatory character which is shares with other valuations, declared universal by our own respect for them" (78).

⁴¹⁴ While Polanyi is certainly not at ease with the theory of positivistic science, his own understanding of scientific truth claims compared to the truth claims of other disciplines is not consistent and favors the positivistic model. In *Personal Knowledge* he writes that because of the experiential aspect of scientific research it is able to be *verified*, whereas "mathematics, religion or the various arts" can only be *validated* according to their own internal structures (202).

disciplines as well, including theological studies.

D. Synthesis

This chapter has shown that Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing centers around his affirmation that "*we can know more than we can tell.*"⁴¹⁵ In order to explain this, Polanyi's epistemological theory distinguishes between two kinds of awareness—focal awareness and subsidiary awareness. In being focally aware of some thing we are, at the same moment, subsidiarily aware of numerous other elements that we are not explicitly aware of but nonetheless give meaning to our focal awareness—i.e., we are tacitly aware of them. In many cases, the subsidiary aspects of our focal awareness are able to be brought into focal awareness and be known explicitly by us. The example of telling time used earlier in this chapter clearly demonstrated this point.⁴¹⁶

There are instances, however, where the subsidiary particulars that make up our focal awareness are not able to be brought into our focal awareness. In other words, there are times when the subsidiary aspects of our focal knowledge are not able to be drawn into our focal awareness and known explicitly by us. We can easily recognize the face of a friend because we have integrated the subsidiary elements of his facial features into a meaningful whole. And yet, according to Polanyi "we usually cannot tell how we recognize a face we know."⁴¹⁷ Although we are focally aware that *this* face is the face of our friend we would be hard pressed to explain the subsidiary facial features from which

⁴¹⁵ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 4.

⁴¹⁶ See above, 132-133.

⁴¹⁷ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 4.

our focal knowledge is derived. Riding a bike, kicking a soccer ball and medical diagnosis are all further examples where the subsidiary components of something focally known are not able to be made explicit. Such knowledge is real knowledge although it is not able to be fully described or explained.

The process of discovery highlights both of these aspects of tacit knowing, the focal and the subsidiary. On the one hand, a discovery may come about as the result of a knower beginning to see the connection of numerous subsidiary clues pointing to something as yet unknown (the beginning of a good question). On the other hand, something might be known focally without all of its subsidiary elements being accounted for or explained (as was the case with Polanyi's doctoral dissertation). In both of these cases Polanyi would insist that what the knower is focally aware of is real knowledge, even if it is not able to be fully explained or known. That certain elements of our knowledge and awareness remain beyond our ability to explain them does not invalidate that knowledge. Rather, it demonstrates *that we know more than we can tell*. It is this aspect of Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing that will prove most useful when placed in dialogue with Maritain's theory of the divinized supraconsciousness of Christ.

Chapter 4

A Confluence of Thought

Introduction

Now that we have examined in preceding chapters Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Christ and Polanyi's epistemological theory of tacit knowing, this chapter will show that although they developed their epistemological theories within very different fields, Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing affirms important aspects of Maritain's Christological epistemology. Specifically, both theories hold that anyone's real knowledge of anything is made possible by other knowledge of which the knower may not be explicitly aware.

The first section of this chapter will clarify the aspects of Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Christ that will and will not be examined further in light of Polanyi's tacit theory. Following this will be a brief discussion of the different backgrounds within which each developed his theory. Finally, Maritain's Christology, specifically the conscious self-awareness of Jesus Christ will be examined further in light of Polanyi's epistemological theory of tacit knowing. After that, a critique of one aspect of Maritain's theory will be followed by a brief conclusion.

A. Clarification

It is important to clarify which aspects of Maritain's theory of the consciousness and knowledge of Jesus Christ we will be examining further along with Polanyi's epistemological theory of tacit knowing. Recall that Maritain discusses Jesus' soul as existing simultaneously under the dual states of *viator* and *comprehensor*. It is in the state of *comprehensor* that Jesus beholds the beatific vision which illuminates his supraconsciousness, i.e., "divinizes" his supraconsciousness.⁴¹⁸ Hence it is in the divinized supraconsciousness that Maritain affirms that Jesus' knowledge "embraced *all things* absolutely."⁴¹⁹ Recall also that Maritain indicates that the divinized supraconsciousness and consciousness of Jesus are separated by a partition which renders the "sphere of the divinized supraconsciousness, under the state of final consummation ... strictly *incommunicable*" to Jesus' consciousness.⁴²⁰ However, the divinization of Jesus' supraconsciousness does directly impact his consciousness as *viator* "by mode of general influx, and of comforting, and of participated light."⁴²¹

When Maritain refers to Jesus-*viator*, then, he is referring to the state that Jesus holds in common with all humanity. It is the consciousness and knowledge of Jesus-*viator* that Maritain is referring to when he discusses the intellectual and conscious growth of Jesus. In other words, it is in the state of *viator* that Jesus gains and acquires knowledge, both of himself and of the world around him. Maritain indicates two notable differences between Jesus' knowledge and consciousness as *viator* and that of the rest of humanity, however. First, Jesus' consciousness does not suffer the ill effects of personal

⁴¹⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 58-59.

⁴¹⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 94.

⁴²⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 94. See also 59-60, 127.

⁴²¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 59. See also 23.

or original sin.⁴²² Second, as noted above, the supraconsciousness of Jesus is divinized and affects his consciousness through a “general influx, and of comforting, and of participated light” stemming from the beatific vision.⁴²³ This is the direct result of Jesus’ human nature being hypostatically united to the eternal Word, something proper to Jesus alone.⁴²⁴

For the purpose of this study, however, what we are interested in exploring further is Maritain’s theory of the consciousness and knowledge of Jesus-*viator*. It is clear, however, that any discussion between Maritain and Polanyi would not include the enlightened state of Jesus-*comprehensor* and the divinized supraconsciousness. Because Jesus-*comprehensor* sees the beatific vision, that vision would not include any “tacit” or unspecifiable aspects within it. Rather, it is an explicit and direct knowledge known in the intellect of Jesus. Therefore, it offers no common ground with Polanyi’s epistemological theory. However, the manner in which Maritain understands the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus-*viator* can be further substantiated and understood when viewed in light of Polanyi’s epistemological theory of tacit knowing.

B. Divergence

The fruit of Maritain’s epistemological thought present in his Christological theory in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* is best viewed along with his earlier work, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, where he outlines the psychological foundations of

⁴²² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 58.

⁴²³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 59.

⁴²⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 57.

his epistemological theory.

There are two kinds of unconscious ... screened from the grasp of consciousness: the preconscious of the spirit in its living springs, and the unconscious of blood and flesh ... I would like to designate the first kind of unconscious by the name of *spiritual* ... and the second by the name of *automatic* unconscious or *deaf* unconscious—deaf to the intellect, and structured into a world of its own apart from the intellect.⁴²⁵

In this brief quote Maritain indicates the three degrees of consciousness present in a person and the particular effect each has on a person's ability to know this or that thing. Since I have already discussed these in greater detail in Chapter 2, I will only mention a few of the more important points here. By the time Maritain writes *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, he has slightly altered his terminology. Consequently "the preconscious of the spirit in its living springs" he now calls "supraconsciousness," and the "automatic consciousness" he now calls "infraconsciousness." This change in terminology more aptly designates Maritain's belief that there are aspects of consciousness which remain below ("infra") and above ("supra") our conscious awareness. Maritain's description of the infraconscious as "the vast psycho-somatic unconscious of tendencies and of instincts, of sensations not yet elaborated in perceptions, of latent memories" is an accepted notion today and does not require further explanation.⁴²⁶ In *Creative Intuition in Poetry*, Maritain compares this aspect of his theory of the unconscious to the Freudian unconscious.⁴²⁷ However, the manner in which Maritain understands supraconsciousness and its role in human knowing is unique. What is important in Maritain's theory to this study is the influence and affect the divinized

⁴²⁵ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 91-92.

⁴²⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 55.

⁴²⁷ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 92. In footnote 29 on the same page Maritain contrasts his understanding of the unconscious with Jungian unconscious.

supraconsciousness has on Jesus' conscious awareness.

Even apart from Maritain's particular theory of Jesus' divinized supraconsciousness for a moment, he indicates that every person has a supraconscious, that it remains above conscious awareness and "escape[s], by the very reason of its superiority, from the consciousness of self, in the ordinary sense of this word, which is characteristic of the *homo viator*."⁴²⁸ Although the supraconscious remains above conscious and infraconscious awareness, all of these various degrees of consciousness intermingle with the others.⁴²⁹ It is in the supraconsciousness, however, that Maritain believes every aspect of human life—the intellect, imagination, and sensitive powers—comes together to make poetic intuition (i.e., an intellectual grasp of some deeper aspect of reality) possible.⁴³⁰ Recall that in Maritain's thought the "spark" of poetic intuition in the supraconsciousness grants a knower a glimpse into the deeper reality and connection of things in this world. As a result, poetic intuition "tends and extends to the infinite."⁴³¹ In other words, when an instance of poetic intuition occurs in a person's supraconsciousness, that person not only grasps the deeper meaning and reality of this or that thing but also the Creator—God.⁴³²

Hence it is in the supraconsciousness that God is present to and known by the human person. What appears on the surface to be a psychological epistemology is also a metaphysical one, too. It is apparent that Maritain's epistemological theory is not just trying to explain *that* the poet, Jesus, you or I know these deeper realities of human life,

⁴²⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 49, footnote 2.

⁴²⁹ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 92, footnote 29.

⁴³⁰ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 107.

⁴³¹ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 126.

⁴³² Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 127.

but *how* we come to know such things. What it is that we are able to know consciously is deeply indebted to what is processed, synthesized and known by the supraconsciousness. Thus Maritain's "philosophical psychology"⁴³³ is intended to clarify how we come to know things in light of and including metaphysical beliefs. With this in mind, I would summarize the methodology behind Maritain's epistemology in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* as utilizing a philosophical psychology to explain the relationship between epistemology and metaphysics. What is relevant to this study is that Maritain's methodological approach in both *Poetic Intuition in Art and Poetry* and *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* makes it possible for him to affirm the reality of knowledge originating in the supraconsciousness of the knower (i.e., the poet or Jesus) without that knowledge being wholly explicit in the knower's conscious awareness. Nonetheless, what is known in the supraconsciousness affects and influences what is consciously known.

It is interesting that Polanyi, although writing from within the philosophy of science, comes to a very similar conclusion as Maritain. Polanyi's epistemological method differs from Maritain's in two distinct ways. The first is that Polanyi's epistemological theory is worked out primarily within the philosophy of science. Second, whereas in Maritain one must understand his philosophical psychology in order to more fully understand his epistemology, in Polanyi one must grasp the relationship between knowledge, discovery and the knower's "fiduciary framework." A closer examination of

⁴³³ Maritain is not alone in attempting to integrate modern psychology with Thomas' philosophy and anthropology. A good example of a standard philosophical textbook from the early 1960s that attempts to integrate the insights of modern psychology within a Thomistic anthropology is J.F. Donceel, S.J., *Philosophical Anthropology* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967).

these points will show that, although Polanyi is addressing epistemological questions from a different perspective than Maritain, his theory of tacit knowing comes to a very similar conclusion.

When examining Polanyi's epistemological theory it is important to keep in mind the methodological background from which it emerged. Recall that Polanyi was initially a scientist by training and profession, first as a medical doctor and later as a chemist, not a philosopher. Had Polanyi been schooled in academic philosophy, he may well have articulated his theory of tacit knowing in relation to or within some already existing philosophical school and method. However, Polanyi's theory originated in response to scientific questions and not within a particular academic philosophy as such. Thus it developed outside a specific philosophical genre and without the use of technical philosophical language.⁴³⁴ Concerning this point, Richard Gelwick writes:

The presentation of Polanyi's philosophy is in itself a major task. Since it is independent of any single philosophical school and arose from his own reflections, this philosophy has to be approached as distinctive and unique... To be sure, the philosophy has affinities and continuities with previous philosophies. Yet it is new and should not be prematurely classified.⁴³⁵

Marjorie Grene agrees with this assessment.⁴³⁶ Indeed, although Polanyi initially began addressing epistemological questions within the philosophy of science, it was in

⁴³⁴ Scott and Moleski note that it was Marjorie Grene who assisted Polanyi with *Personal Knowledge* by reading through the original drafts and making certain he correctly used philosophical language. Throughout this editing process Grene became "the dominant figure in the development of Polanyi's philosophical skills." See *Michael Polanyi*, 220.

⁴³⁵ Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery*, xvi.

⁴³⁶ Marjorie Grene, "Tacit Knowing: Grounds for a Revolution in Philosophy," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 8, no. 3 (October 1977), 164. Grene begins her article by writing, "Although in general neglected by *academic philosophers* ... his [Polanyi] major contribution to philosophy has been ill appreciated even by many of those who have drawn heavily on his work" (italics added for emphasis).

preparing the Gifford Lectures that Polanyi began to articulate his epistemological theory more clearly. As I indicated in Chapter 3, the initial catalyst of Polanyi's thought was in reaction to the objectivist view of science as well as to counter the growing trend of planned scientific inquiry.⁴³⁷ However, by the time Polanyi published the Gifford lectures as *Personal Knowledge*, he gave it the sub-title *Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, seemingly aligning himself with a distinct school of philosophy.⁴³⁸ Gelwick believes that Polanyi's epistemology "is more constructive than the negative contrast with the period of critical philosophy" and thus cannot really be called "post-critical" at all.⁴³⁹ In either case, Gelwick and Grene's assessment that Polanyi's epistemology does not fall into any pre-established category of academic philosophy seems correct.

Although in the years following *Personal Knowledge* Polanyi dedicated himself primarily to philosophical writing, it is clear that scientific questions remained at the forefront of his philosophical thinking. This leads us to a discussion of the second disparity between

⁴³⁷ Grene concurs with this evaluation in the Introduction to *Knowing and Being: Essays by Michael Polanyi*, ed. Marjorie Grene (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), xiii.

⁴³⁸ Polanyi indicates two things in *Personal Knowledge* concerning the sub-title of the work. In the first place, Polanyi believed that his "fiduciary programme" moved beyond the strict scientism of his day and sought to restore *belief* to the knowing equation. Second, Polanyi claimed that St. Augustine was the first to emphasize the role of belief contra the rationalist Greek philosophy of his day. In this way St. Augustine was the first "post-critical" philosopher (264-268). It seems to me that what Polanyi is indicating by this is not an affinity with the "post-critical" or "postmodern" movement as such. Rather, he is stating what his philosophy is diverging from, i.e., the hyper-rationalism of post-Cartesian philosophy.

⁴³⁹ Gelwick, *The Way of Discovery*, 83. Gelwick creates a whole new category for Polanyi's philosophy, i.e., "Heuristic philosophy." Jerry H. Gill, *The Tacit Mode: Michael Polanyi's Postmodern Philosophy* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2000) devotes the first ten pages to defining "post-critical" and "postmodern" in relation to Polanyi's epistemological theory, finding the term "postmodern" more positive and appropriate. Harry Prosch, *Michael Polanyi: A Critical Exposition* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1986) devotes an entire chapter to Polanyi's epistemology which he calls, "A New Epistemology" (49-62). All of these authors believe that Polanyi's epistemology is either wholly new or different enough to avoid being aligned with a pre-existing category of philosophical thinking.

Polanyi and Maritain's epistemological theories.

In *Personal Knowledge*, Polanyi states that all knowledge is predicated upon a particular belief system held by the knower, i.e., a “fiduciary framework.” In maintaining that all knowledge is built upon a particular belief system, Polanyi specifically mentions his agreement with St. Augustine's maxim “*nisi credideritis non intelligitis*.”⁴⁴⁰

Although St. Augustine was specifically referring to the Christian faith, Polanyi adopts the adage and applies it to all human knowing. He writes:

We must now recognize belief once more as the source of all knowledge. Tacit assent and intellectual passions, the sharing of an idiom and of a cultural heritage, affiliation to a like-minded community: such are the impulses which shape our vision of the nature of things on which we rely for our mastery of things. No intelligence, however critical or original, can operate outside such a fiduciary framework.⁴⁴¹

Consequently, we can say that a scientist who adheres to a strict positivistic model of science has committed himself to that particular belief system—thus it is a tacit component of all his subsequent knowledge. In summarizing this point, Moleski writes, “We always approach reality through our own view of reality—we can never use anyone else's mind to think for ourselves—and yet reality is able to challenge the assumptions we have brought to bear on it.”⁴⁴² Thus Polanyi holds that all knowledge, both tacit and explicit, is always predicated upon the particular belief system to which a knower has committed himself. Indeed, Polanyi himself adheres to this principle in *Personal Knowledge*. “The principle purpose of this book is to achieve a frame of mind in which I may hold firmly what I believe to be true, even though I know that it might conceivably

⁴⁴⁰ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 267.

⁴⁴¹ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 266.

⁴⁴² Moleski, *Personal Catholicism*, 141.

be false.”⁴⁴³ Polanyi recognizes that the particular belief system to which he adheres, i.e., a tacit framework for all knowledge, is one to which he has both committed himself and also the one from which he encounters all of reality.

Polanyi’s fiduciary framework, however, is not simply meant to justify his theory of tacit knowledge, but rather it helps to clarify what Gelwick calls Polanyi’s “heuristic philosophy.” As discussed in Chapter 3, the process of scientific discovery acted as the catalyst to Polanyi’s epistemological thinking, primarily because it is with discovery in mind that he began to formulate his tacit theory of knowledge. For Polanyi, the possibility of discovering something new is directly related to the fiduciary framework of the knower and serves as an example of the personal element inherent in all human knowing. How is this so? A particular fiduciary framework establishes the mental parameters from which the knower is able to “reach out” into uncharted aspects of the world and know it. Also, it is from within these parameters that discovery occurs, i.e., a knower begins to grasp in a non-specific, non-explicit manner some unknown thing.

What we see in Polanyi’s appropriation of St. Augustine’s maxim, “Unless you believe, you shall not understand,”⁴⁴⁴ is that he directly relates it to his understanding of the process of discovery. At the heart of discovery and all human knowing, according to Polanyi, lies the fundamental aspect of his epistemological theory—tacit knowledge. According to his theory, what is explicitly known is built upon tacitly held knowledge that oftentimes remains hidden to the knower. Nonetheless, what is tacitly known is real knowledge that may lead to the discovery of something that is initially unable to be specified by the knower. In other words, according to Polanyi there are things that we

⁴⁴³ Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 214.

⁴⁴⁴ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 61. See also *Personal Knowledge*, 266-267.

really know even though we are unable to fully articulate them and draw them into our focal, explicit awareness. The process of discovery, i.e., asking the question that will eventually bring into focal awareness something that is tacitly known, highlights Polanyi's theory of tacit knowledge. Thus we can see that although Polanyi is approaching epistemological questions from the perspective of a philosophy of science and not a philosophical psychology like Maritain, he reaches a similar epistemological conclusion, namely, that we know more than we are necessarily able to say, as the process of discovery highlights.

C. Convergence

This final section will return to the question of the consciousness of Christ in Maritain's thought as understood with the help of Polanyi and will be divided into two parts. The first part will explore the implications of Maritain's theory of the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus and its affect on the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus-*viator*. Specifically, I will show how Maritain's theory of poetic intuition further clarifies the manner in which knowledge in the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus effects and is known, albeit in a limited, non-thematic manner, in his conscious awareness. This will be followed by an examination of the knowledge that Jesus has of himself and his divine identity. Lastly, I will briefly critique Maritain's application and inclusion of infused knowledge in light of his overall theory of the divinized supraconsciousness and consciousness of Jesus.

The Knowledge of Jesus-*viator*

In order to more fully appreciate Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, it is important to keep in mind what he is trying to accomplish. It is clear that Maritain tries to integrate the scholastic theory of the threefold knowledge of Jesus in such a way that does not compromise Jesus' genuine humanity. However, Maritain did not consider his theory of Jesus' consciousness as a wholly new endeavor. Rather, he considered his work as "extending his [St. Thomas'] movement of thought" in light of modernity's understanding of human nature, especially consciousness.⁴⁴⁵ Thus we must view Maritain's theory as an attempt to affirm two simultaneous realities about Jesus at once. On the one hand, Maritain certainly maintains the scholastic theory of Jesus having the beatific vision in his soul. On the other hand, he also maintains, based on his reading of St. Luke's Gospel (2.52), Jesus' having genuine human and intellectual growth. It is in coming to understand these two seemingly divergent theses, i.e., the presence of the beatific vision in Jesus' soul while also affirming genuine intellectual growth in light of the indispensable "*philosophical instrument*"⁴⁴⁶ of consciousness that Maritain makes a real contribution to Christological studies. This contribution can be seen most clearly in his understanding of the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus-*viator*.

Maritain indicates that the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus-*viator* functions like that of any other man with the exception of his supraconsciousness being divinized

⁴⁴⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 52.

⁴⁴⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 48-49.

by the beatific vision.⁴⁴⁷ Recall that for Maritain, supraconsciousness “functions in us only in the zone of ‘the spirit in its living springs,’ where the world of conscious activity has its hidden source.”⁴⁴⁸ Thus in you or me, supraconsciousness is above our conscious awareness but is the source of our conscious activity. Jesus’ supraconsciousness acts in the same manner, but his also has the unique benefit of being divinized by the beatific vision.⁴⁴⁹ Thus the intellectual synthesis that takes place in Jesus’ *divinized* supraconsciousness, particularly concerning matters related to his mission as redeemer and the knowledge he has of himself, includes the added benefit of beatific certainty.

Recall also that Maritain posits the presence of a partition separating the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus-*comprehensor* from the consciousness of Jesus-*viator*. However, Maritain reminds his reader that the two states and consciousnesses share the same human nature and the same faculties.⁴⁵⁰ Because they share the same nature and the same faculties, Maritain can affirm, “I think there was clearly a certain communication between these two states and these two worlds.”⁴⁵¹ Thus when Maritain indicates that knowledge originating in Jesus’ divinized supraconsciousness crosses the partition into the consciousness of Jesus-*viator*, the knowledge is doing so within the same nature and the same intellectual faculties. With this in mind, it is easier to understand that when Maritain discusses the knowledge of Jesus-*viator* as originating in the divinized supraconsciousness, he is not discussing something completely foreign or added to the

⁴⁴⁷ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 116. Recall that it is infused knowledge which crosses the partition separating the divinized supraconsciousness from the consciousness of Jesus-*viator*. I shall speak briefly about infused knowledge later.

⁴⁴⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 80.

⁴⁴⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 101-102.

⁴⁵⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 59.

⁴⁵¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 59.

intellect of Jesus. As I indicated earlier, there was in addition to infused intellectual knowledge an influence of the beatific vision in Jesus' divinized supraconsciousness on his human consciousness taken in a broader sense.⁴⁵²

When we look to Maritain's explanation of supraconsciousness in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, we find an analogous relationship between poetic intuition in the poet and the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus-*viator* in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*. It is in the poet's supraconsciousness where images and concepts are further illuminated and as a consequence reveal something more about reality. All of this occurs, of course, above the poet's conscious awareness.⁴⁵³ Nonetheless, although this knowledge comes to be known in a non-thematic and non-explicit manner in the poet's consciousness, Maritain indicates that it is a real kind of knowledge which is eventually externalized as a creative act of art or poetry. In Jesus Christ, however, because his supraconsciousness is also divinized by the beatific vision, the knowledge present to him in the divinized supraconsciousness is illuminated in a manner far greater than that of any instance of poetic intuition. What is clearer in the divinized supraconsciousness will also be clearer to the consciousness of Jesus, although what is externalized is but a fraction of what is present in the divinized supraconsciousness. Recall that in Maritain's theory of poetic intuition, what is known by the poet in the supraconscious comes to expression through the creative consciousness of the artist. However, although the expression seeks to share the instance of creative intuition with another, "a great many things, and often the most important, the dearest to the poet, are lost and wasted in the process."⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵² See above, 86-90.

⁴⁵³ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 99-100.

⁴⁵⁴ Maritain, *Creative Intuition*, 308.

Although some of what is “known” by the poet is lost, the conscious expression of an instance of poetic intuition is still the real expression of the unthematic knowledge originating in the supraconscious of the poet. As a result, a poet’s conscious awareness is a true but limited expression of the knowledge he has in his supraconsciousness.

Thus the non-conceptual knowledge that descends from the divinized supraconsciousness into the consciousness of Jesus would reflect the greater illumination and synthesis afforded by him also having the beatific vision. However, the knowledge that Jesus has in the state of *viator* would be far less explicit than the knowledge he has in his divinized supraconsciousness. The same holds true for an instance of poetic intuition in a poet. What the poet is conscious of is but a small part of the totality of the synthesis that has occurred in his supraconsciousness. Referring to Jesus’ divinized supraconsciousness, Maritain writes, “... the *content* of the supraconscious heaven of the soul was retained, [and] could not pass into the world of consciousness ... except ... by mode of general influx, and of comforting, and of participated light.”⁴⁵⁵ In the same way as the poet is unaware of the fullness of an instance of poetic intuition, so too would Jesus be unaware of the fullness of an instance of “poetic intuition” in his divinized supraconsciousness. In both cases, however, it does enter into and affect what is consciously known and done by the person. Of course, one would say that the knowledge that Jesus-*viator* has does not so much concern artistic or poetic creativity, although it theoretically could, inasmuch as it is one of “divine” creativity.

Can we take seriously Maritain’s assertion that non-thematic, non-explicit knowledge originating in the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus-*comprehensor*, as

⁴⁵⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 59; see also 127.

well as explicit infused knowledge of divine mysteries, bears upon and is present in his explicit knowledge and consciousness as *viator*? Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing helps to answer this question.

Based on our study of Polanyi, the answer to the previous question is yes, we can take seriously Maritain's understanding that knowledge originating in the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus affects the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus-*viator*. Notwithstanding the different methodological approach previously noted between the two epistemological theories, Polanyi's understanding of tacit knowledge lends credence to Maritain's theory of supraconsciousness, especially as it relates to the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus-*viator*. The main aspect of Polanyi's theory that is relevant to Maritain is his explanation of tacit knowledge as real yet non-explicit knowledge that bears upon the focal knowledge of the knower. When Polanyi states that all focal or explicit knowledge is built upon tacitly held knowledge, he is indicating something similar to Maritain's epistemological theory about the role of the divinized consciousness in the consciousness of Jesus-*viator*.

Polanyi's assertion that all explicit knowledge is built upon tacitly held knowledge is perhaps the most fundamental aspect of his tacit theory. Indeed, in the introduction to *The Tacit Dimension* he writes,

This structure [tacit knowing] shows that all thought contains components of which we are subsidiarily aware in the focal content of our thinking, and that all thought dwells in its subsidiaries, as if they were parts of our body. Hence thinking is not only intentional ... it is also necessarily fraught with the roots that it embodies. It has a *from-to* structure."⁴⁵⁶

What Polanyi is indicating here is that focal, explicit awareness is built upon and relies on

⁴⁵⁶ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, x.

non-explicit, tacitly held knowledge (i.e., subsidiary particulars). By way of an analogy, Polanyi's view of knowledge is very much like an iceberg. What we are focally aware of is but a very small part of what we really know, much like the tip of an iceberg reveals only a fraction of what lies below the surface of the water. Polanyi would add, of course, that both the tip of the iceberg and our focal knowledge are only able to be known because they are "supported" by knowledge that remains outside our focal awareness, i.e., it remains tacitly known. Polanyi calls these underlying, tacitly held structures of our explicit knowledge subsidiary particulars. Depending on what we are explicitly aware of we may be more or less able to bring into our focal awareness any one of the many underlying, tacit structures of our explicit knowledge. Sometimes, however, these tacit components of knowledge remain unspecifiable and are not able to be drawn into our focal awareness, i.e., in the medical diagnosis of a seizure. When a doctor identifies a patient as having a seizure (and not a stroke) there are numerous tacit elements of the diagnosis that are not able to be attended to focally by the doctor. These unspecifiable, tacit elements, however, bear upon the doctor's diagnosis, and although they remain beyond the doctor's focal awareness, they remain real knowledge.

When examining Maritain's Christology in light of Polanyi's tacit theory, two things become evident. First, if Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing is correct, and I believe that it is, it would apply as much to the human nature and consciousness of Jesus as it does for you or me. Therefore, Jesus' focal awareness of any given thing would also include all the many underlying, subsidiary elements to that knowledge. In other words, the foundation of all his explicit knowledge would be tacit knowledge. For example, the common language that Jesus learned as a child was Aramaic. It is certain that when, as

an adult, Jesus engaged in conversations and articulated his thoughts to others, he would have spoken the same Aramaic language he learned as a child, but his focal awareness would not have been on the Aramaic language he was speaking but on the ideas and thoughts he was expressing. If he needed to, however, he could make this subsidiary element explicit by searching for a particular word or utilizing a particular rhetorical style (i.e., parables). In so doing, however, Jesus' focal awareness would shift to what would otherwise be a subsidiary aspect of knowledge. What was previously tacit would become explicit and focal to him. In the first place then, Polanyi's theory of tacit knowledge applies to Jesus' natural, ordinary knowledge.

The second thing that becomes clear when looking at Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus in light of Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing is closely related to the first point. Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing holds that in many instances what is tacitly known as a subsidiary aspect of our focal awareness is able to be brought into our focal awareness. In other words, what is tacitly known is able to be explicitly known. However, Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing also holds that there are some instances where what is tacitly known remains unspecifiable and is not able to be drawn into our focal awareness. Polanyi offers his reader the example of a scientist recognizing a good problem that eventually leads to a discovery.⁴⁵⁷ In this example Polanyi writes that the scientist has "a tacit foreknowledge of yet undiscovered things" based on the totality of his scientific knowledge and training.⁴⁵⁸ The problem the scientist recognizes is tacitly held knowledge—otherwise the question would concern something explicit and then would not really amount to much of a question at all! A good scientific question involves

⁴⁵⁷ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 21-25.

⁴⁵⁸ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, 23.

the articulation (though limited) of something tacitly known yet at the same time bears itself upon and impacts what the scientist is explicitly aware of. The scientist *knows* there is some thing to be discovered without being able to explicitly state the subsidiary, tacit elements of that knowledge. This aspect of Polanyi's theory is particularly important in relation to Maritain's theory of the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus-*viator*. Recall that Maritain understands the knowledge of Jesus-*viator* as originating in the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus-*comprehensor*. Although the knowledge Jesus has in his divinized supraconsciousness affects his conscious life and actions, the contents of that divinized supraconsciousness are not explicitly known in Jesus' conscious mind. Consequently, he would not be able to state explicitly the grounds for all that he said and did. There is a clear affinity between Maritain's understanding of the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus and Polanyi's tacit knowledge.

If I put the problem of Jesus' consciousness and knowledge in Polanyian language, Maritain is stating that the knowledge present in the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus-*comprehensor* bears upon his knowledge and consciousness as *viator*, specifically his focal awareness, in a subsidiary, tacit manner. Such an application of Polanyi's tacit theory to Jesus is not intended as a Christianization of Polanyi's thought. Rather, it shows that both authors agree that in the unconscious, tacit elements of our explicit knowledge are the foundation of, and give full meaning to what is explicitly known. A scientist may not be able to explicitly state why he thinks a particular question is worth investigating any more clearly than Jesus might be able to explain how he knows with certainty such things as his divine identity. In both cases, however, such knowledge is real knowledge founded on tacit elements that remain

unspecifiable to the knower. Accordingly, what is known by Jesus in his conscious awareness is not *less* real than what he knows in his divinized supraconsciousness, but it is not able to be fully specified.

Returning to the aforementioned question of whether or not we can take seriously Maritain's understanding of the explicit knowledge of Jesus-*viator* being rooted in the knowledge present in his divinized supraconsciousness, we come to the following conclusion: Polanyi demonstrates that what we know in our focal awareness is founded upon tacitly held, non-explicit knowledge. In many cases what we are tacitly aware of is able to be drawn into our explicit, focal awareness. However, in some instances what is tacitly known is not able to be drawn into our focal, explicit awareness and thus remains tacit. If we consider Maritain's theory of the consciousness and knowledge of Jesus in light of Polanyi's epistemological theory, we see a confirmation of Maritain's thought from a different philosophical perspective, that of the philosophy of science. Both believe that we have real knowledge even if elements of that knowledge remain hidden to us, i.e., tacit. Therefore, we conclude that Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing enables us to take seriously Maritain's theory of the divinized supraconsciousness affecting Jesus' consciousness and knowledge as *viator*. This brings us to a final examination of the conscious self-awareness of Jesus Christ in Maritain's *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*.

Maritain on the Consciousness of Jesus-Viator

At this point in the discussion, one might ask why Maritain has gone through such a complex matrix of clarifying various terms, states and consciousnesses in Jesus. The question is not an irrelevant one but rather invites us into a deeper dialogue with Maritain and his thought. In fact, the question poignantly brings us to the heart of Maritain's book on the consciousness of Jesus Christ. In the Foreword to *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus*, Maritain indicates that when he originally prepared the seminars that eventually comprised the book, there were "those who claim to put everything in question of the traditional teaching."⁴⁵⁹ It is not very clear who "those" people are since Maritain does not directly reveal their identity. However, as I discussed in Chapter 2, Maritain was certainly aware of the previous controversy concerning the consciousness of Christ and did, in fact, go to great lengths to shield himself from the same problems previous theologians had encountered.⁴⁶⁰ Likewise, Maritain also indicates that the Christological "reinterpretation" that he is proposing originated many years earlier when Raïssa was still alive. In light of this, we are better able to understand why Maritain goes to such lengths to explain the various terms, states and consciousnesses in Jesus with such precision. The attention Maritain devoted to his book on the consciousness of Jesus Christ was to ensure that his proposal did not meet the same fate as some of the authors discussed in Chapter 1 to whom, I believe, Maritain is referring.⁴⁶¹

On the other hand, there are indications in *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* that Maritain is also entertaining the question of the consciousness of Christ because of

⁴⁵⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 8.

⁴⁶⁰ See above, 55-60.

⁴⁶¹ See above, 8-14.

what he refers to as the “poorly instructed Christian conscience,”⁴⁶² which tends to attribute to the human nature of Jesus prerogatives proper to his divine nature.⁴⁶³ Maritain notes that this tendency misunderstands two important aspects of Jesus’ knowledge and consciousness. First, attributing to the human child Jesus divine prerogatives (such as the governance of the world) fails to adequately distinguish the two natures in Jesus. While it is true to say that the divine person of the Word creates, governs and directs the world, he does not do so through his created human nature.⁴⁶⁴ The second misunderstanding, according to Maritain, is that Jesus as *viator* consciously possessed the beatific vision while also living a truly human existence with the limitations attendant on being *viator*. Maritain attributes this view to a “poorly formed and poorly instructed Christian psychology,”⁴⁶⁵ which his theory of the consciousness of Christ addresses.

With these two points in mind, I think we can better appreciate the depths to which Maritain engages the question of the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus. Although his examination of Jesus is detailed, I believe that Maritain is trying to safeguard Jesus’ humanity from becoming, as he states, a “fairy-story marvel which is unworthy of Christ and contrary to the *verus homo*.”⁴⁶⁶ Two further citations explain Maritain’s thoughts on this point.

... being given the central importance of the humanity of Christ in contemplation and the contemplative life, a new synthesis concerning this humanity,—a Thomist synthesis in its principles and its spirit, but freed of accidental obstacles due to the mentality of an epoch, and recognizing that *movement of growth*, not only as to the body but as to the things of the

⁴⁶² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 29.

⁴⁶³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 18-19, 28-30.

⁴⁶⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 29.

⁴⁶⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 30.

⁴⁶⁶ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 19.

soul and of the spirit, is essential to every *true man*,—such a new synthesis seems entirely necessary.⁴⁶⁷

He undertakes to provide this new synthesis with the aid of a more sophisticated psychology than the scholastics had.

Once we are in possession of this philosophical instrument, this explicit and systematic notion of the divinized supraconsciousness of the spirit, it seems to me, not, indeed, that the difficulties cease, but that they become more approachable, that the image which we have of the humanity of Christ becomes more really human, and that place is made in this image (at the level below that of the divinized supraconscious) for the movement, the development, the progress, without which man is not truly man. Christ was not *purus homo*; but he was *verus homo*.⁴⁶⁸

Thus it seems that Maritain is not simply engaging the highly volatile issue of the consciousness of Christ in such a way as to protect himself from the possibility of censure, though that is certainly true. Rather, I think that Maritain was also genuinely interested in providing a theological explanation of the consciousness of Christ that integrates theological truths with common piety. His understanding of the consciousness of Christ seems to do just that.

This brings us to the particular question of the conscious self-knowledge of Jesus-*viator* in Maritain's thought. While it is true that Maritain discusses other things that Jesus-*viator* is consciously aware of with divine certainty (e.g., his mission to reveal the truth of the Father's love)⁴⁶⁹ and his role as savior and redeemer,⁴⁷⁰ both of these spring from the central question of his consciousness and knowledge of himself. Indeed, Maritain makes this point when he states that it is the person of the Word who reveals divine truths in a human manner.

⁴⁶⁷ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 47-48.

⁴⁶⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 50.

⁴⁶⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 104, 108-109.

⁴⁷⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 111-114.

It is absurd to imagine that Christ would have had like us theological faith. He had come—He, the Incarnate Word, the God made man—in order *to reveal divinely* the truths and the mysteries on which this faith lives, and to which it adheres on the testimony and the teaching of *God revealing*, or of the subsisting Truth itself making itself known. Jesus did not *believe*,—He *knew*. He did not have theological faith, He had *knowledge* to which this faith is suspended.⁴⁷¹

So we must ask, where does Jesus' awareness of divine things, including his divinity, originate? In light of Maritain's theory of the supraconsciousness the answer to this question involves two closely related aspects of Jesus' knowledge, which we might try to describe in terms borrowed from Polanyi. First, there are aspects of Jesus' knowledge in which the various subsidiary particulars, tacitly held, are able to be drawn into his focal, explicit awareness. However, there are also elements of Jesus' knowledge and consciousness that are tacit and remain unspecifiable to him. Although what is tacitly known remains beyond Jesus' focal, explicit awareness they still bear upon and affect his knowledge and consciousness. To the extent that they derive from his unique, divinized supraconsciousness, they make Jesus a truly human but special person.

Addressing the self-knowledge of Jesus in Maritain's thought we must begin with his statement, "Insofar as comprehensor, He [Jesus] knew Himself God through the Vision, *in seeing the divine essence and His own divine Person and the Father with whom He is one.*"⁴⁷² Recall that in Maritain's description of the threefold knowledge of Jesus and the dual states of his humanity, it is in the divinized supraconsciousness of his soul that Jesus-*comprehensor* sees the beatific vision. This remains above the consciousness of Jesus because of the partition that separates the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus-*comprehensor* from the consciousness of Jesus-*viator*. For

⁴⁷¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 104.

⁴⁷² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 107.

this reason it is true to say that in his divinized supraconsciousness, Jesus is explicitly aware of himself as a divine person, one of the Trinity. This knowledge of himself is divinely certain because what is being presented to the intellect of Jesus-*comprehensor* is concurrently being seen in the beatific vision.⁴⁷³ It is important to understand Maritain on this point because the knowledge of Jesus-*viator* originates in and must correspond to the knowledge present in the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus-*comprehensor*. Maritain indicates that although one of the modes through which Jesus-*viator* knows himself is the non-conceptual knowledge originating in the divinized supraconsciousness, this knowledge does not have the same degree of certainty as it does in the higher realm of its origin. Nonetheless, “the *consciousness that Jesus had of His own divinity ... developed very quickly in the course of His childhood.*”⁴⁷⁴

Maritain specifically addresses the knowledge and consciousness of the child Jesus and the process through which his conscious development occurs. Maritain writes:

It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that the consciousness of His own divinity should have surged up in Jesus from the instant that He began to become conscious of Himself, and that there began to germinate the idea of God in His acquired science as in His infused science at the state of way; it is absolutely necessary also that it should have grown progressively at the same time as developed his consciousness of Himself, and that the idea of God took better and better shape in His mind, thanks to the infused *species* meeting and illuminating from above the notions communicated from here below through the blessed voice of His Mother and the sacred rites of the Law. The wonder connatural to childhood gave way to the supernatural wonder of the revelation of Himself to Himself. It is without the least surprise, and in a manner altogether harmonious, fresh and gracious, it is with all the naturalness, and the admirable simplicity, and the admirable seriousness of the little child regarding being that the Child Jesus knew that He was God, and that this consciousness of His divinity underwent in Him its developments.⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 107.

⁴⁷⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 119.

⁴⁷⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 119.

Of particular importance is Maritain's indication that the consciousness of Jesus-*viator* is shaped by both his acquired knowledge and knowledge stemming from his divinized supraconsciousness. In order to understand more clearly what Maritain means by this affirmation, we must refer back to his application of the principle of the asymptote to Jesus.⁴⁷⁶ Recall that the knowledge of Jesus-*comprehensor* stems from his intellect being enlightened by the beatific vision and is thus the fullest knowledge possible to a created intellect.⁴⁷⁷ However, according to the same principle, in the state of *viator* the knowledge Jesus has at any particular age is the fullness of knowledge possible for that age, influenced by the divinized supraconsciousness. What Maritain means by this is that Jesus-*viator*'s knowledge increases in proportion with his life experiences, and along with "divinized" knowledge originating in the supraconsciousness, grants him the fullness of knowledge possible at that particular moment in his life.

Thus Maritain writes, "The consciousness that Jesus had of His divinity was to be much higher still at the time of the Last Supper and of the appearance before Caiphias. What I mean is that at twelve years of age, before the Doctors, He had already, with the full consciousness of His divinity, a science of the divine things more perfect and more ample than that of any man here on earth."⁴⁷⁸ Maritain indicates two key points here. First, because his knowledge and consciousness are rooted in his divinized supraconsciousness, Jesus is conscious of divine things, including his own divinity, in a more perfect manner than any other person. Second, this knowledge is not complete at the age of twelve, but with the addition of more and more acquired knowledge

⁴⁷⁶ See above, 66-68.

⁴⁷⁷ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 107.

⁴⁷⁸ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 120, footnote 75.

throughout Jesus' life, will be greater at the end of his ministry than it was when he was found in the Temple at the age of twelve. As Jesus gains further acquired knowledge, that knowledge will be processed and further enlightened in his divinized supraconsciousness. Consequently, as Jesus learns more experientially, he also gains more supraconscious knowledge of things that in turn further affects his conscious awareness.

By way of a further clarification, I would point out that according to Maritain, it is not only through the workings of his divinized supraconsciousness that Jesus is conscious of his divinity by the age of twelve. Maritain indicates that, because Jesus' humanity is free from sin, his human faculties, i.e., his intellect and will, operate in a more perfect manner than a fallen human nature would. "Finally, if it is a question of the *world of consciousness*, which Christ had in common with us,—well, whereas in us this world is wounded by sin, on the contrary in Christ it was free not only of original sin but of all sin, and immaculate, and incomparably holy from the beginning."⁴⁷⁹ Because of his sinless nature Jesus' intellect is impeccable and is able to receive and process acquired information in the light of the divinized supraconsciousness more perfectly. Thus because Jesus' humanity is not divided by nor suffers from concupiscence, he is better able to integrate and understand himself and the world around him. When Jesus-*viator's* knowledge increases, both acquired and through the divinized supraconsciousness, that knowledge is more perfectly integrated within his intellect and consciousness because he is free from sin. While Maritain attributes such intellectual and conscious clarity in Jesus-*viator* to what he receives from his divinized supraconsciousness, it is also true that

⁴⁷⁹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 58.

it is Jesus' immaculate human nature that makes such heightened supernatural knowledge possible. This would be especially true of the knowledge and consciousness that Jesus had of himself and his divinity.

A final note on the infused knowledge of Jesus-*viator* and the knowledge he has of himself and his divinity: Maritain insists that infused knowledge differs in Jesus according to the state of *comprehensor* or *viator*.⁴⁸⁰ As *comprehensor*, that is, in his divinized supraconsciousness infused knowledge would embrace “*all things* absolutely,” and, like the beatific vision present in the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus, it would remain incommunicable to Jesus-*viator*.⁴⁸¹ In the consciousness of Jesus-*viator*, infused knowledge would operate in proportion to his intellectual development and would only reveal to him “all that Jesus had need to know *at that moment*.”⁴⁸² Therefore, Maritain indicates that infused knowledge in Jesus would operate in his two states and consciousnesses in a way reflective of his explanation of Jesus' knowledge. Thus Maritain affirms that in Jesus' consciousness as *viator*, he has the added divine certainty of his own divine identity and mission as well as the things he has come to reveal to humanity through infused knowledge.⁴⁸³

It seems that Maritain includes infused knowledge in his discussion of the consciousness of Jesus as an addition to his theory of the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus. Recall that the scholastic theory of the threefold knowledge of Jesus includes beatific, infused and acquired knowledge. Maritain certainly holds that Jesus acquires

⁴⁸⁰ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 93-97.

⁴⁸¹ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 94.

⁴⁸² Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 96. In footnote 14 on the same page, Maritain adds “His infused science radiated in His consciousness and was communicable, but was received only progressively and *was not infinite*.”

⁴⁸³ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 104.

knowledge, and that Jesus' acquired knowledge reaches unsurpassable synthesis and clarity in the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus. When Maritain includes a discussion of the infused knowledge of Jesus, however, it seems that he does so more as an afterthought to his theory than as an integral part of it. His description of infused knowledge does little to add to what he has already said concerning the consciousness of Jesus, with the exception of enabling Maritain to state directly that infused knowledge gives Jesus "divinely sovereign certitude, *that He was the Word Incarnate, essentially one with the Father.*"⁴⁸⁴ Why is it important for Maritain to state that Jesus has such explicit consciousness and knowledge through infused knowledge when he has already substantiated something very similar with his theory of the divinized supraconsciousness?

Without revisiting the earlier controversies surrounding the consciousness of Christ that pre-date Maritain, I would point to them as influencing Maritain's inclusion of infused knowledge in his theory of the consciousness of Jesus, specifically the knowledge Jesus has of his own divine identity. Through the inclusion of infused knowledge, Maritain is able preemptively to avoid the possibility of censure by: 1. Demonstrating that he has remained faithful to the scholastic notion of the threefold knowledge of Jesus; and 2. Including infused knowledge in his discussion of the consciousness of Jesus. This provides Maritain a forum from which he is able to state unambiguously that Jesus has explicit, certain knowledge of his own divine identity. Unfortunately, Maritain's inclusion of a discussion of infused knowledge does not add much to his theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ. In his theory of the divinized supraconsciousness, Maritain has already accounted for Jesus' supernatural knowledge and its effect on his conscious awareness, especially of himself. A more detailed application of his theory of

⁴⁸⁴ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 108.

poetic intuition to his theory of the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus would have served to make his theory much clearer and perhaps stronger. Although it is regrettable that Maritain did not pursue this aspect of his theory more fully, his theory of the divinized supraconsciousness and consciousness of Jesus Christ is a significant contribution to the question of the consciousness of Christ.

D. Conclusion

Although Maritain's *On the Grace and Humanity of Jesus* has gone largely unnoticed by theologians, the addition of his psychological theory of supraconsciousness to the scholastic understanding of the knowledge of Jesus Christ does offer a potential advance in Christological studies. Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ affirms the scholastic theory of the threefold knowledge of Jesus in its essentials while carrying it further with the aid of his philosophical psychology. By applying his earlier theory of supraconsciousness, and proposing that in Jesus his supraconsciousness was divinized by the beatific vision, Maritain has found a means of expressing the reality of Jesus' supernatural knowledge while simultaneously maintaining Jesus' true humanity. This is seen most clearly in Maritain's disagreement with St. Thomas over the interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel (2.52). To grow in knowledge is a characteristic that applies to everyone who is truly human. If this is a true statement, then it must also be true for Jesus' humanity. Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Jesus Christ enables him to demonstrate true intellectual and personal growth in Jesus while also affirming his having divinely certain knowledge, especially of his own divinity.

Polanyi's contribution to this work is his theory of tacit knowing. In showing that we have real knowledge of things that are not always able to be articulated or demonstrated, Polanyi has moved beyond the strict scientism of his day. Of particular importance is Polanyi's demonstration that what we are explicitly aware of, i.e., our focal knowledge, is built upon and sustained by subsidiary elements that we know tacitly. In some cases what is tacitly held is also able to be brought into our focal awareness. However, there are many more cases where our tacit knowledge remains tacit, i.e., it remains unable to be specified. Still what we are focally aware of is real knowledge even though we are unable to specify one or more of the subsidiary, tacit aspects of that knowledge; in fact, it is real knowledge only because of those subsidiary, tacit aspects.

When we examine Maritain's theory of the consciousness of Christ in light of Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing, two things become clearer. First, we are able to seriously consider Maritain's hypothesis that the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus, while not providing explicit knowledge to the intellect or consciousness of Jesus-*viator*, nonetheless does affect and influence his consciousness and knowledge. In other words, what is derived from the divinized supraconsciousness of Jesus-*comprehensor* affects and influences the explicit knowledge and consciousness of Jesus-*viator* in a tacit manner, similar to the way all human knowledge and skill is derived from subsidiary knowledge. Second, Polanyi's theory enables a greater understanding of genuine growth in Jesus' knowledge, especially of himself. The degrees of Jesus' awareness of himself as a divine person rests without his necessarily being aware of them, or all the subsidiary, tacit components of that knowledge. Every instance of self-reflection, every experience, every moment of prayer would further expose some tacit, underlying aspect of his explicit

awareness of himself to his explicit, conscious awareness. Jesus' consciousness and knowledge of himself as being divine would be real knowledge even if all the underlying particulars of that knowledge are not explicitly known by him, specifically those originating in his divinized supraconsciousness.

Maritain's contribution to Christological studies, then, is his theory of the divinized supraconsciousness and its interaction with the consciousness of Jesus. While affirming an absolute and perfect knowledge in the former, the heart of Maritain's theory lies in the latter. That Jesus experiences authentic intellectual and conscious development is fundamental to his being genuinely human. In his explanation of the impact of the divinized supraconsciousness on the knowledge and consciousness of Jesus-*viator*, Maritain is able to affirm that Jesus' knowledge of the world and of himself is certain knowledge, though it is not absolute knowledge—meaning it is able to increase and to grow. All this being true, Jesus' knowledge of his divinity does not diminish his humanity, but according to Maritain makes it possible for “the image we have of the humanity of Christ” to become “more really human.”⁴⁸⁵ Polanyi's theory helps to make this position more credible by corroborating and filling out Maritain's psychological picture of Jesus as a deeply human one. Thus Maritain leaves us to contemplate a Jesus who, “though he was in the form of God ... emptied himself” (Phil. 2.6-7) and truly entered into solidarity with our human condition.

⁴⁸⁵ Maritain, *On the Grace and Humanity*, 50.

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