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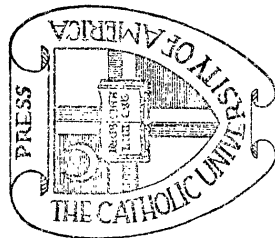
THE SOCIAL ROLE OF TRUTH
ACCORDING TO
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS
A STUDY IN THOMISTIC SOCIAL
PHILOSOPHY

BY

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*To Christ, the Way,
the Truth and the Life*

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P R E F A C E

There is at hand a concrete example to explain the purpose and method of this dissertation. It concerns an individual whose story is told in the Gospels. The religious implications of that story are not our problem here; the social implications are. The history of the man in question has been chosen for that reason.

Pontius Pilate, St. Luke tells us, in the course of his conversations with Christ asked: "What is truth?" Of the motivation for such a question we are not certain. One can doubt that it was sincerely uttered. But suppose the Roman Governor had a burning desire for the answer to that problem; suppose he had received that answer; suppose he had directed his action in conformity with it.

In view and outlook Pilate must be classed among what we today call agnostics. For him only one thing was certain, namely, there was no objective truth. That attitude becomes more and more evident as he conducts the trial of Jesus. He is not at all convinced of the guilt of the prisoner brought before him. As a matter of fact he stated definitely that he "finds no cause in him."

Yet step by step he yielded weakly to the artfully applied pressure of men bent on destruction. Finally he issued the order for capital punishment. In the whole affair Pilate was untrue to himself, untrue to the Roman State and Law which he represented; and—because of the unique character of the One brought to judgment—untrue to Truth. Of such issue is untruth in personal and public life.

The agnosticism of which we cite Pilate as an example is just as devitalizing today. Indeed, in the light of modern developments, agnostics are themselves struggling against their mental enervation. Like Pilate's its undermining effects have weakened even to their foundations the personal, social and religious life of our time. In consequence the stark contrast between the betrayal from indifference to truth and what it should mean to society is, even though no positive contribution were made, a telling argu-

ment. However, we need not confine ourselves to a contrast. The teaching of St. Thomas is positive enough—over and above its critical application to present thought—to offer a definite solution.

Truth is not so lightly dismissed. The mere fact that man frames the question, What is Truth? is his highest prerogative for good or evil. Presently in this dissertation the truth theories of Communism, National Socialism and Humanism as well as their effect on society shall be examined. In the light of Thomistic teaching the examination will take the direction of St. Thomas' contention that error is the corruption of truth. More than that any strength it evidences is due to the mutilated truth at the bottom of it.

The denial of objective truth is in its turn denied by the conduct of man. No small part of the allegiance from the followers of the philosophies of society above mentioned comes from the conviction of their truth. Today, though, many are turning from these philosophies because of their principles and the results of these principles in the practical sphere. But where to turn? Rejection—emotional, or even intellectual—is not enough. The question still remains: What is Truth? To that question we offer the solution of St. Thomas Aquinas. Its strength for the individual and society, we are convinced, lies not in its presentation by insinuating rhetoric, nor in verbal abuse of its opponents, and, least of all, not in its adoption under the compulsion of brute force. It finds its strength in its own true principles which are the fruit of long, patient and humble search by a truly philosophical genius. On that ground we offer it. Any seeming deficiency is the fault of the present exponent; every bit of its true worth is the contribution of a man who single-mindedly sought—Truth.

My sincere thanks are due to my superiors, the V. Rev. Coleman Byrne, C.P., and the V. Rev. Carrol Ring, C.P., under whom my studies were inaugurated and completed. I am grateful also to Doctor Ignatius Smith, O.P., for his direction and encouragement in this work and to Doctor Robert Slavin, O.P., as well as to Doctor William McDonald for the reading of the manuscript and the corrections suggested. My thanks are due finally to the many who in one way or another aided in the completion of this work.

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CHAPTER I

KNOWLEDGE, TRUTH AND FALSITY

A. KNOWLEDGE

1. Preliminary Notions

Men want to *know* if something is *true*. Immediately two terms stand out in that sentence—*Know* and *True*. The amplification of those two words is the problem of this chapter. What does knowing mean and how does truth result from that process? Here the answer to those questions will be that of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Immediately we must clarify our position. First, we must recognize a danger. Etienne Gilson points it out in these words:

Five centuries of history divide us from St. Thomas, full of new systems or new formulations of old problems through which we see Thomism as it were refracted. The—in itself very legitimate—preoccupation to find in Thomistic philosophy the answer to questions which were formulated subsequently to it is apt to lead us imperceptibly to alter the sense of the problem as St. Thomas himself posited it, to coax his text in the direction requisite for adapting it to new problems, and sometimes even to press it for an answer with so little discretion in order to make his words bear the desired interpretation, as to endanger the equilibrium of the whole system. These are proceedings as little satisfactory to philosophy as they are to history. If we wish to find a Thomistic solution to the problem of knowledge the first requisite is that it should be St. Thomas'. In order to ensure that it be his, and not Descartes' or Kant's answer, we must come to it not with a Cartesian or Kantian problem—for problems raised by philosophers are part and parcel of the answers which they give them—but with the question, what would have been the form of the problem of knowledge if by an

organic development of its own principles Thomistic philosophy had ever been led to raise it.¹

So, a primary concern must be to present as accurately as possible what the two fundamental notions "knowledge" and "truth" meant for St. Thomas.

Secondly, we must fix St. Thomas' solution in relation to the various theories of knowledge advanced by the greatest thinkers of the West. In broad outline these thinkers have been committed to one of three great traditions, all Grecian in origin. There is *sensism*, materialistic in character, which may be said to begin with Democritus. It represents an overemphasis of the object of knowledge which is material, at the expense of the subject of knowledge, which is immaterial. Then there is *intellectualism*, idealistic in character, which has its strong beginnings in Plato. It represents an overemphasis of the subject of knowledge, which is immaterial, at the expense of the object of knowledge, which is material. Finally there is *moderate realism* whose author is Aristotle. In this last tradition we definitely find St. Thomas. In that tradition our Saint develops his teaching on knowledge and truth as an integral part of his metaphysics. As will immediately become clear he regards "knowing" as a particular manner of being and hence he conceives it in terms of the fundamental distinction between potency and act, matter and form.

2. *Dignity of Knowledge*

In a beautiful passage of the *De Veritate* St. Thomas envisions the knower as contributing to and sharing in the perfection of the universe. For him there are two ways in which a thing can be found perfect. In the first according to the perfection of its own being, in what is proper to it according to its rightful species. But because the specific being of one thing is distinct from

¹ Gilson, E., *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (St. Louis: Herder, 1939), p. 266; cfr. Phelan, G., "Verum sequitur esse rerum," *Medieval Studies*, Vol. I (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939), p. 8. "When the problem of knowledge is posited in the terms so familiar to philosophy since the seventeenth century—'How can the mind pass from knowledge to reality?'—it becomes an insoluble problem."

the specific being of another thing, the result is that in every created thing the perfection which it possesses lacks absolute perfection in the degree to which equal perfections are possessed by all other species, in such a way that the perfection of anything considered in itself alone is imperfect as being only part of the total perfection of the universe, which is born from the union of all these particular perfections gathered together in it.

So, in order that there might be a remedy for this imperfection, another mode of perfection is found in created things, according as the perfection which is the property of a thing is itself found in another thing. Such is the perfection of knowing in so far as it is such, for in the degree to which it knows the known in a certain way exists in it. And according to this mode of perfection it is possible that the perfection of the entire universe may exist in a single and particular thing.²

Another expression of the dignity of knowledge arises from a consideration of life and life's activity all round us. The activity which is a sign of life is twofold—transitive or immanent.³ A transitive action is one whose term of activity is always outside the agent and which acts not for its own perfection but for the perfection of a thing distinct from itself. An immanent action, on the contrary, has its term within the agent itself, and acts for its own perfection, and not for the perfection of something

² "Sciendum igitur, quod res aliqua invenitur perfecta dupliciter. Uno modo secundum perfectionem sui esse, quod ei competit secundum propriam speciem. Sed quia esse specifico unius rei est distinctum ab esse specifico alterius rei; ideo in qualibet re creata huiusmodi perfectioni habitae in unaquaque re, tantum deest de perfectione simpliciter, quantum perfectus in aliis speciebus invenitur; ut cujuslibet rei perfectio in se considerata sit imperfecta, veluti pars totius perfectionis universi, quae consurgit ex singularum rerum perfectionibus, invicem congregatis. Unde ut huic imperfectioni aliquod remedium esset, invenitur alius modus perfectionis in rebus creatis, secundum quod perfectio quae est propria unius rei, in altera re invenitur; et haec est perfectio cognoscens in quantum est cognoscens; quia secundum hoc a cognoscente aliquid cognoscitur quod ipsum cognitum aliquo modo est apud cognoscentem. . . . Et secundum hunc modum possibile est ut in una re totius universi perfectio existat." *De Ver.*, q. 2, a. 2; cfr. III *Sent.*, d. 27, q. 1, a. 4; I *C. G.*, 44; II *C. G.*, 47; II *C. G.*, 98.

³ In VI *Metaph.*, lect. 1; *S. I.*, I, q. 14, a. 2; I, q. 18, a. 3 ad 1; I, q. 119, a. 1 ad 2; II-IIae, q. 179, a. 1; I *C. G.*, 97; III *Sent.*, d. 35, q. 1, a. 1.

outside itself: willing for example. Now if beings possess life only in proportion to their immanent activity, and "the more immanent the activity the higher the life,"⁴ where do we place mind, the instrument of knowledge, in such a scale? At hand is a citation of St. Thomas that ranges through all the universe to supply the answer:

We find different modes of emanation and further, we observe that from the higher natures things proceed in a more intimate way. Now of all things the inanimate obtain the lowest place, and from them no emanation is possible except by the action of one on another: thus, fire is engendered from fire when an extraneous body is transformed by fire, and receives the quality and form of fire.

The next place to inanimate bodies belongs to plants, whence emanation proceeds from within, in as much as the plants' intrinsic humour is converted into seed, which being committed to the soil grows into a plant. Accordingly, here we find the first traces of life: since living things are those which move themselves to act, whereas those which can only move extraneous things are wholly lifeless. It is a sign of life in plants that something within them is the cause of a form. Yet the plants' life is imperfect because, although in it emanation proceeds from within, that which emanates comes forth little by little, and in the end becomes altogether extraneous: thus the humour of a tree gradually comes forth from the tree and eventually becomes a blossom, and then takes the form of fruit distinct from the branch, though united thereto; and when the fruit is perfect it is altogether severed from the tree, and falling to the ground, produces by its seminal force another plant. Indeed, if we consider the matter carefully we shall see that the first principle of this emanation is something extraneous: since the intrinsic humour of the tree is drawn through the roots from the soil whence the plant derives its nourishment.

There is yet above that of the plants a higher form of life, which is that of the sensitive soul, the proper emanation whereof, though beginning from without, terminates within. Also the further the emanation proceeds,

⁴ IV C. G., II.

the more does it penetrate within: for the sensible object impresses a form on the external senses, whence it proceeds to the imagination and further still, to the storehouse of the memory. Yet in every process of this kind or emanation, the beginning and end are in different subjects; for no sensitive power reflects on itself. Wherefore this degree of life transcends that of plants in so much as it is more intimate; and yet it is not a perfect life, since the emanation is always from one thing to another.

Wherefore the highest degree of life is that which is according to intellect; for the intellect reflects on itself and can understand itself.⁵

⁵ "... secundum diversitatem naturarum diversus emanationis modus invenitur in rebus: et quanto aliqua natura est altior, tanto id quod ex ea emanat, magis et est intimum.

In rebus enim omnibus inanimata corpora infimum locum tenent: in quibus emanationes aliter esse non possunt nisi per actionem unitis eorum in aliquod alterum. Sic enim ex igne generatur ignis, dum ab igne corpus extraneum alteratur, et ad qualitatem et speciem ignis perducitur.

Inter animata vero corpora proximum locum tenet plantae, in quibus iam emanatio ex interiori procedit: in quantum scilicet humor plantae intraneus in semen convertitur, et illud semen, terrae mandatum, crescit in plantam. Iam ergo hic primus gradus vitae invenitur: nam viventia sunt quae seipsa movent ad agendum; illa vero quae non nisi exteriora movere possunt, omnino sunt vita carentia. In plantis vero hoc indicium vitae est, quod id quod in ipsis est, movet ad aliquam formam.—Est tamen vita plantarum imperfecta: quia emanatio in eis licet ab interiori procedat, tamen paulatim ab interioribus extens quod emanat, finaliter omnino extrinsecum invenitur. Humor enim arboris primo ab arbore egrediens fit flos; et tandem fructus ab arboris cortice discretus, sed ei colligatus; perfecto autem fructu, omnino ab arbore separatur, et in terram cadens, sementina virtute producit aliam plantam.—Si quis etiam diligenter consideret, primum hujus emanationis principium ab exteriori sumitur: nam humor intrinsecus arboris per radices a terra sumitur, de qua planta suscipit nutrimentum.

Ultra plantarum vero vitam, altior gradus vitae invenitur, qui est secundum animam sensitivam: cuius emanatio propria, etsi ab exteriori incipiat, in interiori terminatur; et quanto emanatio magis processerit, tanto magis ad intima devenitur. Sensibile enim exterius formam suam exterioribus sensibus ingerit; a quibus procedit in imaginationem; et ulterius in memoriae thesaurum. In quilibet tamen hujus emanationis processu, principium et terminus pertinent ad diversa: non enim aliqua potentia sensitiva in seipsam reflectitur. Est ergo hic gradus vitae tanto altior quam vita plantarum, quanto operatio hujus vitae magis in intimis continetur: non

3. *Nature of Knowledge*

a. Proportions

Yet, though the mind of man is at the summit of material creation it is not without its limitations. Above we see it set forth by a comparison with all below it. Now St. Thomas places it in a cosmic frame and compares it with mind above it.⁶ Man's intellect makes him the greatest of material creatures, but, withal, the intellect of man is inferior to that of other intellectual beings, namely, the angels and God. To omit or neglect this second comparison is to throw out of perspective a genuine view of the intellectual nature of man. Immediately, then, before going on to the study of human understanding in itself, we can look for and find direction in the last named comparison. A continuation of the last quotation from St. Thomas summarizes the point we would make:

The human intellect can know itself, but because it knows nothing without a sensible image the principle of its knowledge comes to it from without. The intellectual life of the angels is more perfect because their intelligence knows itself without having to make use of anything outside it. Yet, their life does not reach the highest point of perfection since their idea, which is within, is not identical with their essence, and their being and knowledge are distinct. The last perfection of life then belongs to God, for Whom to know and to be are equivalent, and in Whom the idea, understanding by idea what the intellect conceives in itself of the object known, is identically the divine essence itself.⁷

tamen est omnino vita perfecta, cum emanatio semper fiat ex uno in alterum.

Est igitur supremus et perfectus gradus vite qui est secundum intellectum; nam intellectus in seipsum reflectitur, et seipsum intelligere potest."
Ibid.

⁶ *De Ver.*, q. 8, a. 15; *II C. G.*, 91; *S. T.*, I, q. 55, a. 3; I, q. 85, a. 1.

⁷ "Nam intellectus humanus, etsi seipsum cognoscere possit, tamen primum suae cognitionis initium ab extrinseco sumit: quia non est intelligere sine phantasmate.—Perfector igitur est intellectualis vita in angelis, in quibus intellectus ad sui cognitionem non procedit ex aliquo exteriori, sed per se cognoscit seipsum. Nondum tamen ad ultimam perfectionem vita ipsorum pertingit: quia, licet intentio intellecta sit eis omnino in-

Still consonant with the principle "the more immanent the activity, the higher the life," the greater perfection of angelic knowledge stands out in the fact that intellectuality for an angel is not a function or a superimposed and partial activity as it is in man; it is its very nature. "It has not intelligence," says St. Thomas, "it is intelligence."⁸ Unlike the human intellect, the angelic intellect is always in act. While we are radically and fundamentally in potency to knowledge the angel is so only accidentally.⁹ In a comparison which St. Thomas offers our mind is likened to a tablet on which nothing is written; the angelic intellect on the contrary may be compared to a tablet already written upon or to a mirror in which is reflected the reason of things.¹⁰

The comparison is justified in the study of the source of knowledge of these two intellects—man's and the angels'. Our knowledge comes from the material universe; angelic knowledge comes from God. Our knowledge is acquired; angelic knowledge is infused. The power of the human intelligence is not complete naturally; it is progressive in its perfection. The angelic intelligence, on the contrary, is naturally complete owing to the infused idea which it receives from God.¹¹ To these differences St.

trinseca, non tamen ipsa intentio intellecta est eorum substantia; quia non est idem in eis intelligere est esse. . . . Ultima igitur perfectio vite com-
petit Deo, in quo non est aliud intelligere et aliud esse. . . . et ita oportet
quod intentio intellecta in Deo sit ipsa divina essentia." *IV C. G.*, 11.

⁸ "Substantiae autem separatae sunt secundum suam naturam ut actu
existentes in esse intelligibili. Unde unaquaqueque earum seipsam per es-
sentiam suam cognoscit, non per aliquam speciem alterius rei." *II C. G.*, 97.

⁹ ". . . intellectus dupliciter est in potentia: uno modo sicut ante addiscere
vel invenire; scilicet antequam habeat habitum scientiae. Alio modo dicitur
esse in potentia, sicut cum jam habet habitum scientiae, sed non considerat.
Primo igitur modo intellectus angeli nunquam est in potentia respectu
eorum ad quae ejus cognitio naturalis se extendere potest. . . . Secundo
vero modo intellectus angeli potest esse in potentia ad ea quae cognoscit
naturali cognitione. Non enim omnia quae naturali cognitione cognoscit,
semper actu considerat." *S. T.*, q. 58, a. 1.

¹⁰ "Intellectus Angeli nostrum intellectum excedat, sicut res formata
excedit materiam informem; unde intellectus noster comparatur tabulae in
qua nihil est scriptum; intellectus autem Angeli tabulae depictae, vel speculo,
in quo rerum rationes resplendent." *De Ver.*, q. 8, a. 9.

¹¹ *S. T.*, I, q. 55, a. 2; *S. T.*, I, q. 108, a. 1; *De Ver.*, q. 8, a. 10 et ad

Thomas also adds in contrast (a) the fact of immutability in the angel because it clings immutably to the good or evil to which it has once turned, while man has a mutable veritability, because he can go from good to evil, and the reverse; and (b) the fact that the angel expresses himself through certain intellectual signs without the vehicle of physical sound, while man speaks through the expression of sound.¹²

Going further, at the highest point in the scale of life we find Absolute Mind—God. In God, the one necessary Being, “the radical difference that divides necessary being from contingent being supposes a breach in the order of existence prolonged into the order of knowledge.”¹³ In no created mind is intelligence identical with essence; in God these two are the same.¹⁴ Being and knowing are identical in God.¹⁵ Thus “Absolute Mind is at one and the same time perfect Immanence and perfect Extensiveness penetrating to the depths of things. He alone is at home everywhere by intelligence Who knows all things by His own Essence, the unique source at once of reality and of truth. The human soul is intelligent because it has a ‘passive’ capacity for all being; God is intelligent because He is the active Source of all being. God’s knowledge is the cause of things.”¹⁶

1 and 3; III *Sent.*, d. 35, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 1; cfr. Sheen, *God and Intelligence* (New York: Longmans, 1925), pp. 86-90; Gilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-185.

12 II *Sent.*, d. 3, q. 1, a. 6; cfr. Pegis, “In Umbrac Intelligentiae,” *New Scholasticism*, Vol. 14, No. 2, April, 1940, pp. 146-180.

13 Gilson, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy* (New York: Scribners, 1936), p. 237.

14 “Respondet dicendum quod nec in angelo, nec in aliqua creatura, virtus vel potentia operativa est idem quod sua essentia.” *S. T.*, I, q. 54, a. 3.

15 “In Deo autem est idem intellectus, et quod intelligitur, et ipsum intelligere ejus. Unde quicquid est in Deo ut intellectum, est ipsum vivere vel ita ejus. Unde cum omnia quae facta sunt a Deo, sint in ipso ut intellecta, sequitur quod omnia in ipso sunt ipsa vita divina.” *S. T.*, I, q. 18, a. 4.

16 Roussetot, *The Intellectualism of St. Thomas*, Translated by J. E. O’Mahony (London: Sheed & Ward, 1935), p. 31; cfr. *S. T.*, I, q. 14, a. 8; *De Ver.*, q. 2, a. 14.

b. Nature of Human Knowledge

Having set human knowledge apart both by reference to what is below it and what is above it, the task now is to examine it more minutely in its own sphere. More exactly, too, since the doctrine of truth is our primary concern, the direction our examination must take is set by St. Thomas’ definition of truth as “adequatio rei et intellectus.”¹⁷ True knowledge involves a relation implying two terms—reality and mind. And in the light of all that has been so far said of knowledge the conjunction of these two is not a mechanical juxtaposition but a vital process, an “intussusception” as one author calls it.¹⁸

We have seen already how St. Thomas in contrasting angelic and human knowledge puts man’s mind in radical dependence on the outside world.¹⁹ Moreover, it is in the body and through the body to which it is naturally united that the human mind reaches the acquisition of knowledge of this outside world.²⁰

A further capital point in the Thomistic theory of knowledge is the immateriality of the mind both as to its nature and its activity. The analysis of the various degrees of knowledge which St. Thomas gives us and the exalted view he achieved of human knowledge demands this. Knowing creatures share in and complement the perfection of the universe. “The soul is in a certain way all things”—the phrase is Aristotle’s, but St. Thomas wholeheartedly adopts it.²¹ “The most excellent beings are intellectual, since intellect is potentially everything, having within itself as it were, the excellence of everything.”²² By the fact that a being

¹⁷ *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 1.

¹⁸ Roussetot, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁹ “Tantum se nostra naturalis cognitio extendere potest, in quantum manduci potest, per sensibilia.” *S. T.*, I, q. 12, a. 12; cfr. *S. T.*, I, q. 85, a. 1.

²⁰ “Sic ergo patet quod propter melius animae est ut corpori uniat, et intelligat per conversionem ad phantasmata.” *S. T.*, I, q. 89, a. 1. “Complet eis ut a corporibus et per corpora suam perfectionem intelligibilem consequantur, alioquin frustra corporibus unirentur.” *S. T.*, I, q. 55, a. 2.

²¹ *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 1.

²² “Inter perfectiones autem rerum potissima est quod aliquid sit intellectivum: nam per hoc ipsum est quodammodo omnia, habens in se omnium perfectionem.” I C. G., 44. “Naturae autem intellectuales majorem habent

is endowed with intelligence, it is capable of possessing within itself all other being.²³ For St. Thomas such possession is synonymous with immateriality. We have already seen the outline of this in the quotation from the fourth book of the *Contra Gentiles*. There the degrees in the created hierarchy of knowing are dependent on a progressive dematerialization. In another place St. Thomas further explains this.²⁴ So consistent is St. Thomas in this attitude that he concludes to the supreme intelligence of God because of His absolute immateriality.²⁵

Material things, too, the object of our mind, must participate in some degree of immateriality if there is to be the possibility of such knowledge. If we assume a purely material universe, deprived of every intelligible element, it would, by definition, lack transparency to mind. The element of an object which can be assimilated by thought, is precisely its form. To say that the knowing subject becomes the object is consequently the same

affinitatem ad totum quam aliae naturae: nam unaquaqueque intellectualis substantia est quodammodo omnia, in quantum totius entis comprehensiva est suo intellectui: quaelibet autem alia substantia particularem solum entis participationem habet. Convenienter igitur alia propter substantias intellectuales providentur a Deo." III C. G., II2.

²³ "... cognoscencia a non cognoscentibus in hoc distinguuntur, quia non cognoscencia nihil habent nisi formam suam tantum; sed cognoscentis natum est habere formam etiam rei alterius." S. T., I, q. 14, a. 1.

²⁴ "Est autem triplex gradus cognoscitivae virtutis. Quaedam enim cognoscitiva virtus est actus organici corporalis, scilicet sensus; et ideo obiectum cuiuslibet sensitivae potentiae est forma, prout in materia corporali existit. Et quia huiusmodi materia est individuationis principium ideo omnis potentia sensitivae partis est cognoscitiva particularium tantum.—Quaedam autem virtus cognoscitiva est, quae neque est actus organici corporalis, neque est aliquo modo corporali materiae conjuncta, sicut intellectus auxiliatus; et cuius virtutis cognoscitivae obiectum est forma sine materia subsistens. Etsi enim materialia cognoscent, non tamen nisi in immaterialibus ea intuentur, vel in seipsis, vel in Deo.—Intellectus autem humanus medio modo se habet; non enim est actus alicujus organi; sed tamen est quaedam virtus animae, quae est forma corporis. . . . Et ideo proprium ejus est cognoscere formam in materia quidem corporali individualiter existentem, non tamen prout est in tali materia." S. T., I, q. 85, a. 1.

²⁵ "Unde cum Deus sit in summo immaterialitatis sequitur quod ipse sit in summo cognitionis." S. T., I, q. 14, a. 1.

thing as to say that the form of the knowing subject enriches itself with the form of the object known.²⁶ Apart from the intellect which can in some way become the thing, there must be, in the thing, some aspect under which it is capable of becoming, in some way, mind.

Here it becomes clear how St. Thomas' theory of knowledge agrees with sensism and idealism while avoiding the excesses of each. Our ideas, agrees St. Thomas with the sensist, are derived from the senses (and therefore from things); but the grossness which would have those ideas not essentially different from images and sensations is avoided. For those ideas are derived by a spiritual faculty and are essentially different from sensation and images. But because those ideas are essentially different does not warrant the conclusion that they are not derived from the senses (and by consequence from things) as the idealist would hold. St. Thomas, as a matter of fact, explicitly criticizes Plato for that excess.²⁷ No, our ideas are *abstracted* from things by the operation of a spiritual faculty.

This leads to the important notion of abstraction. Man is placed in a universe where the intelligible does not occur in a state of purity, and in addition his intellect is such that the intuition of the intelligible is precarious at best. So we can distinguish in the objects of human knowledge a universal and intelligible element associated with a particular and material element. Ab-

²⁶ "Forma autem in his, quae cognitionem participant, altiori modo invenitur quam in his, quae cognitione carent. In his enim, quae cognitione carent, invenitur tantummodo forma ad unum esse proprium determinans unumquodque, quod etiam naturale uniuscujusque est. . . . In habentibus autem cognitionem sic determinatur unumquodque ad proprium esse naturale, per formam naturalem, quod tamen est receptivum specierum aliarum rerum: sicut sensus recipit species omnium sensibilibus, et intellectus omnium intelligibilibus. Et sic anima hominis fit omnis quodammodo secundum sensus et intellectum, in quo, quodammodo cognitionem habentia ad Dei similitudinem appropinquant in quo omnia praexistunt." S. T., I, q. 80, a. 1; cfr. S. T., I, q. 84, a. 7; *De Ver.*, q. 10, a. 4.

²⁷ "Plato vero, attendens solum immaterialitatem intellectus humani, non autem ad hoc quod est corpori quodammodo unitus, posuit obiectum intellectus ideas separatas, et quod intelligimus non quidem abstrahendo, sed magis abstracta participando. . . ." S. T., I, q. 85, a. 1.

straction, the operation proper to man's mind, consists precisely in separating these two elements, so as to present to the mind the intelligible and universal implicated in the singular.²⁸

Man's intelligence, we have seen, is only one of the forms of intelligence, and the lowest one at that. The fact that there are intelligences not united to a body proves that intelligence does not of itself require a body. But human intelligence because it does operate on material things does need one.²⁹ Withal imperfect³⁰ the unique operation by which the mind of man safeguards its own operation, while operating in and through the body, is the abstractive process.³¹ St. Thomas explains it thus:

Abstraction may occur in two ways: first, by way of composition and division; and in this way we understand that one thing does not exist in some other, or that it is separated therefrom. Second, by way of simple and absolute consideration, as when we understand one thing without considering another. . . . This is what we mean by abstracting the universal from the particular or the intelligible species from the phantasm; that is, by considering the nature of the species apart from its individual qualities represented by the phantasms.³²

²⁸ For the modern attacks on the abstractive process and their refutation see Sheen, *God and Intelligence*, pp. 10 ff., 105 ff.

²⁹ ". . . corpus requiritur ad actionem intellectus, non sicut organum quo talis actio exercetur, sed ratione objecti." *S. T.*, I, q. 75, a. 2 ad 3.

³⁰ "Abstratio accidit intellectuali operationi, et pertinet ad perfectionem ipsius, ut ex his quae sunt intelligibilia in potentia, scientiam capiat; sicut est de imperfectione visus vesperilionis, quod necesse habet videre in obscuro." *De Spirit. Creat.*, q. 1, a. 5.

³¹ "Cognoscere vero id quod est in materia individuali, non prout est in tali materia, est abstrahere formam a materia individuali, quam representant phantasmata. Et ideo necesse est dicere quod intellectus noster intelligit materialia abstrahendo a phantasmatibus; et per materialia sic considerata in immaterialium aliqualem cognitionem devenimus; sicut e contra angeli per immaterialia materialia cognoscunt." *S. T.*, I, q. 85, a. 1.

³² ". . . abstrahere contingit dupliciter: uno modo per modum compositionis et divisionis, sicut cum intelligimus aliquid non esse in alio, vel esse separatum ab eo. Alio modo per modum simplicitatis; sicut cum intelligimus unum, nihil considerando de alio. . . . Et hoc est abstrahere universale a particulari, vel speciem intelligibilem a phantasmatibus, considerare scilicet naturam speciei absque consideratione individualium principiorum,

Such summaries are some of the key notions of St. Thomas' theory of knowledge. In their framework and by reference to them we can now develop the theory of truth consequent on Aquinas' teaching on the nature of knowledge. The particular distinction of knowledge is that the form of the thing known is in the one knowing. The form is also the pivotal point in our truth theory. It is through the same form that a thing (a) has being; (b) conforms to the divine intellect; (c) causes a true conception in the human intellect.³³ So, for the terms of truth relation we will look to the natural thing, the divine mind and the human mind.

B. TRUTH

1. Divisions

Truth then can be divided into the truth of things, truth of thought about things and, for man, truth in the outward expression of thought about things. Technically, the first kind of truth is called ontological truth, the second logical truth and the third moral truth. Before treating these various divisions in detail we might first lay the foundation for them.

At the very outset of his discussion of truth in the *Summa Theologica* St. Thomas establishes the fact that truth is principally in the intellect, secondarily in things inasmuch as they are ordered to an intellect from which they depend.

As good exists in a thing so far as that thing is directed to the appetite, and hence the idea of goodness passes on from the desirable thing to the desire itself, so that a desire is called good if its object is good; so, since truth is in the intellect in proportion to its conformity with the object understood, the idea of truth must needs

quae per phantasmata representatur." *S. T.*, I, q. 85, a. ad 1; cfr. *De Anima*, a. 5.

³³ "Res autem existens extra animam, per formam suam imitatur artem divini intellectus; et per eandem nata est facere de se veram apprehensionem in intellectu humano, per quam etiam formam unaqueque res esse habet; unde veritas rerum existentium includit in sui ratione entitatem earum, et superaddit habitudinem adaequationis ad intellectum humanum vel divinum." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 8.

flow from the intellect to the object of the intellect, so that the thing understood is said to be true in so far as it is conformed in relation to the intellect. A thing understood may be in relation to intellect either by its own nature or by accident. By its own nature, it is in relation to an intellect on which it depends as regards its own existence; but by accident to one respecting which it is merely a possible object of knowledge.³⁴

Again St. Thomas states: "... truth properly is in the intellect alone. Things are denominated true from the truth which is in some intellect."³⁵

We find the same point much more fully amplified when St. Thomas says:

A thing is only called true in as much as it is adequated to an intellect; hence truth is found in things secondarily, in the intellect primarily. But it must be noted that the thing is compared to the practical intellect in one way, to the speculative intellect in another way. For the practical intellect causes things, and so is the measure of things which are made by it; but the speculative intellect, because it receives from things, is in a certain way moved by things themselves; so things measure it. It is evident, then, that natural things, from which our mind receives its knowledge, measure our mind; but they are measured by the divine mind, in which are all created things, just as all artificial works are in the mind of their maker. Therefore the divine mind is that measuring, but not measured; the natural thing, however, is that measuring and that measured; our mind is that measured, not, indeed, measuring natural things, but artificial ones only. So the natural thing constituted between two intellects,

³⁴ "Sicut autem bonum est in re, in quantum habet ordinem ad appetitum; et propter hoc ratio bonitatis derivatur a re appetibili in appetitum, secundum quod appetitus dicitur bonus, prout est boni, ita, cum verum sit intellectum, secundum quod conformatur rei intellectae, necesse est quod ratio veri ab intellectu ad rem intellectam derivetur; ut res intellecta vera dicatur, secundum quod habet aliquem ordinem ad intellectum.—Res autem intellecta ad intellectum aliquid potest habere ordinem vel per se, vel per accidens. Per se quidem habet ordinem ad intellectum a quo dependet secundum suum esse. Per accidens autem ad intellectum a quo cognoscibilis est." *S. T.*, I, q. 16, a. 1.

³⁵ "... veritas proprie est in solo intellectu. Res dicuntur verae a veritate quae est in aliquo intellectu." *S. T.*, I, q. 16, a. 8.

is called true, according as there is an adequation to both; for it is called true according to an adequation to the divine mind, in as much as it fulfills that to which it is ordered by the divine mind. . . . However in adequation to the human mind a thing is called true in as much as it is designed to form of itself a true realization. . . . The first reason of truth is present in the thing before the second: for comparison to the divine mind is prior to comparison to the human mind; so, even if there were no human mind, still things would be called true by relation to the divine mind. And, if both minds could be conceived as non-existent, which is impossible, absolutely no reason of truth would remain.³⁶

The above citation gives full weight to the universally accepted definition of truth: *veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus*. Note, though, the shift of viewpoint. For, as previously quoted, "the natural thing, constituted between two intellects, is called true according to an adequation to both. . . ." ³⁷ This demands a

³⁶ "Res autem non dicitur vera nisi secundum quod est intellectui adaequata; unde per posterius invenitur verum in rebus, per prius autem in intellectu. Sed sciendum quod res aliter comparatur ad intellectum prae, aliter ad speculativum. Intellectus enim practicus causat res, unde est mensuratio rerum quae per ipsum fiunt; sed intellectus speculativus, quia accipit a rebus, est quodammodo motus ab ipsis rebus; et ita res mensurant ipsum. Ex quod patet quod res naturales, ex quibus intellectus noster scientiam accipit, mensurant intellectum nostrum. . . . sed sunt mensuratae ab intellectu divino; in quo sunt omnia creata, sicut omnia artificata in intellectu artificiali. Sic ergo intellectus divinus est mensurans, non mensuratus: res autem naturales, mensurans et mensurata; sed intellectus noster est mensuratus, non mensurans quidem res naturales, sed artificiales tantum. Res ergo naturalis inter duos intellectus constituta, secundum adaequationem ad utrumque vera dicitur; secundum enim adaequationem ad intellectum divinum dicitur vera, in quantum implet hoc ad quod est ordinata per intellectum divinum. . . . Secundum autem adaequationem ad intellectum humanum dicitur res vera, in quantum nata est de se formare veram aestimationem. . . . Prima autem ratio veritatis per prius inest rei quam secunda: quia prior est comparatio ad intellectum divinum quam humanum; unde, etiam si intellectus humanus non esset, adhuc res dicerentur verae in ordine ad intellectum divinum. *Sed, si uterque intellectus, quod est impossibile, intellegeretur, auferri, nullo modo veritatis ratio remaneret.*" *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 2; cfr. *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 4. Italics added.

³⁷ "Res ergo naturalis inter duos intellectus constituta, secundum adaequationem ad utrumque vera dicitur." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 4.

modification of the general definition. In the case of truth in the divine mind that modification would be *adaequatio rei cum intellectu*, in the consideration of truth in the human mind it would be *adaequatio intellectus cum re*. The first, ontological truth, lies in the relation of conformity of reality to mental type; the second, logical truth, lies in the relation of conformity of human mind to reality. By a rather crude analogy, if we could imagine a dictaphone as having its whole *raison d'être* from the message it receives, then we might liken it to some natural thing, to which the divine mind gives the message, and from which we receive that message.³⁸

Moral truth is simply truth in the outward expression of our thought about things. The function of words and sentences is but to signify and to convey to others the thoughts of the mind; hence "words receive the predication of truth in the very same way as the intellect which they signify."³⁹ Because man is a social being, moral truth is vitally important in the acquisition and diffusion of truth. Speech is most exacting as a point of contact with others; the utmost concern as to the conformity of words with thought is demanded in the interest of truth. Man can choose his words: by those things he says or does he can give rise to a true or false estimation of himself or others.⁴⁰

The question might arise about man-made creations. The key

³⁸ Cfr. *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 4. "Veritas autem quae dicitur de rebus in comparatione ad intellectum humanum, est rebus quodammodo accidentalis; quia posito quod intellectus humanus non esset, nec esse possit, adhuc res in sua essentia permaneret. Sed veritas quae dicitur de eis in comparatione ad intellectum divinum, eis inseparabiliter communicatur; non enim subsistere possunt nisi per intellectum divinum eas in esse producentem. Per prius etiam inest rei veritas per comparationem ad intellectum divinum quam humanum; cum ad intellectum divinum comparatur quasi ad causam, ad humanum autem quodammodo quasi ad effectum, in quantum intellectus a rebus scientiam accipit."

³⁹ "Voces autem eodem modo recipiunt veritatis praedicationem sicut intellectus quos significant." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 3. ". . . veritatis actionis sub veritate rei comprehenditur, ut veritas enuntiationis sub veritate intellectus quam significat." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 6.

⁴⁰ ". . . quae est clementis orationum suarum, verarum vel falsarum, vel qui facit acsimationem de se vel de aliis veram vel falsam per ea quae dicit vel facit." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 3.

to the solution of that problem is found in a previous quotation from St. Thomas.⁴¹ The creations of man are measured by his intellect; but his works are not *res naturales*, they are artificial. The natural—that which is conformed to the divine mind, has its very being from that mind—limits, confines and restrains them. So true is this that the further any effort of man gets away from the ontological truth of things, the more unreal, artificial in the odious sense of the word, it becomes. Thus, even what seem to be the independent products of man are traceable ultimately to the one normative truth.

2. *Classifications*

The delineation of truth into ontological, logical and moral, serves the cause of exact study. But truth in action bursts these bonds and is coextensive with the whole of man's activity. Thus it is that we find St. Thomas dividing truth into the broad classifications of truth of life, truth of justice and truth of doctrine. The truth of life is so-called inasmuch as man fulfills in his life that to which he is ordered by the divine intellect.⁴² In the words of St. Thomas:

. . . the truth of life is truth according to which anything is true, and not the truth according as anyone speaks the truth. A life, just as anything else, is called true inasmuch as it attains its rule and measure, namely, the divine law, in conformity with which it has rectitude.⁴³

By contrast, while the truth of life is personal, the truth of justice,

⁴¹ ". . . intellectus noster est mensuratus, non mensurans quidem res naturales; sed artificiales tantum." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 4.

⁴² "Veritas vitae dicitur particulariter, secundum quod homo in vita sua implet illud ad quod ordinatur per intellectum divinum." *S. T.*, I, q. 16, a. 4 ad 3.

⁴³ ". . . veritas vitae est veritas secundum quam aliquid est verum, non veritas secundum quam aliquis dicit verum. Dicitur autem vita vera, sicut et qualibet alia res, ex hoc quod attingit suam regulam et mensuram, scilicet divinam legem, per cuius conformitatem rectitudinem habet." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 109, a. 2 ad 3. Cfr. *S. T.*, I, q. 16, a. 1.

on the other hand, has for its concern others; it invokes obedience to what is due another.⁴⁴

To translate *veritas doctrinae*, the third broad division, as truth of doctrine, does not do justice to its full import. In the Latin *doctrina* imports the teaching or instruction of a master to his pupils; such a notion gives more weight to the idea of the truth of doctrine as "the truth by which anyone by word and deed makes manifest what he knows."⁴⁵

These general divisions are significant in the light of the endeavor of this work to show the social rôle of truth. Far from being a matter of academic debate, truth and its acquisition lie across the whole of personal and social life. While this is not yet the place to develop at length the rôle of truth in social life, certainly the foregoing exposition suggests any number of pertinent questions. For example, take the division of ontological truth. From that alone stem the questions: Does it make any difference to both the individual and society whether or not he has a *true* idea of himself? of his fellow men? Is it not profoundly important for society and its members that the concept of duty and obligation stem from the truth about man, his destiny, his make-up, his position in the universe? To answer these questions would be impossible within the limits of this work. Some of the clear rays of the sun of truth we can hope to focus, though, and thus indicate what truth means in man's social life. But of this, more later.

3. *Characteristics*

To further amplify this study let us turn for a moment to some of the common characteristics of truth. We might preface this section by saying that "the deep vein of Agnosticism as to the

⁴⁴ "Veritas autem justitiae dicitur dupliciter: uno modo secundum quod ipsa justitia est rectitudo quaedam regulata secundum regulam divinae legis; et secundum hoc differt veritas justitiae a veritate vitae, quia veritas vitae est secundum quam aliquis recte vivit in seipso, veritas autem justitiae est secundum quam aliquis rectitudinem legis in iudicium, quae sunt ad aliterum servat." *S. T., II-IIae, q. 100, a. 3 ad 3.*

⁴⁵ ". . . veritas quae quid manifestat verbo vel facto quod cognoscit." *Ibidem.*

nature of ultimate reality, and of Scepticism as to the constructive power of reason"⁴⁶ has no place in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. As a matter of fact the robust confidence of the attainability of truth is not the least of the contributions that philosophy can make to social life. The author quoted above means the fact that "the buoyant thought of the Greeks, their constructive reasoning, their daring speculation is no longer ours." He goes on to say: "In so many of the modern codes, reason seems crippled and bent if not broken. . . ." ⁴⁷ There we depart from him. Falsity there can be and is, yes. But while its presence unmanes so many modern philosophers, the followers of St. Thomas Aquinas are prepared to grapple with error precisely because of their view of truth.

And this leads us to our first generalization about truth. It might be considered a view by contrast. Cousin had a point of contact with Scholastic thought when he wrote: "La pure erreur serait impossible, et elle serait inintelligible; comme l'erreur ne pénètre dans l'esprit d'un homme que par le côté de vérité qui est en elle."⁴⁸ Falsity, like other evils, is a privation of good. "As the good is in relation to things, so is the true in relation to knowledge. Nothing can be found among things which is entirely lacking in goodness. Whence, too, there is no knowledge which is totally false, without the admixture of some truth."⁴⁹ Falsity will be discussed more at length later; suffice it here to point out the utter impossibility of complete error. So true is this that falsehood is dangerous only from its possessing a certain portion of mutilated truth.⁵⁰ Falsity is weak, lame and halting; truth on the other hand is so strong and vigorous it demands recognition.

⁴⁶ Vance, J. C., *Reality and Truth* (London: Longmans, Green, 1919), p. 246.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁴⁸ *Cours de philosophie* (Bruxelles: Soc. Belge de Librairie, 1840), Vol. II, p. 369.

⁴⁹ ". . . sicut se habet bonum in rebus, ita verum in cognitione. Impossibile est autem inveniri aliquid in rebus quod totaliter bono privetur. Unde etiam impossibile est esse aliquam cognitionem quae sit falsa, absque admixtione alicujus veritatis." *S. T., II-IIae, q. 172, a. 6.*

⁵⁰ "Falsiter autem non solum est carentia veritatis, sed etiam ipsius corruptio." *De Ver.*, q. 18, a. 6.

This leads to another characteristic of truth—its intrinsic appeal. The quiet of mind which is the characteristic mark of genuine certitude is never complete when one adheres staunchly to an erroneous statement. The false—that which is not—cannot manifest itself as real and true. Such manifestation is reserved to reality—to that which is—to the true.⁵¹ “To apprehend truth,” says St. Thomas, “is in itself attractive to anyone.”⁵² Only for selfish reasons is it denied.⁵³

In this light the Greek adjective meaning true, ἀληθής, is significant. It is formed from the alpha privative and the stem λεί which connotes hiding or something hidden. Thus in its final form it has the notion of not hidden, evident, appealing.

That truth does have this appeal is due to the fact it stems from one unchangeable Truth. “Either truth, namely of the intellect and of the thing is reduced, as into a first principle, to God Himself: because His being is the cause of all being, and His understanding is the cause of all knowledge.”⁵⁴

In this connection we might note the amplification of this statement of St. Thomas. The reason of truth, he holds, consists in two things—the real being of anything and the apprehension of the cognitive faculty proportional to the being of the thing. Either of these is traced back to God as our efficient and exemplary cause. Things are true and the mind discovers truth. But, though there are as many truths as there are created beings, these are all grounded in the one divine Being, the efficient and exemplary cause of all things.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Cfr. Rother, A., *Certitudo* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1911), p. 33.

⁵² “. . . intelligere veritatem cuiuslibet est secundum se amabile.” S. T., II-IIae, q. 15, a. 1 ad 3.

⁵³ Cfr. *ibidem*.

⁵⁴ “Utraque autem veritas, scilicet intellectus et rei, reduciuntur sicut in primum principium, in ipsum Deum; quia suum esse, est causa omnis esse, et suum intelligere est causa omnis cognitionis.” I *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 corpus.

⁵⁵ “. . . ratio veritatis in duobus consistit: in esse rei, et in apprehensione virtutis cognoscitivae proportionata ad esse rei. Utrumque autem horum quamvis, ut dictum est, reduciatur in Deum sicut in causam efficientem et exemplarem; nihilominus tamen quaelibet res participat suum esse creatum, quo formaliter est, et unusquisque intellectus participat lumen per quod

If we wish further to amplify the mind of St. Thomas in tracing all truth back to a First Truth, there are many expressions of this to choose from. Thus, in speaking of the truth of things, he says:

If, indeed, we speak of truth inasmuch as it is in things; thus all are true by one first truth, to which each is likened according to its entity. And so, although there are many essences or forms of things, there is, nevertheless, one truth of the divine intellect, according to which all things are called true.⁵⁶

So, too, as regards the mind, “the soul does not judge of all things according to any truth; but according to the first truth, inasmuch as this results in her, as in a mirror, according to the first intelligibles.”⁵⁷

True, there are as many particular truths as there are entities in this world and beyond it.⁵⁸ And, in a real sense too, we can say that one thing is truer than another.⁵⁹ This, however, is far from being a source of confusion; they all lead back to one first

recte de re iudicat, quod quidem est exemplatum a lumine increato. Habet etiam intellectus suam operationem in se, ex qua completur ratio veritatis. Unde dico, quod sicut est unum esse divinum quo omnia sunt, sicut a principio effectivo exemplari; nihilominus sunt plures veritates in rebus creatis, quibus dicuntur verae formaliter.” I *Sent.*, d. 19, q. 5, a. 2.

⁵⁶ “Si vero loquamur, de veritate secundum quod est in rebus; sic omnes sunt verae, una prima veritate, cui unumquodque assimilatur secundum suam entitatem. Et sic, licet, plures sint essentiae vel formae rerum, tamen una est veritas divini intellectus, secundum quam omnes res renominantur verae.” S. T., I, q. 16, a. 6.

⁵⁷ “. . . anima non secundum quancumque veritatem iudicat de rebus omnibus; sed secundum veritatem primam, in quantum resultat in ea sicut in speculo, secundum prima intelligibilia.” S. T., I, q. 16, a. 6 ad 1.

⁵⁸ “Veritates autem quae sunt in rebus, sunt plures, sicut et rerum entitates.” *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 4.

⁵⁹ “Cum autem veritas constet in adaequatione intellectus et rei, si consideretur veritas secundum rationem aequalitatis, quae non recipit magis et minus, sic non contingit esse aliquid magis et minus verum; sed si consideretur ipsum esse rei, quod est ratio veritatis, eadem est dispositio rerum in esse et veritate; unde quae sunt magis entia, sunt magis vera.” Q. D. *De Caritate*, q. 1, a. 9 ad 1.

truth in which they find unity and in which our mind, apprehending them truly and tracing their origin, finds satisfaction.⁶⁰

Before closing this chapter, let us review what has been so far said. Suppose then the capability of the human mind to know things as they are in themselves and the validity of principles it employs, both of which can be and are demonstrated. Moreover, suppose the existence of God as demonstrated by natural theology. By so doing we shall be enabled to view the whole system of truth as it is developed by St. Thomas.

God the Necessary Being who exists from all eternity and possesses an infinite mind, knows Himself in an infinite degree—that is to say, as far as He is knowable. His knowledge extends not only to what He is in Himself, but also in so far as He is imitable—though imperfectly—by the finite beings which He has power to create. Everything that He freely creates must be fashioned on the model of these divine ideas, as a work of art is fashioned after the ideal the artist forms of his work before he makes it. It follows that all created things correspond with the eternal idea God formed of their nature. This adequate correspondence is their truth; it is essential to them and is immutable. The truth resulting from human knowledge is only a reflection of the truth manifested by God in His works.

Taking this higher view of the order of the universe we may say that truth resides, in the first place, in the Divine Intelligence which eternally conceives the idea of His works. It belongs, in the second place, to things in so far as they are realized in conformity with their eternal archetypal ideas. And finally, it passes from things into human knowledge as soon as the mind represents to itself things as they are.

Further, because truth is coextensive with reality it is entwined by its presence in all man's thoughts, words and actions. So we

⁶⁰ " . . . verum intellectus nostri est secundum quod conformatur suo principio; scilicet intellectui divino. Veritas etiam rerum est, secundum quod conformantur suo principio, scilicet intellectui divino." *S. T.*, I, q. 16, a. 5 ad 2. " . . . et sic denominantur omnes res verae a prima veritate. Et quia veritas quae est in intellectu, mensuratur a rebus ipsis, sequitur non solum veritas rei, sed etiam veritas intellectus, vel enuntiationis, quae intellectum significat, a veritate prima denominetur." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 5.

find the Angelic Doctor speaking of the truth of life, the truth of justice, the truth of doctrine.

4. *Social Application*

Particularly then, how does the truth as St. Thomas traces it affect social life? Though the division *veritas vitae* contains in itself all virtue⁶¹ truth is more specifically applicable in life relations when it is considered as a virtue properly so-called. In so considering it the Angelic Doctor first distinguishes between the truth by which anything is denominated true and the truth as anyone speaks it. In this last sense it is that truth is a virtue—and with serious social implications.

. . . that which makes a work of man good pertains to the reason of human virtue. Whence, where a special reason of good is found in a human act, it must needs be that man is so disposed through a special virtue. Moreover since good, according to Augustine, consists in order, the special reason of the good must be considered from a determined order.

There is indeed a certain special order according to which our exterior acts, words or deeds are duly ordered to something, just as a sign to the thing signified; and man is perfected in this through the virtue of truth. Whence it is manifest that truth is a special virtue.⁶²

A response to an objection in the same question reveals clearly

⁶¹ " . . . veritas vitae est veritas secundum quam aliquid est verum, non veritas secundum quam aliquid dicit verum. Dicitur autem vita vera, sicut et quaelibet alia res, ex hoc quod attingit suam regulam et mensuram, scilicet divinam legem, per cuius conformitatem rectitudinem habet: et talis veritas, sive recitudo, communis est ad quamlibet virtutem." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 109, a. 2 ad 3.

⁶² " . . . ad rationem virtutis humanae pertinet quod opus hominis bonum reddat. Unde ubi in actu hominis invenitur specialis ratio bonitatis, necesse est quod ad hoc disponatur homo per specialem virtutem. Cum autem bonum, secundum Augustinum, consistat in ordine, necesse est specialem rationem boni considerari ex determinato ordine. Est autem quidam specialis ordo secundum quod exteriora nostra vel verba, vel facta debite ordinantur ad aliquid sicut signum ad signatum; et ad hoc perficitur homo per virtutem veritatis. Unde manifestum est quod veritas est specialis virtus." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 109, a. 2. *Cfr.* *S. T.*, I, q. 16, a. 4 ad 3.

the social implications of this virtue. There truth and simplicity are considered the same virtue differing only in reason.⁶³ Thus the virtue of truth rules out the deception and pretense so harmful to social relations. For this reason truth takes on the aspect of something strictly demanded of man as a social being.⁶⁴ Here there is a fruitful view of truth in social intercourse which we hope to emphasize and apply more particularly in the last part of this dissertation.

One further fact we desire to point out—the connection of truth and justice, this latter eminently a social virtue.

Moreover, the virtue of truth agrees with justice indeed in two ways: one way in fact in this that it is to another; for manifestation which we call an act of the will is to another, inasmuch namely as one man manifests to another those things which concern himself; in another manner, in as much as justice establishes a certain equality in things; and the virtue of truth does this too: for it adequates signs to existing things concerning itself. However, it fails in the proper reason of justice from the viewpoint of something due: for this virtue does not consider legal debt with which justice concerns itself, but rather moral debt, in as much as one man owes the manifestation of truth to another from honesty. Whence truth is a part of justice, so that it is annexed to it as a secondary virtue to a principal one.⁶⁵

⁶³ "... simplicitas dicitur per oppositum duplicitate, qua scilicet aliquis aliud habet in corde, et aliud ostendit exterius, et sic simplicitas ad hanc virtutem pertinet. Facit autem intentionem rectam, non quidem directe (quia hoc pertinet ad omnem virtutem), sed excludendo duplicitatem, qua homo unum praetendit et aliud intendit." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 109, a. 2 ad 4.

⁶⁴ *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 109, a. 3 ad 1; *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 114, a. 2 ad 1.

⁶⁵ "Virtus autem veritatis convenit quidem cum iustitia in duobus: uno quidem modo in hoc quod est ad alterum; manifestatio enim, quam diximus esse actum voluntatis, est ad alterum; in quantum scilicet ea quae circa aequalitatem quamdam in rebus constituit; alio modo, in quantum iustitia veritatis: adaequat enim signa rebus existentibus circa ipsum. Deficit autem a propria ratione iustitiae quantum ad rationem debiti: non enim haec virtus tendit debitum legale, quod attendit iustitia, sed potius debitum moralitatem. Unde veritas est pars iustitiae, in quantum annexitur ei sicut virtus secundaria principali." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 109, a. 3.

So close are justice and truth that the Angelic Doctor gives an affirmative answer to the question whether the justice of God is truth.⁶⁶ While admitting justice is an act of the will he emphasizes the rôle of the mind in the same virtue.⁶⁷

An American thinker has said: "Truth is the summit of being; justice is the application of it to affairs. . . . A healthy soul stands united with the Just and the True, as a magnet arranges itself with the pole."⁶⁸ As a matter of fact truth overlays all virtue;⁶⁹ but any further development would take us beyond the scope of this work. So we propose to confine ourselves to the two social aspects of the virtue of truth itself and the rôle of truth in justice outlined above; by using just these as pivotal points more than enough phases of development should be furnished.

C. FALSITY

1. *Cognitively Aspects*

Before going on to the detailed application of truth in social life, the problem of untruth or falsity demands consideration. The shadows as well as the light must be delimited if we are to have a full and rounded appreciation.

The best approach to untruth is the simple question: what is falsity? This we can best answer by an inquiry into its origin. Doing that involves examination of the senses, external objects (*res*) and the mind itself as sources of falsity.

"Simply speaking," says St. Thomas, "everything is true and nothing is false: but relatively, namely by relation to our intellect some things are called false."⁷⁰ Recalling what has been said about truth as an adequation the Angelic Doctor thus explains: in comparison to the divine intellect nothing is false, but in com-

⁶⁶ *S. T.*, I, q. 21, a. 2.

⁶⁷ "... iustitia, quantum ad legem regulantem, est in ratione." *S. T.*, I, q. 21, a. 2 ad 1.

⁶⁸ Emerson, Ralph Waldo, *Essay on Character*.

⁶⁹ Cfr. above, p. 22 no. 61.

⁷⁰ "... simpliciter loquendo omnis res est vera, et nulla res est falsa; sed secundum quid scilicet in ordine ad intellectum nostrum, aliqua res dicitur falsa." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 10.

parison to our intellect there can sometimes be falsity.⁷¹ The question is—how?

That brings us to the senses. The introduction of these faculties needs accurate explanation. This we must emphasize:

Truth belongs to the mind and is known by the mind, because it reflects upon its act; and this reflection consists not merely in the knowledge of its act, but in the knowledge of its conformity with the real. Now this cannot happen unless the very nature of its act be known: and this again cannot be unless the very nature of the principle at work be known, which is the intellect itself, whose nature it is to conform to the real. Therefore, it is insofar as the intellect reflects upon itself that it realizes its truth.⁷²

The senses of themselves do not know truth or falsity, though they do know the true or the false.⁷³ Furthermore our knowledge, which has its origin in external things, begins in sense and is perfected in the intellect; in a qualified manner sense can be considered the medium between the mind and the external world.⁷⁴

⁷¹ "Patet ergo quod res quantumcumque se habeat sub quacumque forma existens, vel privatione vel defectu, intellectui divino adaequantur . . . per comparationem ad intellectum humanum invenitur interdum inaequalitas rei ad intellectum . . ." *Ibidem*.

⁷² " . . . veritas . . . in intellectu enim est sicut consequens actum intellectus, et sicut cognita per intellectum; consequitur namque intellectus operationem secundum quod iudicium intellectus est de re secundum quod est; cognoscitur autem ab intellectu secundum quod intellectus reflectitur supra actum suum, non solum secundum quod intellectus reflectitur secundum quod cognoscit proportionem ejus ad rem, quod quidem cognoscit non potest nisi cognoscatur natura principii activi, quod est ipse intellectus, in cuius natura est ut rebus conformetur; unde secundum hoc cognoscit veritatem intellectus quod supra se ipsum reflectitur." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 10.

⁷³ "Veritas autem non sic est in sensu, ut sensus cognoscat veritatem; sed in quantum veram apprehensionem habet de sensibilibus. . . . Quod quidem contingit ex hoc quod apprehendit res ut sunt. Unde contingit falsitatem esse in sensu ex hoc quod apprehendit vel iudicat res aliter quam sint." *S. T.*, I, q. 17, a. 2; *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 9.

⁷⁴ " . . . cognitio nostra quae a rebus initium sumit, hoc ordine progreditur, ut primo incipiat in sensu, secundo perficiatur in intellectu; ut sic sensus inveniat quodammodo medium inter intellectum et res: est

With all this clearly in mind we can see how the senses are responsible for falsity. We have at hand an accurate and detailed analysis of this problem by St. Thomas: technically he distinguishes between *sensibile per se* comprising the proper object of each sense and the *common sensibiles*,⁷⁵ and the *sensibile per accidens* which is the substratum—for example, substance—inevitably associated with the sensible qualifies affecting our external organs of perception. Only accidentally can the senses be deceived as far as their proper objects go; the same senses can, however, be deceived in the *common sensibile* and the *sensibile per accidens*.⁷⁶ As an example of mistake by a sense of its proper object St. Thomas alleges the case of a sick person whose sense of taste has been affected and for whom even sweets have lost their appeal. A mistake in a *common sensibile* would be that of the enthusiastic hiker who sadly miscalculates the distance from one hill to another. Those scientists who tend to identify the ultimate reality of nature with those quantitative relations that are susceptible of mathematical treatment are deceived in the *sensibile per accidens*. It is evident how these mistakes affect judgment: the sick person decides a dish designed to tempt him is sour to the taste; the hiker underestimates the energy that will be demanded

enim, rebus comparatus, quasi intellectus; et intellectui comparatus, quasi res quaedam. . . ." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 2.

⁷⁵ "Besides the special sensible qualities which constitute the proper object of each of the external senses there are also 'common sensibiles' or qualities which affect many or all of the senses at once. Of these Aristotle enumerates five, namely, 'movement, repose, measure, form or shape, and size.'" Mercier, *A Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1932), Vol. I, p. 194.

⁷⁶ "Similitudo autem alicujus rei est in sensu tripliciter; Uno modo, primo et per se; sicut in visu est similitudo colorum, et aliorum propriorum sensibilibus. Alio modo per se, sed non primo; sicut in visu est similitudo figurarum, vel magnitudinis, et aliorum communium sensibilibus. Tertio modo, nec primo, nec per se sed per accidens; sicut in visu est similitudo hominis, non in quantum est homo, sed in quantum huic colorato accidit esse hominem. Et ideo circa propria sensibilia sensus non habet falsam cognitionem, nisi per accidens, et in paucioribus. . . . De sensibilibus vero communibus et per accidens potest esse falsum iudicium etiam in sensu recte disposito; quia sensus non directe refertur ad illa, sed per accidens, vel ex consequenti, in quantum refertur ad alia." *S. T.*, I, q. 17, a. 2.

of him; the scientist ridicules the substance of the scholastics. In this way it is that there is falsity in the senses.

Now as to external things being false, that too needs to be qualified. By its appearances we may be deceived in our judgment about something—false gold is the example St. Thomas uses. But this does not mean that such an external object is necessarily the cause of falsity; truth and falsity principally exist in the judgment of the soul.⁷⁷ Recall what we have previously quoted from St. Thomas: "Truth belongs to the mind and is known by the mind because it reflects upon its act." With these qualifications we can say there is falsity in external objects when "nata sunt videri aut qualia non sunt, aut quae non sunt," as St. Thomas says.

Thus we come to falsity in the mind. In handling this problem St. Thomas first distinguishes the twofold operation of the intellect by which it apprehends the *quiddity*⁷⁸ and then proceeds by composition and division.⁷⁹ This last would seem to do violence to the real unity of beings outside ourselves. But there is no

⁷⁷ " . . . illa dicuntur falsa quae nata sunt videri aut qualia non sunt, aut huiusmodi accidentia, cum tamen interius apparet color auri, et alia tamen res est hoc modo causa falsitatis in anima, quod necessaria falsitatem causet; quia veritas et falsitas praecipue in iudicio animae existunt, animae vero in quantum de rebus iudicat, non patitur a rebus, sed magis quodammodo agit." *De Ver.*, q. 1, a. 10.

⁷⁸ "It is frequently said that the proper object of the intellect is the 'essence' or 'nature' of material things. Such expressions are not felicitous, as they might lead one to think that we have an immediate knowledge of the specific essences of things. . . . To a full idea of a species the mind must proceed from some less determined, and therefore simpler, notions of genera and even of accidents. In order to avoid such a misunderstanding and to imply that the mind's notion of things is at first only the most simple and general, it is better to adopt two Scholastic words and call the object of the intellect the *quiddity* or *inner reason* of a thing. The word *quiddity* signifies in a very general way *what-a-thing-is*; it answers the question: 'What sort of a being is this? quid est?' " Mercier, *A Manual of Modern Scholastic Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 241.

⁷⁹ " . . . metaphysical composition . . . presupposes some sort of foundation in the object itself; such composition is the outcome of the mind's relative incapacity when confronted with the wealth of attributes that are included in the connotation of any object." Mercier, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 450.

difficulty here if we remember that the mind attains reality, as it were, piecemeal.⁸⁰

And so because the first of the above operations contemplates the *quiddity* of the thing and the second turns its attention to its being, and further, since the reason of truth is founded on the being and not on the *quiddity*, truth and falsity are properly found in the second operation, in the first only by accident.⁸¹ How this happens St. Thomas thus explains:

In affirming and denying, the intellect may be deceived, by attributing, for instance, to the thing of which it understands the *quiddity*, something which is only consequent upon it, or is opposed to it. The intellect is in the same position as regards judging of such things, as sense is as to judging of common, or accidental, sensible objects. There is, however, this difference, as before mentioned regarding truth, that falsity can exist in the intellect not only because the knowledge of the intellect is false, but because the intellect is conscious of that knowledge, as it is conscious of truth; whereas in sense falsity does not exist as known. But because falsity of the intellect is concerned essentially with the composition of the intellect alone, falsity occurs accidentally in the operation of the intellect knowing the essence of a thing

⁸⁰ "Things, however, do not present themselves to the mind with that simplicity which would exclude all questioning and ulterior research. On the contrary, reality reveals itself with an almost embarrassing variety and complexity. To be able to judge and pronounce conclusively, the mind must first unravel this complexity. The proper task of the mind is to discriminate, separate, classify, and recombine. In this task no element of reality may be disregarded or suppressed. It is here that the critical problem begins and that immediate realism starts to differentiate itself from naive realism." Bandas, *Contemporary Philosophy and Thomistic Principles* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1932), pp. 176-177.

⁸¹ " . . . duplex operatio intellectus: una quantum dicitur a quibusdam imaginatio intellectus . . . quae consistit in apprehensione quidditatis simplicis, quae alio etiam nomine formatio dicitur; alia est quam dicunt fidem, quae consistit in compositione vel divisione propositionis; prima operatio respicit quidditatem rei; secunda respicit esse ipsius. Et quia ratio veritatis fundatur in esse, et non in quidditate, ut dictum est, ideo veritas et falsitas proprie invenitur in secunda operatione, et in signo ejus quod est enuntiatio, et non in prima, vel signo ejus quod est definitio, nisi secundum quid . . ." *I Sent.* q. 19, a. 5 ad 7.

by composition being mixed up in it. This can take place in two ways. In one way, by the intellect applying to one thing the definition proper to another; as that of a circle to a man. Wherefore the definition of one thing is false of another. In another way, by including in one definition terms which are mutually exclusive. For thus the definition is not only false of the thing, but false in itself.⁸²

Thus the Angelic Doctor details the contributory factors and the fundamental sources of falsehood and untruth—the attribution by the mind to something apprehended correctly of that which is not consequent upon it or is opposed to it, and of that which of the definition of one thing to another as well as the association in a definition of parts which cannot be combined. Worthy of note before closing this discussion is the fact that, while St. Thomas is aware of error in our mind and acutely analyzes it, just the same he considers such error in intellectual knowledge, in a certain sense, abnormal, occurring in us because of the relative imperfection of our knowing faculty.⁸³

⁸² " . . . in componendo vero vel dividendo potest decipi; dum attribuit rei, cuius quidditatem intelligit, aliquid quod eam non consequitur, vel quod et sicut sensus ad iudicandum de sensibilibus communibus, vel per accidens. Hac tamen differentia servata, quod falsitas in intellectu esse potest, non solum quia cognitio intellectus falsa est, sed quia intellectus eam cognoscit, sicut et veritatem; in sensu autem falsitas non est ut cognita, ut dictum est. Quia vero falsitas intellectus per se solum circa compositionem intellectus est, per accidens etiam in operatione intellectus, qua cognoscit quod quid est, potest esse falsitas, in quantum ibi composito intellectus admiscetur. Quod potest esse dupliciter. Uno modo, secundum quod intellectus definitionem unius attribuit alteri; ut si definitionem circuli attribuat homini. Unde definitio unius rei est falsa de altera. Alio modo, secundum quod partes definitionis componit ad invicem, quae simul sociari non possunt. Sic enim definitio non est solum falsa respectu alicujus rei, sed est falsa in se." *S. T.*, I, q. 17, a. 3.

⁸³ " . . . ratio enim nihil aliud est nisi natura intellectualis obumbrata. . . . *I Sent.*, Dist. 3, a. 4 ad 4. *Cfr. C. G.*, Bk. 3, c. 108. "Proprium autem obiectum intellectus est quidditas rei. In cognitione igitur intellectus decepto accedere non potest, si plures rerum quidditates apprehendat, sed omnis deceptio intellectus accedere videtur ex hoc quod apprehendit formas rerum permixtas phantasmaticas, ut in nobis accidit. Talis autem modus cognoscendi non est in substantiis intellectualibus corpori non unitis. . . ."

2. *Volitional Aspects*

So far we have confined ourselves to the cognitive factors in error, but there is one final point—the influence of will as a contributing element—which we would do well to consider. Here St. Thomas' teaching on assent furnishes the clue. Though that doctrine of assent is studied in another context—in relation to belief—it gives us a valuable treatment for our concern with error and its causes.

Belief—St. Thomas tells us—is not found in the first operation of the mind (simple apprehension), but in judgment, for the object of belief is the true or mistakenly the false. Further, the mind can be determined to assent in either of two ways: (1) by its own proper object, which is the intelligible form of the thing known; or (2) by the will. Its determination in the first case is either immediate (in understanding the first principles), or mediate (in deducing consequences by way of demonstration). In the second case "the intellect is determined through the will which deliberately and positively chooses to assent to one part because of a motive sufficient to move the will, though not sufficient to move the intellect."⁸⁴

Nothing is said above about erroneous judgment. Significantly, though, in another place St. Thomas defines error as: *præcisus assensus ad id quod est falsum*.⁸⁵ Moreover, he frequently implies

⁸⁴ "Patet ergo ex dictis, quod in illa operatione intellectus qua format simplices rerum quidditates, non invenitur assensus, cum non sit ibi verum vel falsum. . . . Intelligens autem habet quidem assensum, quia certissime alteri parti inhaeret; non habet autem cognitionem, quia sine aliqua colatione determinatur ad unam. Sciens vero habet et cognitionem, et assensum; sed cognitionem causantem assensum, et assensum terminantem cognitionem. . . . Sed in fide est assensus et cogitatio quasi ex aequo. Non enim assensus ex cogitatione causatur, sed ex voluntate, ut dictum est. . . . Quandoque vero intellectus non potest determinari ad alterum partem cognitionis neque statim per ipsas definitiones terminorum, sicut in principis, nec etiam virtute principiorum, sicut in conclusionibus demonstrativis est; determinatur autem per voluntatem, quae eligit assentire uni parti determinate et præcisè propter aliquod quod est sufficiens ad movendum voluntatem, non autem ad movendum intellectum. . . ." *De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 1; *cfr. S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 2, a. 1.

⁸⁵ *De Ver.*, q. 18, a. 6.

that every full-fledged mistake involves an influence of free will.⁸⁶ Error, then, would be an assent given under the influence of the will to the reality of something we do not know.

All this is consistent with St. Thomas' notion of the nature of assent. For him assent is an act of the intellect that may be imposed by the will.⁸⁷ As such it is a constituent of all judgment⁸⁸ and something more than apprehending or understanding.⁸⁹ It connotes activity; it is the act by which through the apprehension of a subject-predicate relation between mental terms, we affirm or deny a corresponding state of affairs in the real.⁹⁰ Though not

⁸⁶ "... error manifeste habet rationem peccati." *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 7. "Dissentire (denial of the truth) est actus intellectus, sed motus a voluntate, sicut et assentire." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 10, a. 2.

⁸⁷ "... assensus accipitur pro actu intellectus, secundum quod a voluntate determinatur ad unum." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 2, a. 1 ad 3.

⁸⁸ "... daemones non voluntate assentiunt his quae credere dicuntur, sed *coacta evidentia signorum*, ex quibus *convincitur* verum est quod fideles credunt..." *De Ver.*, q. 14, a. 9 ad 4.

⁸⁹ "... intellectus creditis assentit rei creditae, non quia ipsum videt vel secundum se, vel per resolutionem ad prima principia per se visa, sed propter imperium voluntatis moventis intellectum. Quod autem voluntas modo ex ordine voluntatis ad assentiendum, potest contingere ex duobus: uno alio modo quia *intellectus convincitur* ad hoc quod iudicet esse credendum his quae dicuntur, licet non convincatur per *evidentiam rei*..." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 5, a. 2. Italics added.

⁹⁰ St. Thomas several times draws a distinction between these two activities of the mind: capere, percipere, in apprehensionem cadere, and assentire, assensum adhibere. "... duo actus rationis attenduntur: primo quidem, ut veritatem circa aliquid apprehendat, et hoc non est in potestate nostra; hoc enim contingit per virtutem alicuius luminis vel naturalis vel supernaturalis. Et ideo quantum ad hos actus rationis non est in potestate apprehendit assentit. Si igitur fuerint talia apprehensa, quibus rationaliter intellectus assentiat, sicut prima principia, assensus talium vel discussus non est in potestate nostra, sed in ordine naturae. ... Sunt autem quaedam apprehensa, quae non adeo convincunt intellectum, quin possit assentire vel dissentire, vel saltem assensum vel dissensum suspendere propter aliquam causam; et in talibus assensus ipse vel dissensus in potestate nostra est, et sub imperio cadit." *S. T.*, I-IIae, q. 17, a. 6.

⁹¹ "... assentire non nominat motum intellectus ad rem, sed magis ad conceptionem rei quae habetur in mente; cui intellectus assentit dum iudicet eam esse veram." *De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1 ad 14.

in itself an act of the will, assent for St. Thomas retains its association with that faculty and reveals itself in contexts where the action of the will is in the foreground.⁹¹

So, our conclusion is this: The will of itself has no capacity for affirming or denying; it can only impel the intellect to these operations between certain limits. It acts in judgment by concentrating the attention of the mind on certain motives, and by increasing the pull which a conceived object exercises on the mind, in that it wants this object as good. That it is good (under some aspect) is a truth that can move the mind; that it is true may in turn be a good, and as such be covered by the will.⁹² Hence the will is impotent to superinduce assent unless the intellect be in some measure solicited and set going by its own object, and then only to deflect or augment unduly the resulting movement.

3. Social Application

More specifically, we must now examine particular phases of falsity affecting social life. And as we confined ourselves in the application of truth to the virtue of truth itself and the rôle of truth in justice we propose to do the same here.

In regarding violations of truth it would be well first to emphasize the social character of speech. Man has been given this endowment precisely because he is a social being. It is the instrument par excellence of communication with his fellow men. In that light its use and abuse cannot but have repercussions in social intercourse.

For the sake of clearness let us use the word untruth for falsity in speech. On examining this untruth we find it has many sides.⁹³ Man alone can perceive the relation of the thing signified and its means of signification; as a consequence he alone is capable of a

⁹¹ "Potest etiam dici quod intellectus assentit, in quantum a voluntate movetur." *S. T.*, I-IIae, q. 15, a. 1 ad 3.

⁹² "... voluntas quodammodo movet intellectum, dum intelligo quia volo; et intellectus voluntatem dum volo aliquid quia intelligo illud esse bonum." III *Sent.*, d. 23, q. 1, a. 2 ad 3; cfr. *S. T.*, I-IIae, q. 17, a. 1; I-IIae, q. 75, a. 5 ad 2; I-IIae, q. 83, a. 3 ad 3; *De Ver.*, q. 24, a. 6 cor. and ad 5.

⁹³ *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 109, a. 1.

perversion of such a means; it depends on his will. Further, the proper object of this manifestation is the true or the false. As a consequence when one utters untruth with the deliberate intention of so doing and with the further intention of deceiving he is guilty of lying. Over and above this deliberate deception there is utterance of the false without deliberate intention of deceit. Yet this too is dangerous, and sincere but erroneous reformers have been not the least of the scourges of mankind.

So the external manifestation of truth indeed means much to society. Lying is not only unjust, it is unnatural.⁹⁴ It is a deliberate perversion.⁹⁵ There is also another consideration of untruth, if not necessarily in speech, at least in external action. The name is familiar enough—dissimulation. Dissimulation is directly opposed to truth, involving as it does, deception by word or deed.⁹⁶ A species of it is hypocrisy—the external pretense to a virtue one does not possess.⁹⁷

As for the violations of justice involving untruth there is, for example, perjury, to which St. Thomas applies the above designation of perversion, and whose very essence is, he says, falsity.⁹⁸ This vice is, of course, connected with process of law and therefore particularly affects the common good. He also lists lying and subterfuge, both phases of untruth, as damaging to the machinery

⁹⁴ "Cum enim voces naturaliter sint signa intellectuum, innaturale est et indubitum quid aliquis voce significet id quod non habet in mente." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 109, a. 3.

⁹⁵ " . . . quis volens a recte deviat." *I. Sent.*, d. 38, a. 1. Per signa exteriora, qualis est. Signa autem exteriora non solum sunt verba, sed etiam facta. Sicut ergo veritati opponitur quod aliquis per dactum exteriora aliud significet quam quod habet apud se, quod ad mendacium pertinet; ita etiam opponitur veritati quod aliquis per aliqua signa proprie simulatio dicitur. Unde simulatio proprie est mendacium quoddam in exteriorum signis factorum consistens." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 111, a. 1.

⁹⁶ "Unde cum hypocrisis sit quaedam simulatio, qua quis simulat se habere personam quam non habet, consequens est quod directe opponatur veritati, per quam aliquis exhibet se talem vita et sermone qualis est." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 111, a. 3.

⁹⁸ *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 70, a. 4.

of justice.⁹⁹ As a matter of fact the Angelic Doctor examines in detail the obligation which truth lays on plaintiff, defendant, witnesses and judge.¹⁰⁰

Untruth is also the foundation of another form of injustice—the deliberate dishonoring of another by false and serious accusations against him. This aspect of untruth comes under the virtue of justice, because it strips a fellow man of a most cherished possession and one rigorously demanding no falsehood against it.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 68, a. 3.

¹⁰⁰ *S. T.*, II-IIae, qq. 67-71.

¹⁰¹ "Cum ergo convictum seu contumelia de sui ratione importet quamdam dehonorationem, si intentio profertur ad hoc feratur ut per verba quae profert, honorem alterius auferat, hoc proprie et per se est dicere convictum vel contumeliam; et hoc est peccatum mortale non minus quam furtum vel rapina; non enim homo amat suum honorem quam rem possessionem." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 72, a. 2.

losophers may correct the error of scientists who try to answer questions beyond their professional competence, just as scientists can correct the errors of philosophers guilty of a similar transgression. (f) There are no systems of philosophy, each of which may be considered true in its own way by criteria of internal consistency, and differing from the others, as so many systems of geometry, in terms of different origins in diverse, but equally arbitrary, postulates or definitions. (g) The first principles of all philosophical knowledge are metaphysical, and metaphysics is valid knowledge of both sensible and supra-sensible being. (h) Metaphysics is able to demonstrate the existence of supra-sensible being, for it can demonstrate the existence of God, by appealing to the evidence of the senses and the principles of reason, and without any reliance upon articles of religious faith.²

What can be said for the point Professor Adler makes? What is the origin of this positivism and what are its consequences? Can we in reading its exponents and examining its principles see this modern thought taking the direction he attributes to it? "Positivism," says one author, "is philosophy driven into the camp of science by loyalty to the standards of exact research."³ Positivism is the result of the amazing advances of science in the last two centuries. "Nineteenth-century philosophy is primarily the story of varying reactions to this new science."⁴ How was philosophy to approach this new scientific spirit?

There are three possible points of view open to it. Philosophy might have ignored it altogether and gone on speculating about material things without ever looking in the direction of science. Or it might have entered into a full consideration of the findings of science and rendered an appreciation of their conclusions in the light of the more universal principles of philosophy. Lastly, it might have taken up an attitude of subordination in which philosophy steps down from its high throne as the

² *Loc. cit.*, pp. 128-129.

³ Perry, R. B., *Present Philosophical Tendencies* (New York: Longmans, 1929), p. 38.

⁴ Randall, J. H., *The Making of the Modern Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1940), p. 577.

CHAPTER II

TRUTH AND MODERN SOCIETY

A. CURRENT THOUGHT AND TRUTH

1. *Present Thought*

But recently Mortimer J. Adler made this serious charge against modern thought:

And, furthermore, I say that the most serious threat to Democracy is the positivism of the professors, which dominates every aspect of modern education and is the central corruption of modern culture. Democracy has much more to fear from the mentality of its teachers than from the nihilism of Hitler. It is the same nihilism in both cases, but Hitler's is more honest and consistent, less blurred by subtleties and queasy qualifications, and hence less dangerous.¹

By contrast with the thought he indicts and as the basis of his own position Professor Adler offers eight propositions to which, he claims, is public knowledge, not private opinion, in the same sense that science is knowledge, not opinion. (a) Philosophical knowledge answers questions which science cannot answer, now or ever, because its method is not adapted to answering such questions. (c) Because of different methods each adapted to different objects of inquiry, philosophical and scientific knowledge are logically independent of one another, and the truth and falsity of philosophical principles or conclusions does not depend upon the changing content of scientific knowledge. (d) Philosophy is superior to science, both theoretically and practically. (e) There can be no conflict between scientific and philosophic truths, although phil-

¹ "God and the Professors," M. J. Adler, *Science, Philosophy and Religion*. (*A Symposium*) (New York: Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, 1941), p. 128.

mistress of sciences and, instead of availing itself of the conclusions of science, becomes its servant.⁵

The paragraph just quoted goes on to say: "This latter attitude has been that of modern philosophy." The procedure took this form: criticism first destroyed the older metaphysical notions by applying whenever possible the methods and principles which had proved so efficient in the region of scientific research.⁶ Obviously such a method must needs have profound consequences for philosophy. The consequences in their full sweep reveal themselves in this general description by a historian of last century thought: "Popularly, the best known types of philosophical thought in the three countries are Materialism and Pessimism in Germany, Positivism and social philosophy in France, Naturalism and Agnosticism in England."⁷ This is the result though and the need now is to see how and why such currents should arise in the wholehearted adoption and subservience of philosophy to science.

It is a truism to say that one goes where another leads in following the principles and conclusions of that other. What were the general ideas of the science to which philosophy turned? One of the most important and far-reaching was the fact that the ideal of abstract truth suffered belittlement. Science in many cases held that formulas are convenient; they are not true—but useful. "Unity of knowledge, order and harmony, even completeness and symmetry, truth and beauty, are indeed no longer of direct use as canons for the scientific inquirer, any more than mysteries are supposed to be inherent in certain numbers. . . . In the place of the high-sounding but indefinable search after truth, modern science has put an elaborate method of inquiry."⁸ This attitude, which Walter Lippmann in a striking phrase calls one of the

⁵ Sheen, F. J., *God and Intelligence* (London: Longmans 1925), p. 71.

⁶ Merz, J. T., *History of European Thought in the XIX Century* (London: Wm. Blackwood & Son, 1914), IV, p. 738.

⁷ Merz, J. T., *op. cit.*, IV, p. 746. Cf. Randall, J. H., *op. cit.*, p. 528.

⁸ Hence while the eighteenth century found its keynote in hope, the nineteenth century expressed, in its philosophy, at least, either disillusionment and pessimism, or a hectic whistling to keep its courage up."

⁹ Merz, J. T., *op. cit.*, I, pp. 30-31.

"acids of modernity," proved corrosive of the traditional authorities of the past. Science substituted hypothesis for conclusion.

2. *Scientific Method and Philosophy*

Philosophy followed the lead and, to confine ourselves to thought in America, we see the reflection in such systems as Pragmatism and Instrumentalism. Here is truth according to Pragmatism, for example:

... "truth" in our ideas and beliefs means the same thing that it means in science. It means . . . nothing but this, that ideas (*which themselves are but part of our experience*) become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience, to summarize them and get about among them by conceptual short-cuts instead of following the interminable succession of particular phenomena. Any ideas upon which we can ride, so to speak; any ideas that will carry us prosperously from any one part of our experience to any other part, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, simplifying, saving labor; is true for just so much, true in so far forth, true instrumentally.

True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate, and verify. False ideas are those that we cannot. That is the practical difference it makes to us to have true ideas; that, therefore, is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known as.

The "true," to put it very briefly, is only the expedient in the way of thinking, just as "the right" is only the expedient in the way of our behaving. Expedient is almost any fashion; and expedient in the long run and on the whole, of course; for what meets expediently all the experience in sight won't necessarily meet all farther experiences equally satisfactorily. Experience, as we know, has ways of boiling over and making us correct our present formulas.

The "absolutely" true, meaning what no further experience will ever alter, is that ideal vanishing point towards which we imagine that all our temporary truths will some day converge. It runs on all fours with the perfectly wise man, and with the absolutely complete experience; and if these ideas are ever realized, they will all be realized together. Meanwhile we have to live to-

day by what truth we can get today, and be ready tomorrow to call it falsehood. Ptolemaic astronomy, euclidean space, aristotelian logic, scholastic metaphysics, were expedient for centuries, but human experience has boiled over those limits, and we now call these things only relatively true or true within those borders of experience. "Absolutely" they are false; for we know that those limits were casual, and might have been transcended by past theorists just as they are by present thinkers.⁹

Knowledge in this system "we must identify with human knowledge. Such is knowledge for better or for worse. No hypothetical knowledge can be more infallible or more certain than the processes of that human mind which defines, proves and believes it. It follows that it is possible to know, as fully as it is possible to know at all, a limited portion of reality."¹⁰ Truth is a property of ideas as they arise amid the actual processes of human thinking; its norm is whether or not the idea works, whether it fulfills its function or performs what is demanded of it. "An idea is essentially *for* something, and when it does what it is *for*, it is the right or true idea. And since ideas have a function, which they may or may not fulfill, truth is one of two opposite fortunes which may befall ideas, the other being error."¹¹

Instrumentalism expresses itself in a slightly different vein, though in the same environment and in the same temper. The fact of reference to John Dewey reveals itself in that branch of pragmatism known as instrumentalism,¹² and in such a phrase as this: "John Dewey prefers to call his philosophy experimentalism, or even instrumentalism, but the public continues to regard him as the leading exponent of pragmatism."¹³

The above quotations are evidently justified in the works of Instrumentalism's leading exponent. Here is an apt summary of his norm of truth:

⁹ James, Wm., *Pragmatism* (New York: Longmans, 1910), pp. 58, 201, 222-223. Italics author's.

¹⁰ Perry, R. B., *op. cit.*, p. 243.

¹¹ Perry, R. B., *op. cit.*, p. 204.

¹² *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1942), pp. 78, 246.

If ideas, meanings, conceptions, notions, theories, systems are instrumental to an active reorganization of the given environment, to a removal of some specific trouble and perplexity, then the test of their validity and value lies in accomplishing this work. If they succeed in their office, they are reliable, sound, valid, good, true. If they fail to clear up confusion, to eliminate defects, if they increase confusion, uncertainty and evil when they are acted upon, then are they false. Confirmation, corroboration, verification lie in works, consequences. Hand-some is that handsome does. By their fruits shall ye know them. That which guides us truly is true--demonstrated capacity for such guidance is precisely what is meant by truth. The adverb "truly" is more fundamental than either the adjective, true, or the noun, truth. An adverb expresses a way, a mode of acting. Now an idea or conception is a claim or injunction or plan to act in a certain way as the way to arrive at the clearing up of a specific situation. When the claim or pretension or plan is acted upon *it guides us truly or falsely*; it leads us to our end or away from it. Its active, dynamic function is the all-important thing about it, and in the quality of activity induced by it lies all its truth and falsity. The hypothesis that works is the true one; and *truth* is an abstract noun applied to the collection of cases, actual, foreseen and desired, that receives confirmation in their works and consequences.¹³

Here, too, scientific thought and method have left their imprint. The attitude of the scientist that his formulae are not true, are merely useful and convenient, serving for a time and being supplanted sooner or later by new and other formulae, is carried over to philosophy, introduced and adopted there.

3. *Philosophical Science*

The course of events outlined above reveals itself in another way. Just as there is an introduction of strictly scientific elements into philosophy, so there is an adoption of philosophical attitudes by science. The sciences have been advancing at a prodigious rate and presenting the philosophers with data faster than they

¹³ Dewey, J., *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt, 1920), p. 156. Italics author's.

can assimilate it. Moreover, because of the present exaltation of science, the scientists show a tendency to do their philosophizing for themselves.

In broad outline we might contrast the position of the philosopher and scientist as follows: The philosopher takes into account all branches and aspects of human knowledge and experience. The inspiration of the artist, the social urge of the reformer, the emotions of the lover, and the intuitions of the plain man—all are grist to the philosopher's mill. Moreover he must also take into consideration the conclusions and discoveries of the scientist.

The scientist, working away in his own special compartment, devotes his attention to a certain carefully delimited section of the universe. Thus enclosed, he arrives at more or less definite conclusions without stopping to consider what relation they bear to the conclusions reached by other scientists working in their watertight compartments. In the nature of things this is as it should be; cosmic correlation is not the business of the scientist. So there arises the need for a clearing-house in which the results arrived at by the various sciences can be pooled and collated, in order that, looking at them as a whole, we may be able to infer what kind of a universe it is that we live in, and hazard speculation on the destiny of human life within it.

At present, though, the above distinction is disregarded and that disregard reveals itself in the field of the special sciences. Those sciences, not content with their own special fields, concern themselves with the problem of the reality that underlies the world of science, and further, strive to give a logical account of it *in terms of their own special interest*.

If we ask, then, how the reality is to be conceived, it is probable that we shall get a number of different answers varying with the personality of the answerer. It is a mathematician's mind according to Sir James Jeans, an universal mind-stuff according to Professor Eddington, an organic unity rather like a person according to Professor Whitehead, a stream or force of life according to Bergson.¹⁴

¹⁴ Joad, C. E. M., *Guide to Modern Thought* (New York: Frederick Stokes Co., 1933), p. 104.

Take the scientist in physics. Because his world is a world of symbols, he suggests that the world of everyday life is the same. Modern physics claims to have eliminated the notion of substance; chasing it, in Professor Eddington's words, "from the continuous liquid to the atom, from the atom to the electron," physicists "have there lost it."¹⁵ "It is an astonishing feat of deciphering that we should have been able to infer an orderly scheme of natural knowledge from such indirect communication."¹⁶

Another example of the philosophizing of physicists is the celebrated argument of Sir James Jeans to show that the universe is a thought in the mind of a mathematical thinker. For Sir James the universe is more easily analyzable in terms of mathematical concepts than of those appropriate to any other science. The further we penetrate into the nature of physical things the more plainly are the mathematical principles underlying them laid bare. Substantial matter is in modern physics gradually shredded away; structure and relations only are left. Structure and relations are expressed in terms of mathematical formulae. The universe in short is more like a mathematical formula than it is like a machine, a living organism, a moral concept, or a work of art. Further, having formulated the laws of mathematics for ourselves, we find, when we turn our attention to the things of the outside world, that they obey them. What is the significance of this fact? First, that our own minds and the external world both originate in the constructive operations of the same mind. If that is in fact the case, that they should both work in accordance with the same laws is exactly what we would expect. Secondly, we are justified in drawing an inference as to the nature of this constructing mind; it must think or be capable of thinking mathematically.¹⁷

The science of biology shows the same tendency. "Here too a momentarily fashionable proclivity is at work: the tendency to glorify becoming or potentiality at the expense of being or actuality."

¹⁵ Eddington, Sir A., *The Nature of the Physical World* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. 318.

¹⁶ Eddington, Sir A., *Science and the Unseen World* (New York: Macmillan, 1920), p. 23.

¹⁷ Jeans, Sir James, *The Mysterious Universe* (New York: Macmillan, 1932), pp. 159-165.

ality, the way at the expense of the end, the struggle at the expense of achievement. In a natural reaction to 'static,' 'pre-evolutionary' forms of thought, in a too eager response to recent 'dynamic,' 'creative,' 'emergent' and 'relativistic' leadings¹⁸ is enthusiasm overreaches itself.

Along these lines the purely biological theory of emergence is expanded into the philosophical doctrine of life's creativity. In the world of materialist physics there can never be more in the result than there was in the cause. There can, in other words, only be rearrangements of what is already given; and all change and apparent growth must be rearrangements of what is already existing material. But with life, if the hypothesis of creative evolution is correct, this is not so. The mode of life's development is different from that of matter, in that life is continually bringing forth what is new, so that at any given moment in the development of a living organism the organism is literally more than it was at any preceding moment. The process of evolution consists, therefore, in the emergence of even higher levels of vital development, life possessed of greater powers and endowed with a capacity for greater variety and intensity of experience.

Life is a force or principle, at first unconscious or possessing only the latent germs of consciousness, seeking to realize through individuals not only higher powers and extended faculties, but a more conscious realization of the use to which its powers and faculties may be put.

Psychology, too, is of the same mind in some of its exponents. Briefly, but clearly, it reveals itself in attitudes such as this: "No, science is no illusion. But it would be an illusion to suppose that we can get anywhere else what it cannot give us,"¹⁹ or, "Psychologically, God always signifies the greatest value, hence the greatest sum of libido, the greatest intensity of life, the optimum of psychological activity."²⁰

¹⁸ Dakin, A. H., *Man the Measure* (Princeton University Press, 1939), pp. 254-255.

¹⁹ Freud, S., *The Future of an Illusion*. Translated by W. D. Robson-Scott (London: Hogarth Press, 1928), p. 98.

²⁰ Jung, C. G., *Psychological Types*. Translated by H. G. Baynes (London: Kegan Paul, 1923), p. 222.

4. *End Result*

The result of all this is an indiscriminate mixture of science and philosophy and a body of doctrine as confused in its results as in its origins. Philosophy is to prove its true worth

... by substituting faith in the active tendencies of the day for dread and dislike of them, and by the contrivance of intelligence to follow whither social and scientific changes direct us. We are weak today in ideal matters because intelligence is divorced from aspiration. The bare force of circumstance compels us onwards in the daily detail of our beliefs and act, but our deeper thoughts and desire turn backwards. When philosophy shall have co-operated with the course of events and made clear and coherent the meaning of the daily detail, science and emotion will interpenetrate, practice and imagination will embrace.²¹

Such is the present temper—an ideal of power through science, and for society the good life for all through the "intelligent" exercise of power.

Whither all this leads—and more particularly what it points for society—is summed up by Santayana:

The present age is a critical one, and interesting to live in. The civilization characteristic of Christendom has not disappeared, yet another civilization has begun to take its place. We still understand the value of religious faith; we still appreciate the pompous arts of our forefathers; we are brought up on academic architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, and music. We still love monarchy, and aristocracy, together with that picturesque and dutiful order which rested on local institutions, class privileges, and the authority of the family. We may even feel an organic need for all these things, cling to them tenaciously, and dream of rejuvenating them. On the other hand the shell of Christendom is broken. The unconquerable mind of the East, the pagan past, the industrial socialistic future confront it with their equal authority. Our whole life and mind is saturated with the slow upward filtration of a new spirit—that of an emancipated, atheistic, international democracy.

²¹ Dewey, J., *op. cit.*, p. 212.

These epithets may make us shudder; but what they describe is something deeply rooted in our animal nature and inspiring to our hearts, something which, like every vital impulse, is pregnant with a morality of its own. . . . This spirit is amiable as well as disquieting; liberating as well as barbaric. . . .²²

The phrase "emancipated, atheistic, international democracy" is worth more than passing notice. Truth, as modern philosophy considers it, has had no small part in forming this ideal for present society. The elements which that philosophy adopts and the ends it sets reveal both their nature and their direction in the startling phrase above.

"These epithets may make us shudder," as Santayana says, but they are demanded if present thought is to be consistent in all its applications. The currents that go to make up that thought are many; but pervading the whole is a scepticism and irrationality which, if not so noticeable in its premises, stands out most clearly in its conclusions.²³

The world is full of thinking, but there is no agreement in thought. There are philosophers, but there is no grave of the Unknowable; the history of Pragmatism is now being written in an exaggerated reaction to Idealism. . . . Bergsonian becoming is decaying and a sort of philosophical biologism remains as its heritage. The hurry, the fever, the restlessness, the excitement which blind us to the divine in things, leaves nothing but a philosophy of action for men of action. . . . Men are suffering from the fever of violent emotion, and so they make a philosophy of it."²⁴

More dangerous still, they have taken from science and rationalized a great many irrational factors. Blind evolution, confusion of matter and mind, psychology's appeal to instinctual and sensual drives, discontent with materialism yet withal a refusal to accept the distinction between life and matter, mind and body—all these

²² Santayana, G., *Winds of Doctrine* (New York: Scribners, 1926), p. 1.
²³ Joad, C. E. M., *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.
²⁴ Sheen, F. J., *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

contribute to a fluidity of thought whose consequences are now upon us. Clear in the whole picture, though, is a disparagement of reason which asserts that in the realm of thought, reason does not and cannot give us the truth, and which also asserts that in the realm of conduct reason should not, even if it can, guide our lives.

The justification of these statements will, it is hoped, become clearer in the next division of this work. These three present philosophies of society, Communism, German National Socialism and Humanism, will be examined. To point to what all this theory leads to in practice is the aim in setting down these philosophies. Another purpose is to show the essential similarities of the three, although one of them, Humanism, would profess to take violent exception to the hint of such similarity. But on the basis of its own principles and conclusions the likeness is there.

There is in all this thought a reliance upon the instinctive and irrational, a distrust of the operation of the intellect, whose methods are conditioned by the postulate that truth exists and is discoverable. Communism and National Socialism, it is granted, do not disown the activities of the intellect, they indeed are perfectly prepared to make use of them; but they will use them as instruments of propaganda, in order that by the creation of opinion they may further their own purposes, rather than as guides to objective fact. Humanism has the decency to protest its high-mindedness, but in sum and perforce it is on the same level as the other two. In this modern atmosphere Communism and National Socialism are collective Irrationalisms which find their truth in class or race; Humanism is an individualist Irrationalism which makes man the measure of truth. To establish these facts we must now proceed.

B. CURRENT PHILOSOPHIES OF SOCIETY

1. Communism

The concern of the philosophy of Communism is the development of an irrational reality, self-moving matter. In terms of such matter everything, God, man, society, is explained. The author of that philosophy, Karl Marx, grew and developed in the

atmosphere of thought previously indicated. Its currents reveal themselves in every page of his writings.

For one thing, Marx derived much of his ideology from Hegel. And although Hegel was an idealist believing in the evolution of a universal mind, he conveniently, if not rationally, regarded the process of that evolution as issuing in the Prussian state and its arbitrary rule. Marx took that process and gave it nuances of his own. "In opposition to idealism," says Ueberweg, "Marx possessed an extraordinarily keen eye for the lower instincts of man. In fact they were the only ones that existed for him."²⁵ In another way, too,

Orthodox or scientific socialism springing from Marx, has glorified the mechanistic universe and evolution because it has believed it was bringing about inevitably the day of revolution. . . . Marx whose conception of evolution was materialistic and Hegelian, rather than biological, saw the process as the successive struggle of classes for dominance and control. . . .²⁶

Moreover, we have Marx's own words that the evolutionary process favored his ideal:

During . . . the past four weeks I have read all sorts of things. Among others Darwin's work on Natural Selection. And though it is written in the crude English style, this is the book which contains the basis in natural science for our view.²⁷

Materialism, out and out, is the cornerstone of Marxian thought. But it was a unique materialism and the contrast reveals itself in the exception Marx took to the prevailing materialism because it lacked a vitalizing principle. Engels, Marx's collaborator, writes:

The materialism of the last century was predominantly mechanical. . . . This exclusive application of the stand-

²⁵ Ueberweg, F., *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie*, 12th ed. (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1924), IV, p. 227.

²⁶ Randall, J. H., *op. cit.*, p. 663.

²⁷ Marx, K., Letter to Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Sect. 2, Vol. 2, p. 533. Quoted by McFadden, C., *The Philosophy of Communism* (New York: Benziger, 1939), p. 25.

ards of mechanics to processes of a chemical and organic nature—in which processes, it is true, the laws of mechanics are also valid, but are pushed into the background by other and higher laws—constitutes a specific but at that time inevitable limitation. . . . The second specific limitation of this materialism lay in its inability to comprehend the universe as a process—as matter developing in an historical process.²⁸

Having criticized such materialism Marx and Engels made their contribution in taking the dialectic which had been the heart and soul of Hegel's idealism and making it the center of their own materialism. They took the development of the idea through opposites, thesis, antithesis and synthesis, and placed this development in the material and real rather than in the ideal order. "The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell."²⁹ Matter in their scheme instead of being an inert entity capable only of mechanical motion is conceived as essentially active. Things were not distinct and independent realities but parts of one great process wherein all things are related and interdependent.

Materialism, then, means something more for Marxism than epistemological realism and material causality. It means also that all reality, all existence is material or derived from matter as its source. In the name of this materialism it denies all transcendent causality and reduces the universe of Christianity to a reflex of the material world. God, man, society—are all explicable in terms of matter.

In this temper Marx considers man as essentially a practical animal working in matter, that is, as a producing animal. Men distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to pro-

²⁸ Engels, F., *Ludwig Feuerbach* (New York: International Publishers, 1934), pp. 36-37.

²⁹ Marx, K., *Capital* (New York: Modern Library, n. d.), Praef. to second edition, p. 25.

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duce their own means of subsistence.³⁰ Consistent with his materialism he looks on human effort as

... a process going on between man and nature, a process in which man, through his own activity, initiates, regulates, and controls the material reactions between himself and nature. He confronts nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion, arms and legs, head and hands, in order to appropriate nature's productions in a form suitable to his own wants.³¹

Such, in the Marxian solution, is the true nature of man. The trouble with other solutions, it says, is that while they recognize other ideal driving forces, they do not push the investigation far enough back to the real motive cause of all man's activity.³²

Men erect a state, formulate laws, practice religion and morality, observe social customs and conventions in order that they may secure for themselves the necessities of life. Subjectively men may believe that they are freely choosing a type of state or code of laws; actually these are adopted because men realize that they *must* follow that course under present conditions, to secure for themselves the necessities of life. Subjectively men feel that they are freely practicing religion for so-called supernatural reasons; actually that reason is demanded by the current mode of production based on private ownership. Subjectively men believe they are freely observing a given code of morality; actually that code of morality is economically determined. Subjectively men believe that they are freely choosing their type of art, literature and music; actually these in turn are economically determined.

Dialectical Materialism has also its "dialectical" theory of knowledge. In such a philosophy mind, of course, far from possessing an existence independent of matter, is actually identified with it. Yet that materialism makes a distinction between the two—a distinction, though, of degree rather than kind, indicating that mind is primary without exaggerating the distinction.³³

³⁰ McFadden, C., *op. cit.*, p. 90.

³¹ Marx, K., *op. cit.*, p. 107.

³² Engels, F., *op. cit.*, p. 59.

³³ Lenin, V., *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (New York: International Publishers, 1927), pp. 118, 207.

There is an inseparable connection (unity in opposition) between the subjective activity of man and the objective material activity, the reality which it reflects. Its product, knowledge, is "nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into forms of thought."³⁴

The problem of objective truth is "not a question of theory but a practical question,"³⁵ which can only be proved on action where man integrates himself with nature and nature takes on a human character.

In order to discover whether our ideas are true we must act on them. In acting on them we change the external environment. The true idea, then, is one which is validated by the outcome of the interaction between our practical activity, which expresses the meaning of the idea, and the external object, which calls it forth.³⁶

The social result of this philosophy is that in the present capitalist era "the objective truth of Marxism realizes itself in the informed revolutionary act. Marxism is neither a science nor a myth, but a realistic method of social action."³⁷ All truth resides with the disenfranchised proletariat and is realized only with its ascendancy.

The final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in man's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought, not in the philosophy, but in the economics of each particular epoch. The growing perception that existing social institutions are unreasonable and unjust, that reason has become unreason, and right wrong, is only proof that in the modes of production and exchange changes have silently taken place with which

³⁴ Marx, K., *op. cit.* Praef. to second edition, p. 25.

³⁵ Hook, S., *From Hegel to Marx* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1936). Marx's II Thesis on Feuerbach wherein this statement is found is incorporated herein, p. 281.

³⁶ Hook, S., *Towards an Understanding of Karl Marx* (New York: John Day, 1933), p. 103.

³⁷ Hook, S., *op. cit.*, p. 114.

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the social order adapted to earlier economic conditions is no longer in keeping.³⁸

Thus, too, the virtues of truth and justice are restricted to the proletarian class:

We say that our morality is wholly subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. We deduce our morality from the facts and needs of the class struggle of the proletariat. . . . That is why we say that a morality taken from outside of human society, does not exist for us; it is a fraud. For us morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletarian class-struggle.³⁹

Such is Communist philosophy in its antecedents, its theory and its application to society. Its conclusion is this: truth is the interest of the proletariat, law the weapon of its struggle for power. It does profess truth—the truth of class.

2. *German National Socialism*

The philosophy, if it can be called that, of German National Socialism demands a different treatment. Though according to its proponents it is a *Weltanschauung*, it is difficult to define. Nazi orators and writers make the task no easier when they say it is untranslatable, inexpressible, infallible, indivisible—which tells nothing. "The truth is that it can be understood only as a kind of retrospective philosophical justification of Nazidom. It is well known that with such a dynamic movement, the theory may follow rather than precede the events."⁴⁰

Unlike Communism, National Socialism has, more or less, formed and defined its philosophy as it went along. But the point is that as a philosophy of society it reflects the intellectual attitudes of that atmosphere to frightening conclusions. One of the

³⁸ Engels, *F., Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (New York: International Publishers, 1935), p. 54.

³⁹ Lenin, *V., Religion* (New York: International Publishers, 1933), pp. 47-48.

⁴⁰ Roberts, S. H., *The House That Hitler Built* (New York: Harpers, 1938), p. 45.

proponents of the German Faith Movement, for instance, Wilhelm Hauer, in his book, *Deutsche Gottschau*, argues that the real deity is the spirit of the race and that national history is more than a sequence of facts; it is a *Werden*, a becoming, an evolution; it is the spirit of the race always in suspense, always in movement, a progress of Being, a revelation. This is no more than emergent evolution with an umlaut.

We have, from an accurate observer who witnessed its rise and growth, a short and clear summary of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*.

This then is the German philosophy of which Alfred Rosenberg and Walter Darre are the high priests, and the anthropologists, and biologists and historians in every German university are the acolytes. There is a Nordic "Volk" triumphant over everything. This depends on the unalterable facts of Blood and Soil and the two combine over long periods of time to produce a race of supermen. Within the "Volk" the naturally superior specimens come to the fore. Democracy is a historical accident of the last century, Communism a Jewish disease in debased Slav-Russia; there only remains, then, a system of government in which the interests of the individual are cheerfully surrendered to those of the community, or "Volk" as a whole. This system is National Socialism and within it the "Fuehrer" is the mouthpiece of the "Volk," revealing its best interests by some kind of inspiration. As such he must be accorded blind obedience so that the "Volk" may prosper.⁴¹

The importance of these ideas cannot be exaggerated. With them we pass from the sphere of politics proper into a realm of a philosophy which imposes upon the Germans a mission entrusted to them from on high. Politics, *Weltanschauung*, and religion are inextricably locked together. The vindication of Race (Volk) and Blood (Blut) and Soil (Erbe) in the subjection of the weaker is a divine mission. This doctrine is set forth as the *volkische Weltanschauung*, the philosophy of life of the German people. *Volksisch* in this connection is translated by the English word national which poorly conveys the connotation of racial and spiritual

⁴¹ Roberts, S. H., *op. cit.*, p. 57.

solidarity implied by the word. Implicated in *volksisch* is the racial purity, the pristine glory and heroism of the original Nordic, Aryan or Teutonic family.

The general attitude of National Socialism is revealed in an extremely crude, albeit revealing phrase of one of the earlier leaders of the party. "Objectivität," says Ernst Roehm, "ist Unpersönlichkeit, ist Afferweisheit."⁴² Much of its theory is a monument of pseudo-scholarship full of absurdities, misstatements, and bizarre theories. With its scientific refutation we are not concerned.⁴³ Our point is that undisciplined minds have brought together some of the advance theories of rationalistic criticism and though they have used them, not in the interests of rationalism, but of romantic racism, they cannot be separated from the present intellectual atmosphere. "Fascism" (in this case the German form), says C. E. M. Joad,

is pervaded by a thorough-going anti-intellectualism. Now particularly in its German form, it repudiates the notion that there is an absolute truth or set of truths of reasoning, and communicated to others by a process of exposition and argument. . . . Professing a general distrust of abstract reason, it has much in common with the criticisms of scientific method which have been authoritatively put forward during the last two decades.⁴⁴

The all important factor for the *Volk* is blood. "The sin against the blood and the degradation of the race are the hereditary sins of this world," says Hitler, "and the end of a mankind surrendering to them."⁴⁵

⁴² Röhm, E., *Die Geschichte eines Hochverraters*, 2nd ed. (München: Verlag de N. S. D. A. P., Franz Eher, 1930), p. 327.

⁴³ For the scientific refutation of Nazi theory see Kleinberg, A., *Race Differences* (New York: Harpers, 1935); Montagu, A., *Man's Most Dangerous Myth, the Fallacy of Race* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942); *Scientific Aspects of the Race Problem*, by H. S. Jennings and others (New York: Longmans, 1941).

⁴⁴ Joad, C. E. M., *Guide to Philosophy of Morals and Politics* (London: V. Gollancz, 1938), pp. 614-615.

⁴⁵ Hitler, A., *Mein Kampf*, a complete and unexpurgated edition (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1940), p. 339.

What does blood mean to us? We cannot rest satisfied with the teachings of physics, chemistry or medicine. From the earliest dawn of the race, this blood, this shadowy stream of life, has had a symbolic significance and leads us into the realm of metaphysics. Blood is the builder of the body and also the source of the spirit of the race. In blood lurks our ancestral inheritance, the blood is embodied the race, from blood arises the character and destiny of man: blood is to man the hidden undercurrent, the symbol of the current of life, from which man can arise and ascend to the regions of light, of spirit, and of knowledge.⁴⁶

All reality is interpreted in terms of race and blood. For Alfred Rosenberg, the official philosopher of National Socialism, "the racial soul of the people (*die rasseugebundene Volkseele*) is the measure of all our thoughts, all the motions of our will, all our actions; it is the final norm of our values."⁴⁷ This line of thought is pushed to the extreme of concluding that God would not exist if soul and blood did not exist.⁴⁸ Hence the importance of racial purity and hence eugenics as the normative discipline of the new religion! In practice this is realized when, for example, the *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* reproduced in huge letters that occupy a whole page, a saying of Ernst Arndt: "To be a People—that is the religion of our time."⁴⁹

Such in short is reality in the National Socialist scheme. The clearest summary of its body of knowledge is the fact that Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Rosenberg's *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts*⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Krieck, E., "The Education of a Nation from Blood and Soil," *Internationale Zeitschrift für Erziehungs- und Wissenschaft*, 1933-1934, Drittes Heft, pp. 310 ff. The quotation is from the English translation of the original "Volkische Erziehung aus Blut und Boden," same issue, p. 305 ff.

⁴⁷ Quoted in Micklem, N., *National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church* (Oxford University Press [issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs], 1939), p. 19.

⁴⁸ Micklem, N., *op. cit.*, Chapter II.

⁴⁹ Roberts, S. H., *op. cit.*, p. 270.

⁵⁰ "Prelections from Mein Kampf preceded and followed by Nazi hymns, are constantly read at Party meetings with great solemnity. Many visitors to Berlin may remember a distinguished photographer's window in Unter den Linden which displayed to the public gaze a picture representing a corner in Hermann Goering's Karin-Hall; in the dark background might

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are its textbooks. Consistent with their teaching, education like life itself must be rooted in blood and soil, if it is not to become formal and mechanical.⁵¹ Its ideal is this:

The folkish State, through this realization, has to direct its entire education primarily not at forming in bodies. Of secondary importance is the training of the mental abilities. But here again first of all the development of the character, especially the promotion of will power and determination, connected with education for joyfully assuming responsibility, and only as the last thing, scientific schooling.⁵²

The character of the scientific schooling which might be allowed can be gathered from a further statement of the German leader: "For the rest, it is the task of a folkish State to see to it that at last a world history is written in which the race question is raised to a predominant position."⁵³

Hitler expresses the same idea, also, when speaking of the winning of the people; in order that the necessary blind faith be sustained, one's own teaching must be unalterable and infallible and it must be anchored in feeling rather than in thought.

The great mass of a people consists neither of professors nor of diplomats. The small abstract knowledge it possesses directs its sentiments rather to the world of feeling. . . . He who would win the great masses must be discerned the features of a Gothic Madonna; in the foreground, upon a sumptuous lectern flanked by candles set on noble candlesticks, there lay a de luxe edition of *Mein Kampf*." Micklem, N., *op. cit.*, p. 3.

Rosenberg's *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* (München: Pöhlchen-Verlag, 1930), may be studied in English # 46 *Mythos I. The Worship of Race* and # 44 *Mythos II. The Character of the New Religion* (London: "The Friends of Europe" publications, 1933).

⁵¹ Cf. Kandel, I., *The Making of Nazis* (Columbia University Press, 1935), pp. 51 ff.

⁵² Hitler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 613.

⁵³ Hitler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 630. Cf. Ziemer, G., *Education for Death* (Oxford University Press, 1941) for an eyewitness account of present German education. The author, formerly principal of the American school in Berlin, was granted exceptional privileges in his examination.

know the key which opens the door to their heart. Its name is not objectivity, that is, weakness, but will power and strength.⁵⁴

Knowledge is not the mind's apprehension of some objective fact which is known; knowledge is what the Nazi Party as the highest expression of the *Volks* has decided that individuals should believe; ignorance or error is what the same Party has decided that individuals ought not to know.

But naturally, also, truth is the creation of the Aryan:

It is a futile enterprise to argue which race or races were the original bearers of human culture and with it, the actual founders of what we sum up with the word "mankind." It is simpler to put this question to oneself with regard to the present, and here the answer follows clearly and distinctly. What we see before us of human culture today, the results of art, sciences, and techniques, is almost exclusively the creative product of the Aryan. But just this fact admits of the not unfounded conclusion that he alone was the founder of higher humanity as a whole, thus the prototypes of what we understand by the word "man." He is the Prometheus of mankind, out of whose bright forehead springs the divine spark of genius at all times, forever rekindling that fire which in the form of knowledge lightened up the night of silent secrets and thus made man climb the path towards the position of master of the other beings on this earth. Exclude him—and deep darkness will again fall upon the earth, perhaps even after a few thousand years, human culture would perish and the world would turn into a desert.⁵⁵

Rhapsody? Yes. But it matters not in the least whether we agree with this philosophy or not; what matters is that we are confronted with a *Weltanschauung* in action, with the ruthless driving force and energy of a fanatic dictator behind it—a ruthless fanatic just because he conceives himself to be a vessel of absolute truth, and through that truth saviour of the soul of his people. And, as one observer notes, to the German it is all very

⁵⁴ Hitler, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 467-468.

⁵⁵ Hitler, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 397-398.

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natural for it symbolizes to him the ceaseless struggle for roots in a world in which moral standards are tottering.⁵⁶

The translation of all this theory into practice has been swift, expedient and logical. The virtues of truth and justice and their organs of expression in present-day Germany clearly reveal this. Here again the point of departure is the same: "All that is not race in this world is trash."⁵⁷

Moral truth is identified with force—" . . . the most striking success of the revolution of a view of life will always be won whenever the new view of life is, if possible, taught to all the people, and if necessary, is later forced upon them, while the organization of the idea, that means the movement, has to embrace only so many as absolutely necessary for the occupation of the nerve center of the State involved."⁵⁸

Truth, the object of the theoretical reason, is subordinated to, if it is not dismembered in the interests of living; morals and the disciplines of the passions, study and the life of the mind, which have been traditionally enjoined upon man by authority, reason and experience alike, are jettisoned in the interests of "fuller" living. "Goebbels," says an eye-witness, "has arrived at a mathematical relationship between the stream of propaganda and any individual's power of resistance, and if his margin is sufficient to wear down foreigners, how much more effective is it for his own nationals, predisposed as they are to be converted to the achievements of the new regime."⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Roberts, S. H., *op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁵⁷ Hitler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 406.

⁵⁸ Hitler, A., *op. cit.*, p. 852.

⁵⁹ Roberts, S. H., *op. cit.*, p. 28. ". . . many apparent absurdities, exaggerations or eccentricities must be ascribed neither to ignorance nor stupidity or even vindictiveness; they arise from a primary and more or less conscious disregard of objective truth. For the only function of cognition in political, and even philosophical matters, as they see it, is to equip the fighting nation and the leaders who mould it with the most effective weapons possible." Kolnai, A., *The War Against the West* (London: the Left Wing Book Club, is an exhaustive study of the fundamental irrationalism of National Socialism. It has also the merit of an excellent bibliography.

Justice is in the same pattern. Simply "whatever is useful to the German people is right; whatever is harmful is wrong."⁶⁰

The blood community of the race . . . i. e., the nation, is the pivotal point of all earthly existence. The nation alone is a purpose in itself. Everything else is a means to an end and must serve the good of the nation, everything including justice and law. Justice is whatever is of benefit to the nation, whatever corresponds with the German feeling of justice, the unadulterated voice of God in the race-pure soul.⁶¹

When the cornerstone of the vast *Haus de Deutschen Rechts* was laid at Munich Dr. Frank, Minister of Justice, gave expression to the new idea of law as a living, malleable reflection of a nation's current morality. National Socialism had, according to him, closed the unhappy gap that hitherto had existed between justice and the people. Spirit had triumphed over form, common sense over arid academic theories, and healthy evolution over a paralyzed static conception. Law is to be living and vital, it changes with the community, and is justified only in so far as it gives expression to the spirit of the community and its rulers.⁶²

Such is the atmosphere, spirit and result of German racism. Its reality is attested to by its strength and importance in present-day Germany. Whether Hitler and his Party are political opportunists or not, they appeared when any order was better than chaos; when any ruler who restored unity and the strength which comes with unity was better than drifting and being at sixes and sevens; when any cause which offered man the chance of escaping from selfishness and self-indulgence into the service of a supra-personal ideal was better than demoralization. The ideal on which they built was truth—the truth of race.

3. Humanism

That which goes under the name of Humanism today has many

⁶⁰ Herr Wagner, Bavarian Minister of the Interior, quoted in Joad, C. E. M., *op. cit.*, p. 646.

⁶¹ *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, May 17, 1936, quoted in Micklem, N., *op. cit.*, p. 162.

⁶² Roberts, S. H., *op. cit.*, p. 289.

faces. It professes, for instance, in its highest—or lowest—reaches to be a religion and as such is defined in the second unabridged edition of Webster's New International Dictionary as: "a contemporary cult or belief calling itself religious, but substituting faith in man for faith in God." The dictionary then cites a sentence of Dr. C. F. Potter's: "Humanism is faith in the supreme value and self-perfectibility of human personality."

With Humanism as such an organized movement and its vitality we are not greatly concerned. Our concern is with its ideas whose influence and prevalence in English-speaking countries especially, none can gainsay. The degrees of difference between those who call themselves Humanists are not particularly important; what is important is their ideas and trends of thought—the common forming ground for a whole group of self-styled "advanced" thinkers.

Probably the most expressive statement of what Humanism means appeared in the May-June, 1933, issue of the *New Humanist*. The editor of that periodical, Mr. R. P. Bragg, observed at that time:

The Manifesto is a product of many minds. It was designed to represent a developing point of view, not a new creed. The individuals, whose signatures appear, would, had they been writing individual statements, have stated the propositions in differing terms. The importance of the document is that more than thirty men have come to general agreement on matters of final concern and that these men are undoubtedly representative of a large number who are forging a new philosophy out of the materials of the modern world.

After a lengthy preamble demanding changing views in a changing world, the Manifesto details the points on which Humanists would agree:

First: Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.

Second: Humanism believes that man is a part of natural process.

Third: Holding an organic view of life, humanists

find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.

Fourth: Humanism recognizes that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely moulded by that culture.

Fifth: Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values. Obviously humanism does not deny the possibility of realities as yet undiscovered, but it does insist that the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry and by the assessment of their relation to human needs. Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method.

Sixth: We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of "new thought."

Seventh: Religion consists of those actions, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant. Nothing human is alien to the religious. It includes labor, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship, recreation—all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living. The distinction between the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained.

Eighth: Religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist's social passion.

Ninth: In place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being.

Tenth: It follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with belief in the supernatural.

Eleventh: Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that

humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene, and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking.

Twelfth: Believing that religion must work increasingly for joy in living, religious humanists aim to foster the creative in man and to encourage achievements that add to the satisfactions of life.

Thirteenth: Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. The intelligent evaluation, transformation, control, and direction of such associations and institutions with a view to the enhancement of human life is the purpose and programme of humanism. Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.

Fourteenth: The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.

Fifteenth and last: We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from it; and (c) endeavor to merely for the few. By this positive morale and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.

The use of "religion" and "religious" which constantly recurs in the above is to evaluate in the light of the previously given definition of Humanism: "a contemporary cult or belief calling itself religious but substituting faith in man for faith in God." Starting from the postulate that since nothing is better known than man he must be the norm of thought and action, Humanists portray him each according to his own likeness. They can be classified in three groups, depending upon their estimate of his

estimate of his

place in the universe. There is the optimistic school which holds high hopes for man and his development in the universe. There is the pessimistic school which stresses the subjectivity, the relativity, and the frustration of human desires. And, last, there is the mediating school which strives to reconcile cultural, personal points of view with clear, abstract, scientific points of view.

John Dewey, one of the signers of the Manifesto, indicates a general attitude of Humanists to the all-embracing character of science when he says:

Science is not constituted by a particular body of subject matter. It is constituted by a method, a method of changing beliefs by means of tested inquiry, as well as arriving at them. It is its glory, not its condemnation, that the subject-matter develops as the method improves. The identification of science with a particular set of beliefs and ideas is itself a holdover of ancient and still current dogmatic habits of thought which are opposed to science in its actuality and which science is undermining.⁶³

It is "from science rather than from ethics and religion . . . philosophy should draw its inspiration," claims Bertrand Russell.⁶⁴ In such a vein he concludes that the postulation of creation out of nothing is unwarranted. The world would seem to have had a beginning in time, but that is no reason for concluding it was made by a Creator. "There is no reason whatever why the universe should not have begun spontaneously, except that it seems odd that it should do so; but there is no law of nature to the effect that things which seem odd to us must not happen. To infer a Creator is to infer a cause, and causal inferences are only admissible in science when they proceed from observed casual laws. Creation out of nothing is an occurrence which has not been observed."⁶⁵

So, too, Humanists take over the conclusions of psychology, and

⁶³ Dewey, J., *A Common Faith* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1934), pp. 38-39.

⁶⁴ Russell, B., *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays* (London: Longmans, 1925), p. 98.

⁶⁵ Russell, B., *The Scientific Outlook* (New York: Norton, 1931), pp. 117-118.

God in their scheme, far from being the supreme reality demanded by the postulate of reason, becomes a projection into the universe of man's own sense of personal agency.⁶⁶ Here the method of a school of psychology is adopted and the result is the above. That school realizes clearly enough that, unlike the other natural sciences, it is dealing not with the objects of consciousness, but with consciousness itself. Moreover, not content with this abstractive device as a method of clarification, it pushes it further and makes it an ultimate means of discriminating between truth and error, reality and delusion. Humanists, enthralled by such science, follow its subjectivism to the last degree.

Under such auspices and in the same way do Humanists ex-cogitate their body of knowledge. The Manifesto previously quoted is the best and fairest summary of the result. On examination their affirmations fall roughly into two groups, one of primarily naturalistic import reflecting the influence of science, the other humanistic and a by-product of the refinement of civilization by Christianity. The naturalization of the universe (item one), man (items two, three, and eight), and religion (items four, five and six) belong to the first group. The second group includes the humanistic view of religion (items seven, nine, and ten) and of the individual and society (items eleven to fifteen). In the name of Science, progress and relativism Humanists eliminate God (items one, five, and six), assign the origin and nature of man to an irrational process (items two, three, and four), make him the measure of truth (items eight to twelve), establish the general nature of the naturalistic society they would have (items thirteen to fifteen).

Truth for Humanists here shows its antecedents. In one way or another it is equated with practical consequences and efficiency and man becomes, not only the measure of truth, but to an in-defineable extent the master and creator of reality. Reason, no longer the key to reality and truth, is often treated as the tool of instinct, will and emotion to be used for purposes beyond its ken. Logic as working itself out in historical events and institutions, overshadows logic as a dissection of ideas and propositions.

⁶⁶ Sellars, R. B., *Religion Coming of Age* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. 159.

"Scientifically approved," "emotionally satisfying," "idealistic attitude," "dynamic," "forward looking," "vital"—all these are phrases used by the Humanists to summarize their attitude.

But the inversion to which they are compelled lest they find plan, purpose, value, a meaning in the nature they extol is revealed in such side-stepping as this:

A rational world is a world that reason can grasp and because of this, it is associated in our minds with reason and thought of as akin to it, but as a matter of fact, the relation between intelligence and order is just the reverse of the one the idealist suggests. It is intelligence which presupposes order and not order which presupposes intelligence. Without order in the world the human reason could neither have risen nor could it have got leverage upon the world. An orderly world is rational only in the sense that it is suited to reason. It is the kind of world in which reason can arise and operate.⁶⁷

Thus the circle is completed from St. Thomas to modern thought. St. Thomas finds the explanation of the irrational in the rational and true; present exponents find the explanation of the rational and true as they would have it in the irrational.

We need not speculate on the practical working out of all this theory. It has been clearly stated. In merely setting it forth, moreover, we can see further justification for bringing together Communism, National Socialism and Humanism as all stemming from the same source. To this, of course, Humanists would take violent exception. They particularly identify their theories with Democracy and are the loudest and most vocal in their condemnation of the excesses of the dictatorships. Professor O. L. Reiser defines Humanism as "the doctrine that men, through the use of intelligence, directing the institutions of democratic government, can create for themselves, without aid from 'supernatural powers,' a rational civilization in which each person enjoys economic security and finds cultural outlets for whatever normal human capacities and creative energies he possesses."⁶⁸ The ob-

⁶⁷ Sellars, R. B., *op. cit.*, p. 220.

⁶⁸ Reiser, O. L., "The Social Objectives of Humanism," *The New Humanism*, December, 1934.

jectives of Humanism then outlined are in such harmony with the objectives of Communism and National Socialism that the agreement is more than coincidental. The only difference is, as M. J. Adler says, the fact that the dictatorships are less queasy in pushing their conclusions to the ultimate in practical results.

Some of the objectives outlined are these: (1) in social relations: (a) abolition of institutional authority in fixed beliefs; (b) modernization of courts and legal procedure; (c) sterilization of defectives unfit to be parents; (2) in the family: (a) eugenics; (b) birth control; (c) divorce by mutual consent; (d) removal of the illegitimacy stigma; (3) in education: mental hygiene facilities (clinics) for all.⁶⁹

Communism and National Socialism have effectively abolished institutional authority and fixed beliefs; have modernized their courts and legal procedure; have sterilized defectives, introduced eugenics, birth control, divorce and removal of the illegitimacy stigma. The results in the name of class or race have been and are being recounted in numerous articles, books and in the daily newspapers. Should Humanists have their way the same results would be recounted in the name of man.

Humanism, to localize it, has been called typical of Anglo-Saxon liberals.

... Anglo-Saxons on account of their devotion—supposedly more marked in themselves than in other peoples—to liberty, tolerance, order, and peace, and on account of a generally "idealistic" attitude as native and well come to them as it is frequently alien and suspect to others. Rationalistic in their faith in science, intelligence, planning, and in their hatred of institutional authority for anything with which they disagree. Liberal because in almost everything their appreciation of the new seems too eager, ill-considered, well meant and confused to those called conservative, and timid, over-called radical.⁷⁰

Such is the nature of the individualist irrationalism of Humanism.

⁶⁹ Reiser, O. L., *loc. cit.*

⁷⁰ Dakin, A. H., *op. cit.*, p. 176.

CHAPTER III

A CRITIQUE

A. OF TRUTH OF CLASS

1. *Agreement and Difference*

The rejection of reason whose progress we have indicated in the previous chapter was at first individualist. A substitute, though, had to be found to supply for that rejection. Some turned to a cult of æsthetic emotion withdrawing from the real world of irrational forces into an equally irrational but consoling world of phantasy. Some cultivated an egoism, the enjoyment of power or pleasure. A great many refused to think at all about the meaning of life and immersed themselves in "practical living." But the laws of reality must inevitably bring home to men, whether they yield to them or not, the consciousness of their own weakness when they adopt a cult of individualist egotism.

In self-defense, then, irrationalism became social and then powerful and dangerous. We have seen this in Marxism and National Socialism. Even Humanism, the apotheosis of determined individualism, was pushed to a social consciousness. Its own program, quoted at the end of the last chapter, reveals a panicky and frantic effort whose result is an alignment with what it so vocally condemns.

This is not to say that modern thought completely abandoned truth. Such an over-simplification would be as much a disservice to truth as the over-emphasis on race, class, or man which we now propose to criticize in the light of Thomistic wisdom. Our contention is that extreme positions have, as they inevitably must, generated error. Obviously, to immediately take an extreme position ourselves would be to nullify our critique and fall into the error we are seeking to point out.

The above thoughts suggest our procedure. What elements of truth do we find in the philosophies we condemn? If we do find

truth as well, why do we condemn? But by the same token partial truth is no guarantee of the lack of vicious error. It is in fact the best assurance of the propagation of that error. Error is dangerous only inasmuch as it possesses a certain portion of mutilated truth.¹

Judging by present acceptance and also by present activity Marxism, National Socialism and Humanism can indeed score a point in their favor. Many factors of course have combined to bring them to this popularity—and by no means the least of these has been brute force. But our concern here is not the social or economic or military or any other of many important ferments at work within these systems; our problem is in their philosophical structure. And our examination will deal with the intrinsic worth of that structure.

2. *Theories of Knowledge*

The strength and weakness—if you would, the truth and error—of Marxism is admirably suggested for our purpose in the following:

There are in Marxist epistemology a certain number of traits which do not displease a Thomist: its aversion to idealism, its affirmation of the reality of the external world, the rôle it grants to the body in knowledge itself (in the first degree of human knowledge), the importance (unfortunately principal) which it bestows upon material causality, the sense which it bestows historical becoming (and which reduced to just proportions would be a highly philosophical sense, but which in the Marxist theory devours everything).²

One of the first points of agreement between Marxism and Thomism is the importance both assign to a theory of knowledge. Knowledge and the truth resulting from it is for St. Thomas, as we have already seen, a particular mode of being. St. Thomas

¹ "... sicut se habet bonum in rebus, ita verum in cognitione. Impossibile est autem inveniri aliquid in rebus quod totaliter bono privetur. Impossibile est esse aliquam cognitionem quae sit falsa, absque admixtione alicujus veritatis." *S. T.*, II-IIae, q. 172, a. 6.

² Maritain, J., *Scholasticism and Politics*, p. 43.

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examined the process of intellectual cognition minutely because of his estimate of its worth. "The greatest among the perfections of things is that a thing is intellectual, because thereby it is, after a fashion, all things, having within itself the perfections of all."³ That which is most perfect in any intellectual nature is intellectual operation, according to which it seizes in a certain way all things.⁴ Further, because knowledge and truth are indissolubly united, the perfection of a spiritual nature (in Thomistic thought any intellectual being must be such) consists precisely in knowledge of the truth.⁵

Now the preoccupation to know what knowledge is, is by no means spontaneous to man.⁶ Yet it would be laboring the obvious to call attention to St. Thomas' concern with it. As a patient observer, a philosopher studying the deepest reaches of all things, he was not content to know, but he wanted to find out why he knew and what he knew. That quest itself and the fidelity in which he pursued it show better than mere protestations his devotion to, among other great facets of his philosophy, a theory of knowledge.

Marxism, too, recognized and turned its thought to the same problem. Engels calls it one of the great basic questions of all philosophy.⁷ Holding to a rigid materialism Marxism inevitably raised difficulty for itself in that problem. As we have pointed out in the previous chapter⁸ Marxists would admit no difference of kind between mind and matter. Yet it is perhaps an unconscious tribute, even though an inconsistent one, that they strenuously insist on a difference, at least in degree, to secure for

³ "Inter perfectiones autem rerum potissima est quod aliquid sit intellectivum: nam per hoc ipsum est quodammodo omnia habens in se omnium perfectionem." *I C. G.*, 45.

⁴ "Id autem quod est perfectissimum in qualibet intellectuali natura, est intellectualis operatio, secundum quam capit quodammodo omnia." *S. T.*, I, q. 26, a. 2.

⁵ "Perfectio autem spiritualis naturae in cognitione veritatis consistit." *De Ver.*, q. 15, a. 1.

⁶ Cfr. Gilson, E., *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, p. 261.

⁷ Ludwig Feuerbach, p. 30.

⁸ Chapter II, p. 49.

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themselves the activity of mind and an important place for it in their philosophy.

We have seen, moreover, how they speak of true ideas. "To be a materialist is to acknowledge objective truth revealed by our sense organs."⁹ This in philosophical language is called "the identity of thinking and being."¹⁰ The dynamism of Marxism, its activities not only in the theoretical establishment of its premises but in the practical sphere, show a serious, almost fanatical devotion to the thought of Marx and Engels. Here there is no dilettantism, rather a deep concern that could only arise from a conviction of worth.

3. *Materialism and Idealism*

Another point of contact for Marxism and Thomism is their reaction to extreme Idealism. St. Thomas establishes his position by reference to two extremes of Grecian thought—the materialism of Heraclitus and the idealism of Plato.¹¹ To the theory of knowledge of both St. Thomas takes exception. His strong rejection of Platonic idealism, moreover, is evidenced in the choice of the word "derisibile"—an unusual word for St. Thomas whose kindness and recognition of his opponents is ever present in his works—to characterize its position. He then goes on to adopt his own position of moderate realism in the Aristotelian tradition. And the issue here is not merely one of rejecting or adopting the

⁹ Lenin, V., *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, p. 104.

¹⁰ Engels, F., *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹¹ "... primi philosophi, qui de naturis rerum inquisiverunt, putaverunt mobilia esse et putabant ea in continuo fluxu esse, existimaverunt, quod nulla certitudo de rerum veritate haberi posset a nobis. Quod enim est in continuo fluxu, per certitudinem apprehendi non potest, quia prius labiliur quam mente diiudicetur; sicut Heraclitus dixit. . . . His autem superveniens, lectum haberi, posuit praeter certam cognitionem veritatis a nobis per intellectum haberi, posuit praeter ista corporali aliud genus quod nominabat species, sive ideas; per quarum participationem unumquodque istorum singularium et sensibilem dicitur vel homo, vel equus, vel aliquid hujusmodi. Sic ergo dicebat, scientias, et definitiones, et quidquid ad actum intellectus pertinet, non ferri ad ista corpora sensibilia, sed ad illa immaterialia et separata, ut sic anima non intelligat ista corporalia, sed intelligat horum corporaliur species separatas." S. T., I, q. 84, a. 1.

solution of a particular doctrine but rather of deciding for or against an entire philosophy.

St. Thomas unmasks behind every one of the doctrines he combats the latent presence of Platonism; if he rejects these doctrines, the reason is that in his eyes it is the business of philosophy to interpret the real world of Aristotle, not the world of appearances described by Plato. And, again, if he holds firmly to the real world of Aristotle, the reason is an assertion of sheer common sense beyond and behind which it is impossible to go.¹²

We have seen previously¹³ the program to which Marx and Engels committed themselves in breaking with the inert materialism of the eighteenth century. Their own system they called "Dialectical Materialism" to set it apart and indicate their contribution.

Dialectical Materialism distinguishes itself and its point of view by its affirmation—(a) of the reality and knowability of the world of material reality; and (b) of the inseparable connection (unity in opposition) between the subjective activity of Man and the objective material activity, the reality, which it reflects.¹⁴

Dialectical Materialism is explicitly and chronologically a revolt against Hegelian idealism. Marx started his study of philosophy with Hegelianism which was in his time the official philosophy of all German universities. But from the first he was repelled by it. Though the complete formulation of his own thought came only years later, it is significant of the bent of his mind that in this Hegelian atmosphere his choice for a doctoral dissertation was a comparative study of the philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus. Hegel he considered as having stood dialectic on its head. His collaborator Engels tells us how Marx and himself "comprehended the concepts in our heads once more materialistically—as images of real things, instead of regarding the real things as im-

¹² Gilson, E., *op. cit.*, p. 194.

¹³ Chapter II, pp. 48-49.

¹⁴ Jackson, T., *The Logic of Marxism* (London: M. Lawrence Co., 1936), p. 575.