PERSONS AND CAUSES: BEYOND ARISTOTLE

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Abstract: While Aristotle does not consider (as Libet) the physical universe causally closed, his understanding of causality is insufficient: 1. Aristotle does not grasp the indispensable role of persons for the "four causes" he distinguishes: Physical efficient causality can neither explain itself nor the entire chain of physical events, nor is it the primary form of causality, nor sufficient to explain personal agency. Also formal and final causality are inexplicable without persons. Without the essential relation to persons efficient, formal, and final causes are impossible and unintelligible. Moreover, Aristotle attributes wrongly fundamental traits (to be the source of individual being and the ultimate subject of form and change) to material causality as such, which is incorrect, because these traits belong more perfectly to spiritual persons. 2. There are entirely new causes of human acts that cannot be subsumed under the four causes encountered in intentionality, cognitive relations to objects, human motivation and behavior etc., which, when reduced to efficient causes (let alone to mere brain-causes) are entirely misconstrued. If such a reductionist causal theory were true, its truth would destroy the cognitive value of the theory itself which advances such a causal reductionism. Therefore a personalist rethinking of causality is necessary.

THE FOLLOWING paper has grown out of an extended research project I have directed[1] dedicated to the thesis of Benjamin Libet and some other brain scientists who deny positive free will but maintain that we do possess some negative free will of vetoing voluntary movements or actions. Libet and many other far more deterministic brain scientists and many philosophers assume that, if freedom exists at all in a causally completely or well-nigh completely closed physical universe, it can do so only in a tiny corner of the universe, and in a restricted, almost unnoticeable, negative and secondary way. In other words, the underlying framework of such a philosophy is that causality exists only or at least primarily in the physical nature and mental events and realities are effects of physical causes, brain causes and others initiating in a big Bang or in evolutionary processes which produced what we call "persons" and keep producing mental events through physical causes.

One possible way to criticize Libet's and other scientists' view and challenge to free will is to show that it contains a complete reversal of the order of causality and that it suffers from a "forgetfulness of the person" and of her crucial role in the order of causes. But before showing this in relation to the merely implicit philosophy of brain scientists, I thought it wise and necessary to tackle this question by a pure return to things themselves, and in dialogue with an incomparably greater philosopher, the

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intellectual giant Aristotle, whose philosophy of causality I will critically examine in this paper. In a later paper I will address the theory of Libet under this aspect.

I. Subject and Purpose of This Paper

In the history of a philosophy of causality Aristotle is no question a giant, if not even the single most important philosopher of causality, in particular by his enlarging the concept of causality and by his having shown that all thinkers that preceded him, upon asking why a thing comes to be or exists, what its cause is, have referred only to one or two of its causes, not to the entirety of four quite distinct causes that account for the being and becoming of things and all of which have to be known in order to answer the question why a thing is and whence it came from. Aristotle gives an equally simple and beautiful illustration of these four different causes - a sculptor who makes a statue: the artist (a) uses a certain matter; (b) must give it a certain form; (c) must engage in activities through which the form is given to matter; (d) must have a purpose for the sake of which he makes it (for example to be used in worship in a temple or simply for the sake of its beauty). Particularly if the statue is a portrait or represents a great hero or god, we can (e) identify the exemplar which the statue imitates as a fifth cause (exemplary cause, which plays hardly any role in Aristotle but a huge role in Plato and in the whole Platonic tradition of philosophy up to the present).

Now while Aristotle, already through the example by which he illustrates the four causes, the sculptor who makes a statue, has taken into account many aspects of the relation between persons and causes, he has had a limited understanding of the central significance persons play for all and particularly for some causes. Taking the classical Aristotelian discovery of the four causes as my starting point, I will attempt to show initially the essential connection of these causes to persons. Above and beyond this, I intend to show that in the world of human consciousness and of volitional acts there are a variety of other causes that cannot be reduced to the four, thus showing still more the insufficiency of the Aristotelian discussion of causes when it comes to the explanation of causality in the world of persons.

The question about the first principles and causes of being and change in the world plays an overriding role in Aristotle's and in most subsequent metaphysics.[2] The Aristotelian concept of cause is far more extensive than the modern one, which tends to reduce the complexity of causes to efficient causality alone and to a small part thereof. It might therefore be better to use, besides the term "cause," expressions such as ground, principle, element, condition, etc., in order to do justice to the breadth of the Aristotelian quest for the *aitía* and *arché* of things.[3] Aristotle means with "cause" nothing more and nothing less than all those factors which are decisive for the coming about and the being of a thing. Turning to "things themselves", he makes

[2]See Reale 1976: 23 ff., where one finds a brief but important summary presentation of this theme in Aristotelian metaphysics.
[3]Reale 1976: 31 ff.

the tremendous discovery of four fundamentally different sorts of causes of being and becoming: a) the formal cause or essence (whatness) of things; b) the material cause out of which or in which change occurs or form is received; c) the efficient cause, through the power of which a change is effected or a being is; and d) the final cause, for the sake of which something is or is done. Following Plato, later thinkers added the exemplary cause as a fifth cause, while others subordinated the exemplary cause – the model, ideal or paradigm – to the category of a (transcendent) formal cause.

In this paper, I will try to show mainly the following things:

1) Aristotle, with most of the subsequent tradition of philosophy, does not sufficiently realize the essential connections between the four causes discovered by him and persons; without such an understanding, however, these four causes can only be understood very imperfectly. An investigation into the relation between persons and causes will show, among other things, that specifically personal acts, in particular knowledge and free actions, can so little be explained through physical causes that on the contrary the whole order of causality in nature and in human affairs can solely be appropriately understood if we recognize first that none of the classical Aristotelian causes, and in particular efficient and final causality, can be understood without understanding their various relationships to, and ultimate dependence on, persons.

2) Aristotle mistakenly believes that there are only these four causes of being and becoming, while on the level of persons we find many other and fundamentally different *kinds of causes* which are totally irreducible to the four causes.

II. Persons and the Four Traditional Causes

A) Some Reflections on Aristotle's philosophy of the four causes.

a) *Formal Cause:* According to Aristotle, the most important *aitía* (I often will use this Greek term for cause because we are too much used to employing the term cause solely for efficient causes) is the *ousía*, which term, understood as cause, does not refer to *substance* (another meaning of '*ousia'* in Aristotle) but to the formal cause, i.e., the essence[4]. Aristotle believes that it is possible to reduce all other ultimate grounds of the explanation of a being to its formal cause, which he calls the "first cause",[5] speaking of it as the primary ground, highest and ultimate cause of all beings, such that in the last analysis Aristotle holds that also the final cause, for the sake of which something is or a person acts, coincides with the formal cause.[6]

[4]The "formal cause" can also be called the *morphé* and *eidos*, the *tí eînai* or the *tò tí ên eînai*. See Reale 1976: 23, 34, 37 ff., 54, fn. 104. See also Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Z 17, 1041 b 27-28, H 3, 1043 b 13-4.

[5]Reale 1976 rightly sees in the primacy of the formal cause in the *Metaphysics* a certain influence of Platonic philosophy on Aristotle, in particular because Aristotle also uses the expression „paradigm'.

[6]See Reale 1976: 23 ff., 31 ff. Given that with the word *ousía* Aristotle means not only the formal cause, but also substance, one may have some doubts about whether Aristotle means just a primacy of substance or one of the formal cause as such.

If "formal cause" is to encompass the essence and intelligible structure of a being, the formal cause undoubtedly is an absolutely elementary principle of all being and becoming.

Unlike Plato, Aristotle sees the formal cause almost exclusively in terms of the form *in things*, rejecting the timeless Platonic forms. While Aristotle, who calls the forms eternal and seems to hold that they exist in the immovable 'active intellect', can hardly be interpreted in the sense of *entirely* immanentizing the formal cause in things and denying any forms transcendent to things, he nevertheless moves in this direction.[7] Now, we fully acknowledge, with Aristotle, the primacy and character of reality which is attributable only to the essence *in individual things*. Still, concrete individual things remain subjected to the "*rationes aeternae"*, the "eternal reasons" which contain the essential foundations and timelessly valid and unchangeable necessary 'essential plans', rules, and laws for them.

Thus there are significant reasons which would compel us to carry out a critique of the thesis suggested in Aristotle's sharp criticism of the Platonic doctrine of eternal forms, that the formal cause can only exist *in real particular* things as their immanent essential form.

b) *Material Cause or the 'in which' of change–source of individuality?* Aristotle also acknowledges the material cause (*hyle, hypokeimenon*), for example, bronze for a bronze statue, which is according to him particularly, or even exclusively,[8] necessary for sensible things.

There is certainly an evident and objective distinction between the form or the essence and the material of which a physical thing consists. Matter in this sense is not a subject but a constituent element of material things.

Very different is the distinction between the subject that undergoes change and essential or accidental essential determinations and changes which a given entity undergoes, found in most every process of becoming,[9] not only in one that occurs in the material world.

At closer inspection, Aristotle uses two entirely different notions of "material cause": one simply refers to the ultimate *subject* of essential determinations and change, that which underlies change and *in which* change occurs (the *hypokeimenon*); the other is the pure principle of 'stuff', of "matter", the *physical* substratum *out of which* material entities are made or by which they are, together with their form,

[7]Particularly his critique of the Platonic doctrine of the Ideas. On the need for recognizing, in addition to the formal cause as essential form *in* concretely existing beings themselves, essence as *eidos*, as the essential intelligible *ratio*, which precedes all contingent beings because of its timeless and eternal intelligible unity and necessity, see Seifert 1996: ch. 1. With his rehabilitation of *eidetic* causes, Seifert introduces within the formal cause, in addition to the form immanent in beings, the exemplary cause, and adopts thereby a Platonic or better said Augustinian philosophy of exemplarism.

[8]See the foundation of this claim of the exclusivity in this direction in Reale 1976: 24ff; 34 ff.; 50.

[9]I prescind here from such changes as are involved in the movement of time itself that does not seem to occur "in" a subject. See the discussion of time in Josef Seifert 1989, ch. 10.

constituted. At the foundation of the already formed materials (such as bronze), also called "secondary matter" (*deutera hyle),* lies that pure principle of materiality which Aristotle characterized as *prime matter (prote hyle)*, and which (in later scholastic terminology of the "the prime matter quantitatively distinct", the "materia prima quantitate signata"), according to Aristotle is the source of *individual* being and essence.

To identify these two meanings of the cause which Aristotle calls material cause contains a serious confusion. For in the wider sense of material cause as the underlying subject of formal (essential) characteristics and change every finite being, and therefore also a spiritual person, insofar as something happens in her, can be considered as a "material cause," i.e., if this is understood as any something which can possess or receive a "form" (essence) and in which change occurs (as any "in which"/*en hoo*). Aristotle recognizes this to some extent in the idea of the "second matter" (*deutera hyle),* an already formed material subject of new accidents and forms, such as the bronze which is material cause for the statue distinct from "prime matter" and already is a material substantial thing that has a form.

Besides, Aristotle's claim that sees the sole principle of individual being in the material cause (prime matter) implies that solely and exclusively the material cause is responsible for individual things and that spiritual substances are pure (non-individual) essences. Thus Aristotle attributes on the one hand to the material cause the tremendous metaphysical function of being the only source of individual being. On the other hand, Aristotle attributes to both the material cause and individual being a very limited significance, as it is according to him just needed and extant in the material universe.

Now, in material entities matter (distinct from form) fulfills to some extent truly the two roles Aristotle attributes to it: being the source of individuality and being the ultimate recipient of form. But these two decisive roles of the type of cause here considered must not at all be attributed to matter in all beings.[10] It is untenable to derive all individuality, least of all the individual spiritual unicity and unrepeatable and indivisible "thisness" of persons, from the pure stuff out of which material entities are made (*materia prima quantitate signata)* and which – in virtue of its extension and multitude of parts and other predicates – can never account for personal individuality.

On the other hand, we may ask: Does not the material cause, understood as any "*in which,"* as any bearer of forms, have a far deeper significance than that which Aristotle concedes to it, by not just appearing within material reality as stuff of which they are made, but by being a foundational principle and cause also for all spiritual forms of becoming. For also a spiritual substance or person is the bearer, "that wherein" essence (form) exists and change can take place. This second and far more fundamental type of "in which" goes beyond the sphere of physical reality and should actually not be called "material cause" but rather be designated by the more abstract

[10]See Seifert 1989 a: ch. 8-9.

Aristotelian terms *en hoo* ("in which") or "*hypokeimenon"* (that which underlies change).

The confusion of these two things may have suggested itself to Aristotle by the fact that in the material world matter to some extent really performs all of these functions (being the recipient of form, the subject of change and form and the source of individuality) though rather the synthetic unity of matter and form, than matter alone, accounts for the individual thisness of material things.

c) *Efficient Causality:* From the formal and the material causes Aristotle distinguishes the efficient cause, through the power and efficacy of which something happens. With this, he has certainly fastened upon another originary kind of causality in an indubitably phenomenological manner. He also gives a formulation of the principle of causality, formulating it simultaneously in relation to efficient, formal and material causes: "Everything that comes to be, comes to be through something, from (out of) something, and as a certain something" (*Metaphysics*, VII 7, 1032a). Only the first and third one of these three propositions contained in Aristotle's formulation of the principle have universal validity and express the 'eternal truth' of the principle of causality that also underlies all natural sciences (besides being the ground of all other explanations of human, moral, spiritual, or any other contingent things, events, and states of affairs): "Everything that comes to be, comes to be through something;" and; "Everything that comes to be, comes to be … as a certain something." The second proposition, 'Everything that comes to be, comes to be … from (out of) something' relates only to the causation of material things that are made out of some material by any (human or divine) agent and, still more narrowly understood, to the production of things through finite agents who can never create anything "from nothing" – which would be the most radical form of efficient causality –, cannot create spiritual substances at all, and can make material things only 'out of *preexisting* matter'.

This causality by the power of which something happens is unfortunately again limited by Aristotle to the sphere of sensible realities, leaving his metaphysics open to the critical question of whether only sensible things have causes or even can themselves be efficient causes, wherefore that pure spirit of the absolute, divine being, according to Aristotle, only influences the world as final cause, *"as the beloved"*[11]. While Aristotle admits at times the absolute efficient causality of free agents and even assigns to it a primary paradigmatic character,[12] Aristotle attempts

[11] See Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, XII, 7, 1072 a 26 ff. See also Reale 1976, 305, for an explanation and for references to the sources of this Aristotelian doctrine.

[12] Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, ed. F. Susemihl (Leipzig: Teubner, 1884). Greek online edition in *Perseus.*, 2.6.8-9; 1223 a 3 ff., describes free will powerfully, attributing to it that we are lords over the being or non-being of our acts: "Therefore it is clear that all the actions of which a man is the first principle and controller may either happen or not happen, and that it depends on himself for them to happen or not, as he is lord over their being and of their non-being. But of those things which it depends on him to do or not to do he is himself the cause, and what he is the cause of is from himself. And since virtue and evilness and the actions that spring from them are in some cases praiseworthy and in other cases blameworthy (for praise and blame are

frequently to reduce the efficient cause to the material world. At other times, he tries to reduce the efficient to the formal cause. In such a manner the formal cause would appear to be *the* fundamental principle of generation.

Admiring his tremendous discoveries, we will have to offer an incisive critique of some of the Aristotelian theses regarding efficient causality.

d) *Final causality:* The final cause, the *telos*, is defined by Aristotle as the end of a thing or of an action, as that *for the sake of which* (*hou heneka)* something is or happens. This end, according to Aristotle, coincides with the good and is the ultimately moving and most important cause in the universe, which Aristotle at times identifies with the essences (formal causes) of things, especially in living things which are an *en-tel-echy*, a being that has its end in itself as the form it is called to actualize.[13]

We now proceed to the most significant section of the first part of this paper, an examination of the personalist dimensions of the four causes which were largely overlooked by Aristotle – to the detriment of a proper understanding of the four causes.

B) Persons as Principles of Explanation of Aristotle's Four Causes

The last one in particular, but also the third and in some respects even the first two of these four causes can be understood in their ultimate specificity and efficacy only if metaphysics is not limited to being merely a metaphysics of substance and

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not given to what necessity or fortune or nature determine but to things of which we ourselves are the causes, since for things of which another one is the cause, that person has the blame and the praise), it is clear that both goodness and badness have to do with things of which a man is himself the cause and origin of actions. We must, then, ascertain what is the kind of actions of which a man is himself the cause and origin. Now we all agree that each man is the cause of all those acts that are voluntary and purposive for him individually, and that he is not himself the cause of those that are involuntary. And clearly he commits voluntarily all the acts that he commits purposely. It is clear, then, that both moral virtue and evilness will be in the class of things voluntary." Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 2.6.8–9; 1223a3 and following (transl. mine): ὥστε ὅσων πράξεων ὁ ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν [5] ἀρχὴ καὶ κύριος, φανερὸν ὅτι ἐνδέχεται καὶ γίνεσθαι καὶ μή, καὶ ὅτι ἐφ᾽ αὑτῷ ταῦτ᾽ ἐστι γίνεσθαι καὶ μή, ὧν γε κύριός ἐστι τοῦ εἶναι καὶ τοῦ μὴ εἶναι. ὅσα δ᾽ ἐφ᾽ αὑτῷ ἐστι ποιεῖν ἢ μὴ ποιεῖν, αἴτιος τούτων αὐτὸς ἐστίν: καὶ ὅσων αἴτιος, ἐφ᾽ αὑτῷ. ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἥ τε ἀρετὴ καὶ ἡ κακία καὶ τὰ ἀπ᾽ [10] αὐτῶν ἔργα τὰ μὲν ἐπαινετὰ τὰ δὲ ψεκτά （ψέγεται γὰρ καὶ ἐπαινεῖται οὐ διὰ τὰ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἢ τύχης ἢ φύσεως ὑπάρχοντα, ἀλλ᾽ ὅσων αὐτοὶ αἴτιοι ἐσμέν: ὅσων γὰρ ἄλλος αἴτιος, ἐκεῖνος καὶ τὸν ψόγον καὶ τὸν ἔπαινον ἔχει）, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ καὶ ἡ κακία περὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἐστιν ὧν αὐτὸς [15] αἴτιος καὶ ἀρχὴ πράξεων. ληπτέον ἄρα ποίων αὐτὸς αἴτιος καὶ ἀρχὴ πράξεων. πάντες μὲν δὴ ὁμολογοῦμεν, ὅσα μὲν ἑκούσια καὶ κατὰ προαίρεσιν τὴν ἑκάστου, ἐκεῖνον αἴτιον εἶναι, ὅσα δ᾽ ἀκούσια, οὐκ αὐτὸν αἴτιον. πάντα δ᾽ ὅσα προελόμενος, καὶ ἑκὼν δῆλον ὅτι. δῆλον τοίνυν ὅτι καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ καὶ ἡ [20] κακία τῶν ἑκουσίων ἂν εἴησαν. In other texts Aristotle calls free will also "the first principle", "the cause" and "the lord of action". See Aristotle, *Magna Moralia*, 87 b 31 ff., especially 89 b 6 ff.; *Nichomachean Ethics*, III; and *Magna Moralia*, 87 b 31 ff., especially 89 b 6 ff. The moments of self-dominion, self-governance, and self-determination have also been investigated in fine analyses by Karol Wojtyla in his *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka *(*Boston: Reidel, 1979).

[13]See Reale 1976: 23 ff.

nature, but also is, or becomes, comprehended as a metaphysics of the person qua person.

This should become particularly clear in the case of the last two causes, and I begin therefore my exposition with their analysis: *Efficient causality can only be understood through the metaphysics of the person.* This can be seen through the following reasons:

(1) We find the most authentic embodiment of efficient causality exclusively in personal free will. Every other efficient cause, as Augustine states in *De Civitate Dei*[14], receives it efficacy from without, and operates only to the extent to which it itself is the effect of other causes (actions, processes or events). Therefore only persons who act freely can be properly speaking efficient causes because they act more than being acted upon.

Even plants and animals, despite their spontaneity and activity of their own, cannot properly be considered as authentic efficient causes because their being causes is not wholly but largely determined by preceding causes in their instincts and nature, and by extrinsic causes to which they react. Therefore, such causes that are determined by other causes and consequently rather are mere "transmitters" of the force of other causes than being causes in their own right clearly never suffice to explain human action. (Aristotle concurs with Augustine on this at times).

Free will alone can be considered an efficient cause that is essentially more efficient cause than a causally produced effect, because only free will as the '*principle par excellence*' embodies the *ratio* of the efficient cause in the fullest sense, being truly the origin of that which happens through it. Free will alone can in an authentic sense be that *through which* something is, insofar as the origin of its efficacy lies in the free agent himself. Free will is the only cause in the fullest sense of efficient causality, since it alone truly originates and exerts efficient causality rather than merely passing it on. The free act constitutes either an absolute beginning (in divine freedom) or (in human persons) "acts more than it is acted upon" and thereby constitutes a true, and in a limited sense even an 'absolute', beginning of efficient causality that is not caused from outside the free agent. Therefore, as Augustine says in sharpest contrast to the discussion of causality in most of contemporary brain science and philosophy, non-personal beings and impersonal things and events cannot even properly be considered as efficient causes at all; the existence of such causes that are themselves determined by other causes can therefore never be the whole story about efficient causality because, in the last analysis, they do only what free wills do with them. (The necessarily limited sphere of their operation, which always begins in causality through freedom, does not contradict free actions but on the contrary, these presuppose the – limited realm and dominion of – "determined causes" under laws of nature, which is never the principal cause of human actions but is used by them).[15]

Thus the first one of all efficient causes is the person, since she alone is properly speaking a cause rather than being a mere transmitter of the causal impact of other causes through which she is determined.

[14]Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, V.
[15]See Ingarden 1970.

(2) We touch thereby a second moment. All other efficient causality, with the exception of causality in and through free will, leads us back to a principle of its efficacy distinct from itself. Solely the free and simple initiating and setting into motion of a chain of causes is a true beginning of a chain of efficient causes.

In fact, without free agents there would be an infinite chain of causes but, as Aristotle Aquinas, and many others including Kant saw, there cannot be an infinite chain in the realm of causality. Therefore, only free will is the ultimate and first principle of explanation of all efficient causality in a contingent world, and therefore also the absolutely first cause of the contingently existing universe, whose origin and existence requires an efficient first cause that can only be a free cause.[16]

(3) We can thirdly ascertain that free will is not only the most authentic embodiment and the only true beginning of efficient causality. Rather, in the personal form of efficient causality there lies a radically other and higher type of efficient causality than that which is thinkable within the sphere of apersonal beings. Therefore, a metaphysics understood as the explanation of the highest cause of all things must necessarily be a personalistic metaphysics. What are these new elements efficient causality takes on solely in free will?

(a) First off, in free self-determination and in free acting lies a unique form of efficient causality for the reason that we are dealing here with a conscious causality, in which the effect proceeds from a conscious act such that the consciousness is a mode of personal free agency and causation which we therefore do not call just causing but acting or making (creating). Because a personal being, broadly speaking, possesses his being in a fully new sense in comparison to impersonal beings, because he is conscious of himself and consciously enacts his own being, he therefore also possesses himself in a unique manner through free auto-determination and through the free and creative production and constitution of things and actions in making and acting.

(b) To free causality not only belongs consciousness but also the specifically personal and rational consciousness as a moment inseparable from it, without which this form of causality would be completely impossible; only the spontaneity of an irrational animal could exist. In acting and making, new states of affairs are not simply engendered or changed in an unconscious, mechanistic manner and not even just in an instinctual, or in the less irrational conscious way like a dog's saving his master, but still without possessing rational knowledge of his life's value. Instead, in the intentional, object-directed acts of making and acting the person directs herself consciously and meaningfully to that which he or she realizes, aims at the realization of things or of states of affairs, calls them freely into being. This relation of the person to that which is real outside of herself includes thus wholly distinct forms of relation and efficient causality that are found only on the level of the person. To comprehend them is necessary in order to unfold the philosophical grasp of efficient causality.

[16]Plato has understood this far more clearly, particularly in his *Timaios.* Also Kant, if we prescind from his skeptical and subjectivist understanding of freedom as postulate, has seen this much more clearly – for example, in the *Third Antinomy* in his *Critique of Pure Reason.* See Kant 1968. See also Seifert 2001.

Also for this reason only on the basis of a personalistic metaphysics efficient causality can be properly understood.

(4) *Free will as an immediate experience of efficient causality:* Moreover, in this free causality, as we carry out the conscious act of causation, of engendering our own acts, in acting and making, the causal power is itself immediately and consciously given; we are ourselves identical with the subject of this power: we experience the flowing out of effects from the cause, at least in the engendering of free acts as such and, in a less strong sense, also in doing and making things through mental acts and bodily actions. Here we do not just understand or infer causal relations but experience them immediately.

(5) *Indubitable evidence of efficacy and efficient causality in engendering (causing) free acts:* The causal influence and efficacy proper to free will of bringing into existence acting itself, research, and in particular willing itself, also represent the classic instances in which efficient causality is given with evidence in the immediate experience of causing acts from our own will "which would not exist if we did not want them," of which Augustine says that it is in a sense even more evident than our existence. This applies also, though more weakly, to the causality found in bodily action that is mediated by all kinds of unconscious physiological processes, but it applies absolutely to the mode in which persons cause and engender their own free acts since nothing lies so much in their power of causation as willing itself. And nothing could be more evidently given in knowledge. For even if we could doubt our very being, believing that we might be deceived in this, we could not doubt our free will of not wanting to be deceived. And indeed we know of our freedom with the same type of immediate and reflective evidence with which we know of our own existence.[17] The awareness of our own free will – a knowledge which is so evident that it cannot be deception – is part of the evidence of the Cogito as unfolded by Augustine.[18] And the existence of free will in us is so evident that its evidence in a certain sense is more primary and indubitable than that of all other evident truths given in the *Cogito.*[19] For even if we could be in error about all things, which is impossible, as Augustine sees, it would still remain true that we do not want to be in error and of this free will we can have certain knowledge:

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[17]Investigating this matter more closely, we could distinguish between the evident givenness of freedom on different levels, a) in the immediate inner conscious living of our acts, b) in what Karol Wojtyìa calls "reflective consciousness" (which precedes the fully conscious self-knowledge), and c) in explicit reflection and self-knowledge properly speaking in which we make our personal freedom the explicit object of reflection, d) in the insight into the nature of freedom, an insight which grasps the necessary and intelligible essence of personhood, which is realized in each and every person, and e) in the clear and indubitable recognition of our personal individual freedom, an evident knowledge which depends, on the one hand, on the immediate and reflective experience of our being and freedom, and, on the other hand, on the essential insight into the eternal and evident truth of the connection between freedom and personhood.

[18]See Hölscher 1986. See also Seifert 1987: ch. 4-5. See also Seifert 1998: 145-185.

[19]Of course, this priority is not to be understood absolutely, for without the evidence of our existence and thinking activity also our freedom and will could not be given.

> Likewise if someone were to say, "I do not will to err," will it not be true that whether he errs or does not err, yet he does not will to err? Would it not be the height of impudence of anyone to say to this man, "Perhaps you are deceived," since no matter in what he may be deceived, he is certainly not deceived in not willing to be deceived? And if he says that he knows this, he adds as many known things as he pleases, and perceives it to be an infinite number. For he who says, "I do not will to be deceived, and I know that I do not will this, and I know that I know this," can also continue from here towards an infinite[20] number, however awkward this manner of expressing it may be.[21] On the other hand who would doubt that he ... wills...? For even if he doubts, he ... *wills* to be certain; ... Whoever then doubts about anything else ought never to doubt about all of these; for if they were not, he would be unable to doubt about anything at all.[22]

The evidence of this knowledge cannot even be refuted by any and all possible forms of self-deception because these imply or presuppose already the evidence of free will.[23] And in this indubitable evidence of free will also the causality in *engendering free acts* is given.

With the free causality of our engendering our own free acts and causing them, with the causality of free will, also another dimension of efficient causality, linked to free will itself, becomes accessible to us: namely the way in which we freely perform bodily actions and through them cause changes in the world, i.e., the causality of realizing states of affairs (through acting) or things (through making) in the external world through our free initiative. Thus with this absolutely evident givenness of our engendering our free acts themselves, also a less absolute but still very clear evidence of us being efficient causes of works, books, buildings and other objects and events is accessible to us. Therefore, besides the "causality of free will itself" also "causality through free will," mediated through the brain and body, the freedom to act and to change the world by our actions, is unambiguously given to us, though it is not given with equally indubitable certainty as the causing of our willing itself.[24]

We find in the ability freely to intervene in the world, and thereby to realize things and states of affairs outside of the person, again two specifically personal and originary types of causality, namely making (*poiein*) and acting (*prattein*), which

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[20]McKenna translates the *infinitum numerum* (wrongly, I believe) by ‚indefinite number'.

[21]Augustine 1970: 480-2.

[22]Augustine, *De Trinitate*, X, 10, 14. See also, Augustine, *Contra Academicos*, II, xiii, 29, *ibid.*, III, 23; *De Vera Religione*, XXXIX, 73, 205-7; *De Trinitate* XIV, vi, 8; *ibid.*, XV, xii, 21; *De Civitate Dei* XI, xxvi.

[23]The indubitable knowledge we can gain regarding our freedom refutes also the theory of Hume (of the non-givenness of causality), which considers almost exclusively forms of causality given within the material, sensible world, being also wrong about them. Cf. Hildebrand 1994: 2- 27. Seifert 1987: ch. 4-5.

[24]Therefore the positions of occasionalism or of a pre-established harmony between our will and external bodily actions (Geulincx and Leibniz), according to which our bodies are moved "on the occasion" of our wills and harmony with them, is not a senseless, although a wrong theory.

must also be considered from the point of view of a metaphysics of causality. In making and creating, the person brings some things into existence, in various degrees of radicality which range from producing mere technical products to creating intellectual or artistic works. In acting, the person realizes states of affairs in relation to already existing things.

In both cases, the person also realizes acts in herself and determines herself, whether through the unique and direct causality by which she calls her free acts into existence, or through the human and moral effects of these acts on herself as a person. And this allows us to see a sixth way in which efficient causality requires the understanding of personal beings in order to be properly understood.

(6) *The free subject as a self-determining efficient cause:* We see in the light of the preceding reflections that the person herself, and thereby a spiritual being, i.e., the human person as such in her spiritual aspects, is and can be an efficient cause and agent of free interior acts as well as an object of efficient causality, in that freedom with essential necessity does not merely bring into existence external objects and processes, but also inner acts. Indeed free will has, above and beyond acts performed by the person, the person herself as primary object, even though normally by turning in the first intention to other persons and values outside the person, but it acts at the same time upon the person of the free agent herself in a peculiar form of reflexivity which is inseparable from the exercise of free will.[25] This unique case of auto-determination and auto-causation of free agents does not happen only in the obvious manner, such as in free decisions, for example, or in the free act of calling into existence thinking itself, or research, and other acts and activities, but rather also in the sense in which the person, on the basis of that which she does in her conscious actions and of that at which she aims, also determines herself in a far deeper and farther-reaching sense than the one in which the person can change any material being or animal let alone the one in which animals can cause changes in the material world or the world of plants and animals.

Self-determination is an effect of the use of free will, and thereby an absolutely unique form of causality, in which, as the philosopher Wojtyła profoundly explains[26], not only objects and states of affairs outside of the person are the objects of action, but the person herself, who in her free acting gets hold of her own self, becomes good or evil, and determines herself in a completely unique manner. In the self-determination of the free subject or of the free substance itself lays therefore a unique form of causality, which is unthinkable within the sphere of impersonal being and even in the outward-directed efficient causality of the person.

The actualization of the deepest potentialities of the person cannot happen without the free will of the person. The distance, which metaphysically speaking separates the good person from the evil one, also gives witness to the efficacy of free will upon its own proper subject, and this effectively contradicts the Aristotelian limitation of efficient causality to the sensible-material world. In fact, it becomes

[25]See on this Wojtyła *1979*.
[26]See Wojtyła 1979: Part I, ch. ii; Part II, ch. iii.

clear that efficient causality is not only also possible with spiritual substances, but lies rather – in its fullest sense – exclusively in their sphere.

All of these insights of a metaphysics of the person also refute the third Aristotelian thesis noted above, according to which efficient causality is ultimately reducible to formal causality. This thesis turns out to be clearly incorrect. An agent who acts freely in such a way that his act is a matter of free choice cannot possibly act simply in virtue of his essence or nature and therefore free will as efficient cause cannot be reduced to the essence or formal cause of the agent.[27]

We can see that this is impossible both when we consider the moment of inner self-determination and when we consider efficient causality through free will, in which states of affairs or events outside the person, or at any rate outside of the free acts themselves, are realized, but freely intended and realized by the subject. When we think of that unique form of causality found in personal acting, through which events, processes, states of affairs and causes (which for their part involve further ends of acting) outside of the person are freely realized by the person, we understand that if they were a mere outflow of our essence, and thus reducible to "formal causes", they would precisely not be free. Thus it becomes clear in this case of free external action that the essence (the formal cause) in no way coincides with the efficient cause. Free will as efficient cause is essentially distinct from the formal cause and likewise from all effects and states of affairs that are realized simply through our having a given nature. The same holds for the free creation or making of artifacts, and above all of works of art. Here the free act of the person, which remains immanent in the person but still possesses transeuntive efficacy, cannot possibly be identified with the form which the material object, such as the work of art for instance, receives, or with our own essence or that of our act. Likewise, no other object or other state of affairs, realized through making or acting, possesses the same essence as its efficient cause, nor do the acts that produce these things, let alone their causal effects, coincide with the agent's essence.

Even those effects within the moral sphere in our own person, such as the goodness or wickedness of the person herself, effects that are far more intimately linked with free acts than the objects produced by us, are distinct from the cause which brings them into existence. This is shown clearly from the fact that the acts and the actions through which someone becomes good or evil have long passed away or can at least lie in the past, while their effects continue to remain in the person. In addition to this, the permanent personal characteristics of evilness or goodness possess an ontic character wholly different from the individual acts or actions from which virtues or vices, good or evil actions, and their effects of guilt or merit arise.

B) *A Metaphysics of finality must be a personalistic metaphysics as well:* In the case of the final cause it is even more immediately evident and more easily seen than in the case of efficient causality that exclusively the metaphysics of the person can

[27]Even in the case of procreation, which comes closes to coincide with the formal cause, efficient and formal cause remain different, the (efficient) causal activity in procreation, which is effective for a limited period of time, is not reducible to the formal cause of the progeny, which continues to exist after the act of generation.

perfect the classical metaphysical doctrine of the causes. Indeed a final cause "for the sake of which" something is or is made must remain thoroughly incomprehensible without the metaphysics of the person. Again, we can find at least two reasons for this dependency of all operation of final causality on personal beings:(a) If the end, as Aristotle emphasizes with full justification, must in the first place be identified with a good (even though the two notions are distinct and human persons can have evil purposes for their actions), it becomes evident that the final cause cannot at all be a cause in itself, since the goodness and value of a being are not of themselves capable of bringing anything extrinsic to them, such as acts of persons, into existence, or of being per se the explanatory principle of a thing or becoming. The value is itself a 'consequential property' of things, as Ross say,[28] and this makes it impossible to classify it among the efficient causes, or among the natural causes at all. Rather, the only manner in which the good (the *agathon* or *kalón*) can work is that of an efficacy mediated through knowledge and personal acting. Only through the sphere of conscious personal knowledge and of the free acts motivated by this knowledge can the good become a cause.

Therefore, it is also no linguistic accident that the end and similar concepts can be used for both the objective finality which we find in nature or technology as well as for the goal of personal acts. To speak of the purpose of events in lifeless nature, such as of the obviously existing finality of organs in organisms, means always to assume an efficacy of meaning and of the good which, as becomes evident through deeper reflection, can only happen through the mediation of personal knowledge and freedom. And therefore an atheistic metaphysics has no justification in admitting finality and meaning in nature, wherefore atheists like Richard Dawkins and others fight so fiercely against any admission of a purpose and plan and final causality in nature, though few things could be more evident than the presence of final causality in nature and no biologist could possibly understand the function of any organ without recognizing its purpose and function for the organism.[29]

To remain within human experience, we immediately recognize when we find a work of art or other beautiful man-made things, artifacts, machines; none of which occur in nature, that a human agent has been at work and has acted as efficient cause for the sake of an end.

With this we touch upon one of the greatest weaknesses of Aristotelian metaphysics, that is, his doctrine according to which the unmoved mover (God) attracts the whole of reality only as final cause and as the object of love, but not as efficient cause.[30] This implies on the one hand a mythologization and personification of non-personal creation, as if it were able to know the good and realize it for the sake of being good, and on the other hand overlooks the deepest metaphysical function of efficient causality in the form of free will, and above all of divine creative freedom, through which alone final causality can operate in nature. Of course, also in non-

[28]See Ross 1960: 280 ff.
[29]See on this Spaemann and Löw 1981.
[30]Some interpreters of Aristotle, such as Carlos A. Casanova, believe, based on some texts, that this usual understanding of Aristotle is incorrect.

personal beings certain things can objectively *be* the means, and others the ends. There is no essential necessity whatsoever that would forbid that final causality, a relation in which one thing serves another and exists "for the sake of the other," actually exists in impersonal machines, natural objects or irrational living beings. On the contrary, in nature and in machines we obviously find countless means-ends relations, which precisely must be designed by an intelligent person because neither water nor stars, neither a plant nor an animal possess any intelligence of their own and therefore the extremely intelligent order found in them allows us to infer that they have an intelligent maker. The operation towards ends, be it in nature, in technology, or in art, can only be explained by an intelligent and free efficient cause, a person endowed with intellect who orders the means towards values and ends, or who makes certain things for the sake of achieving others.

(b) But personal beings not only are causes and conditions necessary for the operation of any final causality in nature or in artifacts; they also embody final causality in an entirely new and higher form which is far more intimately connected with, and inseparable from, personhood. For we find in the personal realization of a goal itself, in personal acting which is related to a final *telos*, the most perfect and a principally different form of final causality, which is radically distinct from the finality that is instilled by a person upon a machine or exists in an organism. The ends we find in the sphere of persons have a fundamentally different meaning. This is particularly evident in the sphere of ethics, where the radical essential distinction within finality, between the free desire to realize an end in actions through which the person becomes good or evil, and mere natural causality and objective finality, which as such (except *as freely willed* and thereby as a personal end) could never ground moral values, is obvious.

Within the sphere of personal finality, we must still distinguish the objective *finis operis*, the essential goal inscribed in a certain kind of action such as life-saving or murder, from the subjective *finis operantis*, the extrinsic purpose, goal or motive of accomplishing an act. Both objective essential ends and subjective purposes of acting are specifically personal forms of finality which are by this very fact radically distinct from any finality possible in nature or art. We can ponder the ethical relevance of both the essentially objective personal end of an act and of the subjective end of the acting subject. This distinction regards fundamentally distinct forms of specifically personal goal-directedness and finality. Only a personalistic metaphysics sees the dependence of final causality on persons and recognizes at the same time the fully new way in which finality is realized in the various forms of a free and conscious turning of the person to various ends. The personal value of this turning towards these ends can never be measured morally speaking only in relation to consequences of acts, which to do is the grave error of ethical consequentialism.[31]

C) *Formal causality as well can be understood only on the basis of personalist metaphysics:* A deeper reflection shows that also the philosophy of the formal cause can only be completed through a reflection on personal being. It is indeed no accident

[31]See Seifert 1985.

that Aristotle, in treating of the four causes, always draws examples in which the person imprints a form onto some matter. He chooses the example of the sculptor, who makes a statue out of bronze, or he speaks of the silver coin, whose form was stamped by a person onto a piece of silver. We can see the need to complement a philosophy of formal causality by personalist metaphysics through the following six reasons.

The form is, in contrast to matter as such, something explicitly "spiritual", i.e., something not strictly material even when it exists in material things. As immaterial principle, it is in some ways akin to persons and has something in common with them, and is above all ordained to be known and bestowed on matter by them. This leads us to recognize a second relation between formal cause and person:

While form (formal cause) itself embodies another, radically different form of the "spiritual" than personal being, it proceeds from, and is addressed to, personal spirits. The forms are "spiritual" not by being or possessing a personal spirit but by being intelligible and meaningful in a manner completely different from the material cause and ordained to personal minds. "Form" is something which can only be grasped by a mind and which, because of its intelligibility, has a specific ordination to the mind not found in material causes (although also these can only be known by the mind): they lend themselves to be understood by persons. This holds true of the essential forms and formal qualities of life-less things, plants and animals. Form, even when it exists objectively and independently of spirit in nature and more obviously when it exists in a completed work of art after the death of the artist, is ordained nevertheless in a deep and meaningful manner to the spirit, which alone can grasp it as such, and to which it is addressed in virtue of its meaningfulness and articulateness, value and beauty.

Many forms do not even exist in things themselves, but only on the level of appearances which direct themselves already *as appearances*, and not only in virtue of their form, to the person and in some sense depend on the person, thus differing from the *thing in itself*, i.e., from those characteristics of being and essence which belong to a thing's autonomous and mind-independent reality.[32] The appearance is here the real thing, for example music is not identical with the objective waves studied by the physicist but coincides with what only a person can perceive *as music* and in its inner meaning. Some of these forms which depend on appearances are even less part of a world of things conceived wholly apart from persons than others. The form of a work of art or the tones of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, for example, that constitute this work of art as a work of art, do not exist "in physical nature" in the same sense as do air waves or the material characteristics of a sculpture or work of architecture, even though also here the human or more generally speaking the personal aspect of them depends on persons.

The contingent existence of eternal and necessary essences (forms) in the world can only be caused by persons as efficient causes. Neither the knowledge of form nor its being impressed upon the material and any sort of contingent being found in the world, find adequate explanation without reference to the existence and the activity of

[32]See Seifert 1987, ch. 5-6.

a person.[33] This is even true when the form and essence of such formal principles as numbers or the laws of space and time or of movement are necessary (still their being concretely embodied in material things is not, but is contingent).

A special case: Temporal and eternal 'forms' whose laws cannot take their effect in the physical world by mere objective essential necessities but only by freedom. Whenever a form and a meaningful unity are realized in matter in such a way, however, that this form is both meaningful and could be different, such as in all the different species of plants and animals and the human body, it is even more impossible to consider either accident or blind and non-spiritual matter, or irrational living causes, or ideal objects and *eide* themselves, as sufficient grounds for the coming into existence of such forms, which is one of the key insights expressed by Plato in his *Timaios* and which renders in this respect his *metaphysics* superior to that of Aristotle.[34] The proof for the existence of God from the finality of nature depends upon this same foundational knowledge that the spiritual unity of meaning and the finality of forms within nature are such that purely accidental, material and non-thinking causes or substances could never sufficiently explain them.

The reference of the formal cause to the person becomes even more evident when one thinks of those forms which are not *contingent* and can for this reason be imposed on material objects only by persons, but which, while being *essentially necessary and timeless, can nevertheless be realized solely by the mediation of personal freedom.* That contingent man-made or historically and culturally changing rules of taste, of style, of conventions and customs can influence objects and become formal causes only by the intervention of free agents is not difficult to understand. But that there are also *absolute essential necessities* which can only operate by the mediation of freedom is a particularly striking fact and leads to an important distinction within essential necessities.[35]

There are some essentially necessary laws, for example of motion, which are automatically realized in each object that falls under these laws, for example any moving object.[36] But there are others which, while their essential and absolute necessity renders impossible any dependence of these ultimate formal causes (*eide*) themselves on the human spirit or on material and historical facts, nevertheless, in the form of eternal laws of oughtness, exert their influence on human affairs or on the

[33]See Seifert 2010, ch. 3 and 4.

[34] Understanding this superior personalistic insight of Plato also excludes the common interpretation of the demiurge as a mere symbol or allegory. See Reale 1997; 1993; see also Seifert 2000; and the same author 2002: 407-424.

[35] When we consider the dependence on free will solely within the sphere of essential necessities, which must be distinguished from 'contingent necessities of nature' and from all non-necessary and accidental essences and essential unities of such-being, another highly significant dependence of formal causality on persons becomes clear and a significant distinction must be drawn within essential necessities. See on this Hildebrand 1991; see also Wenisch 1988: 107-197. See likewise Seifert 1976a; the same author1987; 2009.

[36]See Reinach 1989 b: 551-588.

world only by the mediation of personal freedom.[37] With respect to them only the freedom and understanding of a person, and this in a new sense, can achieve the passage between the intelligible and the real world.

Formal causes within the world of persons: Moreover, many forms, essences and essential structures are realized only in the person and the spirit, while they are not at all found in the material world. Among these are the essences of all personal acts, of personhood itself, of the good, of happiness, of love, of justice, etc. Many of these, moreover, are pure perfections, and therefore central objects of metaphysics.[38] For this reason also, a metaphysics of form can clearly only be brought to its completion through a metaphysics of the person.

D) *A phenomenological-personalist critique of the Aristotelian metaphysics of the material cause as source of individuality: spiritual substances (ousia) are not "pure forms".*

(a) The strange view of Aristotle[39] (that exerted also a considerable influence on Aquinas)[40], that spiritual substances are something like species or genera is closely bound up with his conception of matter as *the* principle of individuation. In the metaphysics of Aristotle, matter is the ultimate principle of individuation.[41] Aristotle holds that the form as such does not admit of the distinction between species and individual, and that in a purely spiritual world in which no matter exists, there could only exist pure forms. Aristotle thus attributes to the material cause understood as pure matter a tremendously important role as *the* principle of individuation, a view that entails the thesis that spiritual substances can only be "pure forms", and do not allow for the existence of concrete and individuals spirits and spiritual beings, i.e. persons.[42] He is convinced, however, in stark contrast to the logical consequence of the view that spiritual substances are not individuals, which would make them

[37] In addition to absolute and essentially necessary *eide*, it is also necessary to admit the existence of ideas, which can be discovered, which precede the forms in temporal things. All individual things and the laws of nature are subordinate to atemporal ideas and necessary essences (*eide*), which do not merely possess an articulation and precision of meaning, but also belong to a intelligible cosmos which as such subsists without beginning or end, and which Augustine 1961 saw as grounded not in a purely ideal Platonic world of ideas, but in the divine spirit. See Seifert 2000, ch. 1.

[38] See on this notion of *pure perfection*s Scotus 1962; see also Seifert 1989, ch. 5; the same author 2004: 65-82.

[39] See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV, 3, 1070 a 10 ff.; XI, 2, 1060 a 3 ff.; IV, 8, 206 ff.; 215 ff.; 298 ff.

[40] See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 75, a. 7. To be sure, Thomas holds in other places (which, in my opinion, cannot be brought into agreement with the many sections on matter as principle of individuation) that the soul possesses esse as well as individuality in itself (*Quaestio Disputata de Anima*, a. 3, 2 ad 5).

[41] It is also the ultimate bearer of the *hypokeimenon*, which receives the *actum primum* of the essential (substantial) form and is the origin of every other similar function of bearing characteristics.

[42] See, against this, Boëthius' definition of the person „*persona est naturae rationalis individua substantia',* and many others. See on this also Crosby 2004; and Seifert 1989, ch. 9.

entirely incapable of experiencing or thinking, that these forms are 'pure act' and can execute acts such as knowing.

In many respects, and in particular from the point of view of an adequate metaphysics of the person, it is necessary to criticize this conception.[43]

(i) First, Aristotle seems to have accepted with this position an equivocation of the concept 'spiritual' which goes back to Plato, and in particular to the *Phaedo*.[44]

In this equivocation – as Duns Scotus, Suarez, Edith Stein, and Dietrich von Hildebrand have pointed out – the personal soul, the personal spirit, comes very close to being an abstract universal and both are considered to be similar, while these two, though both are different from matter, are utterly distinct. And so we find also in Thomas Aquinas the assertion that a separated soul, were it not for its ordination to some matter which individuates it, would have to be a universal form, such as the color white[45]. We have to criticize this conception, by pointing, together with Scotus and Suarez, to the ultimate originary datum of "spiritual individuality of persons," and showing that the originary datum of concrete individual being is in no way restricted to the sphere of matter, and cannot at all find its ultimate explanation in *materia prima quantitate signata*. Rather, it is rooted in a far more originary and fundamental manner in spiritual, personal being. It is not necessary to develop this critique here extensively, but only to present it briefly, since it helps to illuminate the confusion which underlies the Aristotelian philosophy of material causality.

(ii) Secondly, we find here the error of considering the form as such, including that which is abstract and ultimately divorced from every plurality and concreteness of individual being, as *act*, and to endow it with those characteristics which could not subsist in universal forms as such, but can solely exist in real and concrete, individual beings. On this point, Aristotle is overly Platonic, not too little Platonic. That is, he ascribes to the universal principles, of which he claims that they could not possess in any way individual existence, characteristics and a supremely real existence, which can only belong to the concrete and individual *ens realis*.

[43]See on this also the superb critique of Edith Stein 1962 (1986).

[44]*Phaedo*, 79 a ff. There, it is asserted that because neither the soul nor the universal, abstract, non-individual forms are visible, audible or in any other way perceptible through the senses, the soul and the abstract forms must be similar to each other. From the atemporality of the universal forms is deduced the immortality, or eternity, of the human soul. As much as this argument of Plato's for the immortality of the soul contains many deep truths, in particular the truth of the reciprocal ordination of personal spirit and universal, spiritual principles of form, there lies nevertheless a fundamental equivocation in identifying spirit in the sense of the most concrete, most individual being with the spiritual in the sense of universal abstract forms, or even in considering these two realities as similar.

[45]See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I q. 75 a. 7. This equivocation was discovered in a seminar held by von Hildebrand in Salzburg in 1964, and is contained in an unpublished manuscript which is part of the collection of his unpublished works.

Aristotle overlooks the fact that only the concrete individual personal spirit can participate in the abstract forms *cognitively*, and therefore can absolutely not itself be an abstract form.[46]

The irreducibility of the explanatory principles of reality to the four causes, the specifically personal explanatory principles of being and the person as cause.

We have already seen that a metaphysics of the *aitíai* and of the *archaí* can only be completed through a metaphysics of the person and that a reduction of efficient causes to material and physiological ones reverses the order of causes and is a topsy-turvy theory of causality because it entirely overlooks personal agency as a prime form and explication of causality. But many more questions remain. I now wish to turn to the question of whether the Aristotelian thesis that only the four causes which he distinguished could possibly exist is correct, or whether this thesis does not rather show that the Aristotelian *Metaphysics* – despite the sublime explanation of the unmoved mover in book XII which makes Aristotle a father of the metaphysics of spirit and indeed of personalistic metaphysics – is overly rooted in a naturalistic model of being, and does not do justice to the objective demands of a metaphysics of the spirit and of the person[47]. Moreover, it is in turning to these specifically and exclusively personal forms of causes that we will go farther beyond Aristotle than we have done until now.

A) The intentional subject-object relation as a metaphysical relation irreducible to any of the 'four causes'.

We must first of all take into consideration that relation and that dependence which we find between object and subject in intentional acts. This relation, which is further differentiated into still more specific relations which nevertheless all share the common moment of a subject consciously directing himself to an object, is already insofar fully *sui generis* as it is necessarily *conscious*. Moreover, it is impossible to characterize the object of an intentional act as the form of this act, or to characterize the dependence which an intentional act can have on its object, through which it is to a certain extent "formed", as a case of formal causality. The decisive point lies precisely in that the personal subject reaches out beyond his own act and takes spiritual possession of the object of consciousness. Perhaps it is better not to treat of this fundamental intentional relation in the abstract, but rather to treat of it as it is modified in the concrete forms of dependence between intentional objects and various intentional acts. Such an investigation will better illuminate the fact that also

[46]Far from considering with Aristotle and St. Thomas that being an abstract spirit and being free of any principle of individuation is a condition for the ability to know abstract forms, we must say: were the knowing spirit itself abstract, it could never know the universal. Aristotelianism likewise overlooks the fact that the person can also know unique, individual forms and individual beings as such, something which Scotus both saw and explained with great penetration and which is the condition for concrete conscious human life, human action and in particular human love, gratitude, etc.

[47]With regard to the reduction of all *aitíai* and *cause* to the four distinguished by Aristotle, see his *Metaphysics*, A 3, 983 a 25 ff. See also Reale 1967: 25. See also Schwengler 1960, in particular vol. II: 26.

generally speaking, the dependence between intentional object and intentional act is of a fully unique character, and is neither reducible to material nor to final causality.

B) The irreducible transcendent relation and the metaphysical relationship of dependence between the act of cognition and the object of cognition.

Let us first think of the *cognitive relation*. When a spiritual subject knows that a particular state of affairs in fact obtains, we find necessarily in this cognitive relation a transcendence in virtue of which more than an immanent content of the cognitive act is realized in the subject. Rather, the *knowing* subject really and intentionally reaches beyond himself and grasps reality as that which it is. Even a 3 year old girl who understands the question and request of her grandfather to please tell her daddy to call back on Skype after dinner, understands, and enters into a cognitive relation with, a question and a request that are wholly different entities from her understanding.

It is necessary to stress that in this relation there also lies a real relation of dependence, in which the subject, or his really existing act, really depends on the being that is known. This being, however, is in no way the formal cause or the essence of the act, an act which rather possesses essential characteristics (such as conscious enactment, for instance) which can in no way be predicated of the object known (e.g. the perceived donkey or the intuited principle of non-contradiction), and which can in fact be contradictorily opposed to the essential marks of the known object.

If however the object which is grasped in knowing is not the formal cause or the essence of the act which grasps it, one could be tempted to consider this relation as a case of efficient causality. But this is also in no way satisfactory. On the contrary, if the act of knowledge were merely the effect of the object known, let alone of brain events which would have the role of efficient causes of knowledge, then the specific cognitional relation as such would thereby be dissolved. In fact, if the act of knowledge is merely determined by an object through which it is causally evoked, then knowledge as such is in no way explained. Indeed, if the act of knowledge is causally produced by an object, by a material thing for example, through material processes in the body which then have this act as a result of their efficient causal force, then the subject could never know whether this purely natural causal chain in fact results in a content of consciousness which corresponds or does not correspond to the real nature of things. "Knowing" would then lose its cognitive character and its object would be just an immanent content of consciousness which has an external cause in the material world. Moreover, its content would not be dependent on the nature of the things that are the *object of knowledge* but on blind chemical and physical causes which as such have nothing to do with the nature of the objects known, such as a chain of chemical causes in the body bear no resemblance to the headache they cause. A dependence of "knowledge" on a pure series of physiological or physical natural causes could not explain knowledge at all. Just as a computer hardware and software or archive does not allow the computer the slightest *knowledge* of whether the product of the physical causes that produce its output, corresponds to reality or not, it would be with all human cognition; there would not exist any act of *knowledge* whatsoever. (Besides, the meaning of the computer output does not consist

in the physical signs but in their conceptual meaning which is not produced by physical causes at all). In this way, by a materialist causal theory of brain causation of knowledge – instead of assigning to brain events a decisive but subordinate and merely mediating and serving role for knowledge – knowledge would not be explained, but abolished, and a materialist brain scientist, not only when he seeks to explain free actions but also when he seeks to explain knowledge by mere physical causes, would destroy the entire basis of his own rational scientific knowledge which, instead of knowledge, would be nothing but an accidental product of physical causes.[48]

The authentic cognitive relation and its unique form of dependence on the object of cognition presuppose that the reality cognized discloses itself to the knowing spirit in a manner that is not a mere case of efficient causality, but rather a real-intentional participation in the being itself as it is. This spiritual act is certainly really dependent on its object, but in a specifically transcendent kind of relation and spiritual participation, which precisely constitutes the cognitive relation as such and excludes that cognition can ever be a mere effect of the object known, but rather is a real-intentional participation in, and an intentional being-determined-by, the object.

That this relation cannot be one of efficient causality already follows from the fact that many objects of knowledge are not material entities, are indeed often not at all real beings, but either abstract universal essences or purely ideal images and relations, or even consist merely in a lack or privation of being, as in the case of the knowledge of nothing or of certain kinds of negative states of affairs and evils that are mere privations of being such as total ignorance, which obviously could not be the efficient causes of real acts such as those of knowing.[49] We can add that states of affairs, which are a chief object of knowledge, never are efficient causes because states of affairs do not at all have the character of things or events and their operations.

We find then in the way in which the act of knowledge is determined by its object a wholly unique relation, which includes a clear metaphysical dependency of the act on its object and which therefore must be taken into account, if the metaphysician wishes to investigate all the forms of *aitíai*, but which cannot be classified as any of the four *causes* discovered by Aristotle.

Naturally, it would be senseless to claim that the being known is the material cause or the final cause of the cognitive act.[50]

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[48]See Seifert 1972: 62 ff., 67 ff., 69 ff.

[49]See Millán-Puelles 1990/1996.

[50]Despite any relationships of finality which may obtain between the object and the act of cognition, we cannot conclude that the fundamental nature of the cognitive relation and of the form in which a real being, namely the act of cognition, is dependent on another ideal, real, or any other kind of object, is a relation of finality. It would certainly never seriously enter into anyone's mind to assert for instance that mathematical knowledge is a means to the realization of mathematical laws (something which is excluded already by their eternity and necessity), or to analogously interpret the cognitive relation as a relation of finality.

C) Motivation as a metaphysical ground of explanation sui generis of volitional acts and the fundamental importance of metaphysics of the person for ethics.

Something similar also holds for the relation of motivation. In the sphere of motivation, a real being, namely a free act, is in a certain way called into existence by something else, namely, the motivating object or its value and other forms of importance, but our acts are not caused by these motivating objects alone but as well by the will of the subject. The specific uniqueness of this relation lies in the fact that the object known does not from itself engender the intentional act related to it, as may happen in the case of knowledge, but that the act is engendered both through the motivating object and through the mediation of the free spontaneity and self-determination of the subject, and in fact becomes the cause of the free act only if the subject freely opens himself to the motivating power of the object. Moreover, besides the object, the free person herself remains a decisive cause of the act.

It is one of the reductionist tendencies in ethics and in philosophical anthropology to interpret the relation of motivation in the light of one or the other of the four Aristotelian causes and in terms of one of the forces in a parallelogram of forces. Thus, it is maintained that the motivating object brings the motivated act causally into existence, through mere efficient cerebral or psychological causes. Such determinism neither does justice to the datum of motivation nor to the evident datum of free will. On the other hand, those philosophers who reject determinism cede easily to the opposite temptation to explain the free act purely in terms of an unmotivated arbitrary and senseless "pure spontaneity" of the subject, asserting that the motivating object, or its importance, have no foundational influence on the subject and his act. The latter view recognizes as free only wholly unmotivated, unplanned, arbitrary, senseless and purposeless volitional acts which are also the kinds of acts, besides urges that have nothing to do with free acts, which Libet investigates in his famous "empirical tests of free will."[51] On an incomparably higher intellectual level, also Kant assumes in his ethics, in order to avoid determinism and eudemonism, that the free act must not in any way be motivated by the object.

In reality, however, the motivating object or its motivating importance is certainly a decisive ground that brings about our acts, but those things that motivate our free acts cannot in any way on their own force be the *cause* of a free act. They can perhaps become causes and reasons of our intentional affective experiences by their own power, motivating these emotions of joy or of mourning in a way we cannot resist and that does not stand within our own power. But motivating objects can become causes or reasons for our free acts' existence exclusively through the mediation of the spontaneity of the free subject; even less can the volitional act be explained through pure physiological efficient causes. Thus, the motivating object is in an entirely new sense the cause or reason to act, which does not contradict, but presuppose freedom of the will. On the other hand, the attempt to divorce the causes and reasons of a free act entirely from their motivating object does not explain free

[51]See —— (and Haggard, P.) 2001: 58; and Mele 2009; and Habermas 2004a: 27; Habermas 2004b: 871-890; and Habermas 2005: 155–186.

will but sheer arbitrariness. Only an understanding of the irreducibly new phenomenon of motivation can overcome these two opposite errors which have the same root: a complete misunderstanding of the kind of personal reason and cause a motive is for human actions. The completely new relationship of the motivating object being the reason for a free act is possible only on the level of the person, because the object does not bring the act into existence by its own power alone but only through its being known and additionally through the free acceptance and cooperation of the free spontaneity of the subject with the potentially motivating power of the object in its importance and value, to which the person has to speak an inner free "yes" in order that the motive be allowed to become co-cause of our free act.

D. The particularity of the specifically personal causes

Personal causal relations, at least most of them and the ones we have considered thus far in this paper, presuppose, with absolute necessity, consciousness in its specifically personal rational form. That these personal causal relations are not at all conceivable within the mere material or the physiological world of brain events, while all other four causes can be realized in non-personal nature, already shows that this metaphysical ground of explanation for being or becoming is of a nature sui generis, and that it does not allow its being reduced to the other four causes, let alone to mere physical efficient causality, as Libet attempts.[52]

One could name many other such relations and causes which play a role solely in the sphere of the person.[53]

E. The relation of 'due relation' as another personal causal relation

Let us consider another one of many metaphysical relations and causes. This cause or reason contributes to the coming into existence of real personal acts, but only on the basis of knowledge and freedom. This relation throws light on the ultimate *raison d'être* of being and of the world as such. I mean that relation which von Hildebrand more than any other philosopher has investigated, namely that of "due relation" (*Gebührensbeziehung*).

Every being demands, to the extent to which it is possesses intrinsic value, a due response, a response appropriate to the rank of its value. Every being that is a bearer of intrinsic values deserves to be affirmed for its own sake, it deserves a response of joy because it is objectively something gladsome, it deserves the response of

[52]In the *Phaedo*, precisely in the context of the metaphysics of the person, Plato has clearly pointed to the distinction between efficient causes and conditions, a distinction which is of fundamental importance for the discussion of the body-soul problem, as has been demonstrated in other works. See Plato, *Phaedo*, 99 b. See also Seifert 1973, 1989 b: 143 ff.

[53]Among the other causal relationships which are not reducible to the four causes we find also the specifically personal relation of dependence and foundation which lies in reflection, where the act which is reflected upon and its dependence on its subject and its rational nature are the explanatory grounds for the possibility of reflection. Likewise, that relation belongs to the specifically personal causal relations, in virtue of which the inner structure and logic of acts such as that of promising, brings into existence other beings, such as obligations and rights which proceed from promises. See Reinach 1953; 1989c; see also the English translation and commentary on this book in Reinach 1983: xxxiii-xxxv; 1-142.

reverence or respect which recognizes its own proper worth and dignity, it has as it were a "right to" an act of affirmation in which its objective worthiness that is to be affirmed actually finds a corresponding free affirmation on the part of the subject.

This due relation culminates in that principle which lies at the root of the personalistic ethics of Karol Wojtyła , Tadeusz Styczeń, and other important ethicists of our time for whom the person merits affirmation and love for her own sake, *persona est affirmanda propter seipsam et propter dignitatem suam* (the person is to be affirmed for her own sake and for his or her own dignity).[54]

That the infinite Good demands recognition and affirmation before and above all else, indeed demands an adoring love, the call for which flows out of the nature of the absolute Good, to whom alone the highest love and recognition must be given, excludes any interpretation according to which this adoring love would be a mere arbitrary act of the will or obedience to positive law.

Free persons can affirm and love the good, and through the fulfillment of this relationship can realize a unique kind of goodness, namely that of moral goodness and of love. No non-personal nature can fulfill this relation; no non-personal being can bring into existence real acts that stand in such a due relation to their object. This can be accomplished only by free and conscious subjects. Although the due relation is not itself a conscious relation, it appeals to a conscious rational subject capable of knowing the good and giving it the "right response." No non-personal nature or alleged cerebral efficient cause of volition can give the value response which is due to goods, as Hildebrand would express it.[55]

It is likewise impossible to consider this relation as exclusively one of finality. We must, precisely in order to do justice to the ultimate *telos* of the world,[56] free ourselves from any interpretation of the world as a system or network of relations of means and ends. Neither the relation of an act being due to a good nor an act of love is an instance of a mere relation of final causality. That an act is due to a being does not mean that it serves that reality to which it responds in the sense of being related to it as a means. Rather, the "for the sake of," "for the love of the other" as it is intended in fulfilling the due relation, is a form of relation absolutely different from final causality. In it, the reality of the act, which gives to the object a response which is appropriate and due to it, is taken completely seriously and is not subordinated to the object or other person as if it were a mere means, but in a very different "reverential" way of subordination because a respect, reverence or love are simply due to a person.

The essential distinction between due relation and final causality becomes clear above all in the fact that the good to which the response is to be given in the most profound instances in which this due relation is realized does not at all depend on the response for its realization. Thus, God is neither the goal nor an end to be realized in adoration, and yet adoration still occurs above all for the sake of God himself, since all praise and all adoration is due to Him because of his infinite holiness. It would be fatal to assert that because God requires nothing and because human acts are of no use

[54]See Styczeń 1979.
[55]See Hildebrand 1978: ch. 17 and 18.
[56]See on this Seifert 2007.

to Him, acts of adoration are performed only for the sake of human persons themselves, and not for God's sake. In such a position, final causality is excluded with full justification, but it is overlooked that the far deeper sense of *propter hoc* in the sense of the fulfillment of the claims of due relation demands that adoration be performed above all 'for the love and for the sake of God'. This shows how important it is to avoid every reduction of due relation to final causality and every confusion of the two meanings of *propter hoc*.

We touch here upon still another form of causality which classical metaphysics and ethics generally overlooked and misinterpreted, namely, the relation of superabundance or of superabundant finality. This relation is found in the relation between moral goodness and happiness, or between happiness and love.

Similar to due relation, this relation is not itself a conscious personal relation, but is nevertheless realized primarily, though not exclusively, but in an essentially different way, in the sphere of conscious personal being. Traditional metaphysics and ethics view also the relation between love and moral virtues to happiness in the light of a relation of pure finality, considering love or the moral life of the human person as a means to the end of happiness.[57] In reality however, the deepest moral life of the person and the deepest love arise for the sake of the beloved being or for the sake of the beloved person, and is in no way a means to one's own happiness, which Aristotle considers as the highest good. Happiness may never be considered the end of moral acts in such a way that the moral life and the love of the person *become* merely a means to the fulfillment of one's own subject, as Maritain holds – despite his deep analyses of the character of Antigone and critique of eudaemonism.[58]

Whatever superabundantly springs out of love, namely happiness, arises only then when love and the beloved are taken seriously and affirmed for their own sakes. Only if we love another person for her own sake, and if our love is in no way a means to the end of making ourselves happy, can we truly become happy. The misapprehension of this relation of *superabundance* lies at the root of numerous anthropological and ethical errors such as hedonism and Aristotelian eudemonism, a danger overshadowing also a great part of medieval philosophy.[59] Here once again the elementary importance of an adequate metaphysics of different causes becomes evident. It is not only indispensable for an appropriate understanding of causality but also decisive for philosophy of the person, philosophical anthropology, ethics, and of course for any adequate religion and theology.

In view of this short discussion of specifically and uniquely personal types of causes we recognize the unfortunate reduction of the extent of causes which Aristotle gave rise to by his rash judgment that his indeed fundamental distinction between the four causes is a complete one and can sufficiently account for what occurs in the primary kind of being, the being of the greatest dignity: the person. Not only was it a fatal mistake not to recognize the incomprehensibility and inexplicability of the four

[57]See Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, passim.
[58]See Maritain 1962, ch. 9.
[59]For its critique see also Scheler 1966. See also Hildebrand 2009, ch. 10. See also Seifert 1976b.

causes without doing justice to the unique role persons play in and for each of them. Not only was it one of the most serious errors to absolutize the role of material causality for the constitution of individual beings or to deny the unique individuality of immaterial beings like souls or persons, and to overlook the far superior mode and ground of the spiritual individual being of persons. But it was an equally great mistake that has many tragic consequences for ethics and philosophical anthropology not to recognize those reasons and causes which explain human knowledge and action, the movements of the human mind and heart, and which can in no way be regarded as subspecies of the four causes. Thus we have to go beyond Aristotle and to rethink the immense complexity of causes in the light of a philosophy of the person.

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