

the latter is Divine. For that reason Cajetan and John of St. Thomas held that the legal justice of the prince is more perfect than the virtue of religion.⁷⁴ Undoubtedly the reasons why we are ignorant of the common good are the very same ones on account of which we are ignorant of political prudence. "We have too long been in error concerning the role of the intellect. We have neglected the substance of man. We have believed that the virtuosity of low souls could assist in the triumph of noble causes, that clever selfishness could lift up the spirit of sacrifice, that aridity of heart could, through the wind of discourse, found fraternity or love."⁷⁵

The intellect has succumbed to the senses, to the senses riveted to the singular good. The conflict which exists between man and society does not come from the perfection of the person, nor from a supposed common good which is contrary to the person; it comes properly from the sensible part of man, from the revolt of this inferior part of man against the good of the intellect. As for the intellect as such, the ordering to the common good is so natural that a pure intellect cannot deviate from it in the pure state of nature. In fact the fallen angels, elevated to the supernatural order, did turn aside from the common good but from that common good which is the most Divine, namely supernatural beatitude, and it is only by way of consequence that they lost their natural common good. The fallen angels ignored by a practical ignorance (*ignorantia electionis*) the common good of grace; we, on the other hand, have come to the point of being ignorant of every common good even speculatively.⁷⁶ The common good, and

⁷⁴ Cajetan, *In IIam Ilae*, q. 81, a. 6; John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, V. VII, d. 19, a. 6, nn. 9-18.

⁷⁵ Antoine de Saint Exupery, *Pilote de Guerre*, Editions de la Maison Française, N.Y., p. 212.

⁷⁶ Even the sin of Adam was without speculative ignorance. "*Adam non est seductus, sed mulier. Seductio autem duplex est, sc. in universali, et in particulari eligibili, quae est ignorantia electionis. Quicumque ergo peccat, seducitur ignorantia electionis in particulari eligibili. Mulier autem*

not the person and liberty, being the very principle of all law, of all rights, of all justice and of all liberty, a speculative error concerning it leads fatally to the most execrable practical consequences.

II

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE NEW ORDER⁷⁷

Non est enim ista sapientia desursum descendens; sed terrena, animalis, diabolica. Jac. III, 15.

Angeli autem boni, cognoscentes creaturam, non in ea figuntur, quod esset tenebrescere et noctem fieri; sed hoc ipsum referunt ad laudem Dei, in quo sicut in principio omnia cognoscunt. Ia pars, q. 58, a. 6, ad 2.

Et (angelo) se cognito, non in seipso permansit, quasi seipso fruens et in se finem ponens—sic enim nox factus esset, ut angeli qui peccaverunt—sed cognitionem suam in Dei laudem retulit. Q. D. de Verit., q. 8, a. 16, ad 6.

According to your program I am supposed to speak to you about "Philosophy and Order in International Relations." Actually I was asked to submit to you, as matter for discussion, the following problem: "Metaphysics and International Order". I must bring this to your attention, because the subject that I am in fact going to deal with is as distant from the sec-

*fuit seducta ignorantia in universali, quando sc. credit quod serpens dixit; sed vir non credit hoc, sed deceptus fuit in particulari, sc. quod gerendus esset mos uxori, et cum ea comedere deberet, et inexpertus divinae severitatis credit quod facile ei remitteretur." S. Thomas, In I ad Tim., c. II Lect. 3. See also In II ad Tim., ch. III. Lect. 2, on the *semper discentes et numquam veritatem invenientes*.*

⁷⁷ This work was presented to the congress of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, held in Philadelphia in 1940. It appeared, in its major substance, in the Proceedings of the Association under the title, *Metaphysics and International Order*. I am told that among other faults the text in the *Proceedings* suffers from being "enigmatically brief". This is a worthy criticism and I shall try to do better in this new version.

ond topic just mentioned as the latter is from the first topic mentioned.

The problem of international order is not properly a problem of metaphysics, but of political science and political prudence. Among the speculative sciences even the philosophy of nature will be more closely pertinent than metaphysics. Yet it is significant that the most radical and most coherent doctrine of the international revolution always takes care to attack metaphysics as its absolute contrary.⁷⁸ The emancipation of political life necessarily led to this result. If politics is a certain wisdom, if in the practical order it is the architectonic science, it is nonetheless not an absolute wisdom, but must remain subordinate. It could not emancipate itself except by denying all subordination. But the philosophy of the revolution well understood that metaphysics indeed takes upon itself to defend first principles, that it is the most proper science for leading us to things which are more noble by nature and more divine than man. The common good of political society is not the purely and simply universal good; it cannot be conserved when one does not order it to the sovereign good. Man is not the measure of man.

That is what by all evidence matters for a universal order among nations. You know very well that the end of revolutionary philosophy is not international order in the strict sense of the word. Revolutionary philosophy does not recognize nations, any more than it recognizes families. It does not even recognize the true common good of political society, nor of political societies. It does want a certain universal order, but it seeks the principle for it in what is materially first in any social order: man purely as man, considered in his most subjective condition, in a state of privation both material and

⁷⁸ Joseph Stalin, in *Histoire du parti communiste (Bolchevik) de l'U.S.S.R.* Foreign language edition, Moscow, 1939, Ch. IV, section 2: "Le matérialisme dialectique et le matérialisme historique." This same section was published separately by International Publishers, New York, 1940.

spiritual. That is how one must understand the radical character of this doctrine.

NEGATION OF THE PRIMACY OF THE SPECULATIVE

In spite of their apparent divergence, modern philosophers generally agree in holding that metaphysics or speculative wisdom, for as much as it principally concerns things which are better than man, alienates man from himself, that it divests him of his true self. Being in some sense superhuman, it is thought to be unhuman. It would distract man from the total effort that is required to conquer the earth, and to respond to his desire to live.⁷⁹ It would be destructive of human nature, and consequently it must be considered as one of the great enemies of humanity.

And, indeed, as Aristotle says in the *Ethics*, if man were the most perfect thing in the universe, not wisdom but political prudence and science would be the most perfect knowledge.⁸⁰ I would like to discuss this hypothesis with you. Suppose for a moment that political science and political prudence constitute the most perfect knowledge, and let us see what one must conclude in all rigour.

The first consequence, and the most general one, is that things would be no more, at most, than what we want them to be. For political science and prudence are practical in that they direct towards an end in conformity with right reason. But that presupposes that we know in some way the nature of the thing to direct and of the end; which is to say that the rectitude of practical rule presupposes the rectification of the speculative intellect.⁸¹ Therefore if, per impossibile, practical

⁷⁹ "A sophista vero differt philosophus 'phronesi', idest electione vel voluptate, idest *desiderio vitae*." In *V Metaph.*, Lect. 4, n. 575.

⁸⁰ "For it is not appropriate to consider politics or prudence as the best of knowledge, unless man be the best of what is in the universe." *VI Ethic.*, ch. 7, 1141a20.

⁸¹ John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theol.*, ed. Solesmes V. I, p. 395.

rule were independent of speculative truth, then what things are or ought to be—man for instance, or the good for man or society—would simply be what we want them to be. Even practical science would no longer be science. Simple practical knowledge would no longer really be practical. All direction would proceed according to chance; it would no longer be direction.

This hypothesis implies more specifically the negation of prudence. One might argue however that we are free to choose the end; is the end not that which is the principle in practical matters, and does the artisan not choose the end that he desires to realise (a house for example, and this sort of house rather than that)? But this would be to forget the radical difference between art and prudence. For prudence does not choose the end, but only the means. If prudence chose the end it would, like art, be unable to choose the means, so that it would be one and the same with art. And if that were so, the truth of a prudential judgement would not depend on the rectitude of the appetite in relation to the good, but on the rectitude of the intellect only, that is of its conformity with the chosen end.⁸² And given that art is concerned only with the true and not, as with prudence, with the true and the good simultaneously, the judgement of a morally corrupt man could be just as wise as that of a virtuous man—which, incidentally, is commonly admitted in active politics; and any default in moral action would be due to a default in knowledge only. Further, since art is concerned with contraries, as health and sickness for example in medicine, if prudence were in this respect like art then it would be indifferent to good and evil.⁸³ The sole criterion of good and evil would be success in the realization of the end chosen. It would be absurd to want to justify one's conduct, even in one's own eyes, by thinking or saying that one acted according to one's conscience and with

⁸² Cajetan, *In Iam Ilae*, q. 58, a. 5.

⁸³ Cajetan, *In Iam Ilae*, q. 47, a. 1.

good intention. Any concrete deviation from the chosen end, whether due to reason, chance, or will, would be a fault.

Following this hypothesis, man would be in truth the measure of all things, and there could be no other measure. But the proposition "man is the measure of all things" remains abstract. To be consistent, we must ask "What man?" or "What men?" Note that we could not ask, "What man or men have the right to impose themselves as measure?" The right will belong to the person who has the power to impose it. In good logic, the most one can do is wait for it to happen.

That is how one accomplishes the emancipation of man as pure *artifex*. This emancipation would respond to a desire entirely characteristic of man. There is in man a tendency to accord the primacy to the practical over the speculative, and to art over prudence. This tendency comes from man's intellectual debility, as one can see through the following reasons.

"The possession of wisdom," says Aristotle in the beginning of the *Metaphysics*, "could be considered as more than human, for human nature is in many ways slave."⁸⁴ The contemplative life is not properly human but rather superhuman, whereas the active life is the most proportioned to human nature.⁸⁵ The best part of man, the speculative part, is the weakest. Will he accept the difficult and unforgiving requirements of the object of that part of him which is at once his most noble and his weakest part? Human nature contains the threat of revolt; can one contain it?

In speculative knowledge the intellect is measured by the

⁸⁴ *I Metaph.*, c. 2, 982b25.

⁸⁵ *Q. D. de virt. card.*, a. 1, c: "... vita autem humana est quae est homini proportionata. In hoc homine autem invenitur primo quidem natura sensitiva, in qua convenit cum brutis; ratio practica, quae est homini propriasecundum suum gradum; et intellectus speculativus, qui non perfecte in homine invenitur sicut invenitur in angelis, sed secundum quamdam participationem animae. Ideo vita contemplativa non est proprie humana, sed superhumana; vita autem voluptuosa quae inhaeret sensibilibus bonis, non est humana, sed bestialis. Vita ergo proprie humana, est vita activa, quae consistit in exercitio virtutum moralium.

object, and in speculative wisdom we are principally concerned with things better than ourselves.⁸⁶ It is impossible to consider these objects without feeling at the same time our condition of inferiority, both as regards our nature and as regards our mode of knowing. In practical knowledge, insofar as it is practical, the intellect is itself measure, and we ourselves are in some way the end of all works of art.⁸⁷

One is tempted to prefer art to prudence because truth in art is not conditioned by the conformity of the appetite to the good but uniquely to the chosen work, whether the latter be good or bad. And the end of art is this particular work, this machine, this statue; but the goodness of this prudential act depends on its conformity to the good life considered in its totality.⁸⁸

Furthermore, because art imitates nature, it succeeds in most cases, and the artisan does not need to deliberate on

⁸⁶ ". . . prudentia est circa bona humana, sapientia autem circa ea quae sunt homine meliora." *In VI Ethic.*, Lect. 6, d. 1191.

⁸⁷ ". . . nos utimur omnibus quae sunt secundum artem facta, sicut propter nos existentibus. Nos enim sumus quodammodo finis omnium artificialium. *In II Physic.*, Lect. 4, n. 8. This proposition is verified even in the case of works of religious art. For these imitations are made in order to represent the originals in a manner more proportioned to ourselves.

⁸⁸ "Et dicit (Philosophus) quod ad prudentem videtur pertinere, quod sit potens ex facultate habitus bene consilii circa propria bona et utilia, non quidem in aliquo particulari negotio puta qualia sint bona vel utilia ad sanitatem vel fortitudinem corporalem; sed circa ea quae sunt bona et utilia ad hoc quod tota humana vita sit bona . . . quia scilicet illi quidem dicuntur prudentes non simpliciter, sed circa aliquid determinatum, qui possunt bene ratiocinari quae sunt bona vel utilia ad aliquem finem determinatum, dummodo ille finis sit bonus; quia ratiocinari de his quae pertinent ad malum finem est contrarium prudentiae: dummodo hoc sit circa ea quorum non est ars, quia bene ratiocinari de hoc non pertinet ad prudentiam, sed ad artem. Si ergo ille qui est bene consiliativus ad aliquid particulare sit prudens particulariter in aliquo negotio; consequens est, quod ille sit totaliter et simpliciter etiam prudens, qui est bene consiliativus de his quae pertinent ad totam vitam. *In VI Ethic.*, Lect. 4, nn. 1162-3.

the means;⁸⁹ but in acts which depend on the conformity to the good, we most often fail.⁹⁰ And the cause of this is man's double nature and the contrariety of the senses to reason.⁹¹ This contrariety makes human actions to be most often bad, for man is not perfect by natural constitution; his "secondary perfections" are not innate but acquired or infused. As long as it is not perfected by virtue, not determined *ad unum*, human nature stands the risk of most often deviating from the right way.⁹²

Still further, on account of the weakness of his speculative intellect, man will be tempted to exalt his ability to construct pleasant imitations. He will be tempted to dominate every

⁸⁹ ". . . manifestum est quod ars non deliberat. Nec artifex deliberat in quantum habet artem, sed in quantum deficit a certitudine artis: unde artes certissimae non deliberant. Sicut scriptor non deliberat quomodo debeat formare litteras. Et illi etiam artifices qui deliberant, postquam invenerunt certum principium artis, in exequendo non deliberant: unde citharaedus, si in tangendo quamlibet chordam deliberaret, imperitissimus videretur. Ex quo patet quod non deliberare contingit alicui agenti, non quia non agit propter finem, sed quia habet determinata media per quae agit." *In II Physic.*, Lect. 14, n. 8.

⁹⁰ ". . . malum numquam invenitur nisi in paucioribus, si referuntur effectui ad causas proprias: quod quidem in naturalibus patet. Nam peccatum vel malum non accidit in actione naturae, nisi propter impedimentum superveniens illi causae agenti quod quidem non est nisi in paucioribus, ut sunt monstra in natura, et alia huiusmodi. In voluntariis autem magis videtur malum esse ut in pluribus quantum ad agibilia, licet non quantum ad factibilia, in quantum ars non deficit nisi ut in paucioribus, imitatur enim naturam. In agibilibus autem, circa quae sunt virtus et vitium, est duplex appetitus movens, scilicet rationalis et sensualis; et ideo quod est bonum secundum unum appetitum, est malum secundum alterum, sicut prosequi delectabilia est bonum secundum appetitum sensibilem, qui sensualitas dicitur quamvis sit malum secundum appetitum rationis. Et quia plures sequuntur sensus quam rationem, ideo plures inveniuntur mali in hominibus quam boni. Sed tamen sequens appetitum rationis in pluribus bene se habet, et non nisi in paucioribus male." *Q. D. de Pot.*, q. 3, a. 6, ad 5.

⁹¹ *Ia Pars*, q. 49, a. 3, ad 5; q. 63, a. 9, ad 1; q. 23, a. 7, ad 3; *Ia IIae*, q. 71, a. 2, ad 3.

⁹² *In II Ethic.*, Lect. 7; *In I Sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 2 ad 4.

imitable original, those greater than us as well as those which are inferior to ourselves. The fine arts are, in fact, the most human means of making objects which are better than us more proportioned to ourselves.

In the Beginning, the Word of Man

Modern history of philosophy shows that all of these consequences have really occurred, and that they have been erected into a doctrine. I want to show briefly that by progressively ignoring and denying the things that are greater than man, and consequently wisdom itself, modern thought has simply denied and ignored what is best in man himself; it has, in truth, bestowed almost divine attributes on that which is most inferior in man, inferior both spiritually and materially.

Encyclopedia Britannica defines humanism as "in general any system of thought or of action which assigns a predominant interest to the affairs of men as compared with the supernatural or the abstract (from the Latin *humanus*, human, derived from *homo*, humanity). The term is specially applied to that movement of thought which in western Europe in the 15th century broke through the medieval traditions of scholastic theology and philosophy, and devoted itself to the rediscovery and direct study of the ancient classics. This movement was essentially a revolt against intellectual, and especially ecclesiastical authority, and is the parent of all modern developments whether intellectual, scientific or social."⁹³

⁹³ And in the article on the Renaissance, the term 'humanism' "denotes a specific bias which the forces liberated in the Renaissance took from contact with the ancient world,—the particular form assumed by human self-esteem at that epoch,—the ideal of life and civilization evolved by the modern nations. It indicates the endeavour of man to reconstitute himself as a free being, not as the thrall of theological despotism, and the peculiar assistance he derived in this effort from Greek and Roman literature, the *litterae humaniores*, letters leaning rather to the side of man than of divinity. In this article the Renaissance will be considered as implying a comprehensive movement of the European intellect and

We would never wish to subscribe to this tentative definition of humanism if it were intended to be applicable to all of those who have been called humanists. When one refers to St. Robert Bellarmine or St. Peter Canisius as humanists, it seems to me that one cannot understand it in the sense which is properly verified in Pico della Mirandola, Erasmus, or Rabelais. Humanism in these latter means a humanist conception of man.⁹⁴ And still further it must be remarked that

will toward self-emancipation, toward reassertion of the natural rights of the reason and the senses, toward the conquest of this planet as a place of human occupation, and toward the formation of regulative theories both for states and individuals differing from those of medieval times."

Concerning a more general use of the term "humanism", see our remarks below, note 94.

⁹⁴ Some authors use the term 'humanism' to signify a very elevated conception of the natural faculties of man. This imposition is the cause of a good many purely verbal misunderstandings. When the word is used with this broad signification, it must be said that St. Thomas is infinitely more humanist than Erasmus, indeed that he is opposed to Erasmus as to one who destroys what is best in man. The conception of humanism which is now referred to as 'vulgar,' and which is based on works such as those of Burckhardt, Monnier and Symonds cannot resist this play on words. This wider imposition can moreover find a justification in the 'vulgar' conception of humanism, which latter also played on the meaning of 'natural power' of man. It is not always warranted that one should accept this kind of slide from one meaning of a word to another. In St. Thomas, 'essence' does not mean gasoline [as it may in French—TRANS.], and in reading St. Thomas we ignore this new meaning of the word though it is not without foundation. The thesis about movement represented by those whom the so-called 'vulgar conception' called "humanists" on account of their ideas, cannot be refuted by citing passages in which Erasmus, for example, contrary to someone such as Mirandola, rebels against the so-called rationalization of the Gospel and against the philosophic Hellenism of the Middle Ages. Erasmus is profoundly humanist when he wishes to reject Aristotle, and he is still more so when he attacks scholastic theology under the pretext of defending Christian wisdom. One diminishes his genius when one tries to excuse him by citing the abuses to which decadent scholastics were given. One diminishes still further the mastery itself of a master when one maintains that his work, isolated from infinitely complex historical circumstances, is

in one such as Rabelais, contrary to the customary thesis, this humanism is much more an attitude than a doctrine.

Consider a text which we would call humanist in the philosophical sense of the word—and it is in this sense henceforth that we will understand the term 'humanist'. It is taken from the Discourse of Pico della Mirandola on the dignity of man.⁹⁵

not really intelligible. He who attacks the great scholastics of the Middle Ages, he who ignores the greatest among his own contemporaries, must also, in our opinion, attack that which was most profound in Greek wisdom, i.e., that by which man can best approach Christian speculative wisdom and moral science, for that is also what is most divine in man. The naked evangelism that Erasmus preached is most humanist in the sense in which we understand the term. His doctrine is not less humanist for being called "philosophy of Christ", or for having considered the use of philosophy in theology as a form of paganism. We do not deny that there is some foundation for the enthusiasm which was later manifested on the occasion of the great scientific discoveries. What we regard as humanist is the hope that was invested in this new power. We do not deny the power of temptation; we consider as humanist the manner in which certain persons reacted, and we count them among our adversaries. Undoubtedly words signify as one pleases—*ad placitum*. But that should not prevent us from following this counsel of St. Thomas: "Because we should not even use terms which the unfaithful use, lest the commonness of the names become an occasion of error, the faithful should avoid readily using the word destiny, so that they will not appear to approve of those who use it according to a bad meaning." *III Contra Gentiles*, c. 93.

⁹⁵ "Statuit tandem optimus opifex ut cui dari nihil proprium poterat commune esset quicquid privatum singulis fuerat. Igitur hominem accepit opus imaginis atque in mundi positum meditullium, sic est alloquutus. Nec certam sedem, nec propriam faciem nec munus ullum peculiare tibi dedimus O Adam, ut quam sedem quam faciem, quae munera tute optaveris, ea pro voto pro tua sententia habeas et possideas. Definita ceteris natura intra prescriptas a nobis leges coercetur. Tu nullis angustiis coercitus pro tuo arbitrio in cuius manu te posui tibi illam praefinies. Medium te mundi posui, ut circumspiceres inde commodius quicquid est in mundo. Nec te caelestem, neque terrenum, neque mortalem, neque immortalem fecimus, tu tui ipsius quasi arbitrarius honorariusque *plastes et factor*, in quam malueris tute formam effinguas. Poteris in inferiora quae sunt bruta degenerare. Poteris in superiora quae sunt divina ex tui

Lastly, the best of the workers (opifex) decreed that this creature, to whom he had not been able to give anything which would be proper to him, would possess all the particular characteristics of different creatures. He therefore gave to Man the function of an undetermined form, and a

animi sententia regenerari. O summam dei patris liberalitatem, summam et admirandam hominis foelicitatem. Cui datum id habere quod optat, id esse quod velit, bruta simul atque nascuntur id secum afferunt (ut ait Lucilius) e bulga matris quod possessura sunt. Supremi spiritus aut ab initio aut paulo mox id fuerunt quod sunt futuri in perpetuas aeternitates." *Oratio Joannis Pici Mirradulae Concordiae Comitum*. "Legi Patres . . ."—*Omnia Opera*, ed. Jehan Petit, Paris 1517. s. p.

Here are some passages taken from the *Theologia Platonica* of his teacher and friend, Marsile Ficin: "A man strives to remain in the mouths of men for the whole of the future. . . . He accepts that he cannot be celebrated by the entire past, by all countries, by all animals. . . . He measures the earth and the heaven, scrutinizes the depths of the Tartar, and the heaven does not seem to him too high, nor the center of the earth too deep. . . . And since he knows the order of the heavens, and who moves these heavens, and where they are moving to and their measures and their products, who will deny that he has practically the same genius as the author of these heavens and that in a certain manner he could create them himself. . . . Man wants to have no superior or equal; he does not tolerate in the least that there should be above him some dominion from which he might be excluded. That is the state of God only. . . . He strives everywhere to command, everywhere to be praised. He strives to be everywhere like God. Like God, he strives to always exist." In P. Monnier, *Le Quattrocento* 8th ed., Paris 1934, V. 1 pp. 49-50.

Further let us quote this passage taken from the *Silva* of Laurence of Medici: "Talent was then equal to desire, and envy to the strength of the intellect; man contented himself to know the part of God that he can understand; and the vain presumption of our perverse mind should not rise higher, nor search with excessive preoccupation the causes that nature hides from us.

"Today our mortal mind presumes that there is a hidden good to which it aspires; a vulgar subtlety spurs our human desire and does not know how to restrain it; that is why our desire complains that the mind has too much light in supposing this good; and, if it does not see it, it complains of the little that it sees, and it sees that it does not see, and it seeks to be blind or to see completely." Apud Monnier, *op. cit.*, V. II, p. 129.

place in the middle of the world, and addressed these words to him: "I did not give you a permanent home, Adam, or a form which is yours alone, or any function which is proper to yourself, so that you might, according to your desire and judgement, have and possess that home, that form, and those functions which you please. The nature of every thing is limited and enclosed within boundaries and laws prescribed by me; you, constrained by no necessity, will decide by yourself what limits to place upon your nature according to the free will that is proper to you and in the hands of which I have placed you. I have established you in the center of the world, so that you might observe from there more easily all that is in the world. I have made you neither divine nor terrestrial, neither mortal nor immortal, so that you might with greater liberty of choice and greater honor—being in some sense your own modeler and creator (*plastes et factor*)—, fashion yourself according to all the forms which you shall prefer. You will have the power to assume the inferior forms of life, which are animal; and you will have the power, through the judgement of your spirit, to be reborn in more elevated forms of life, which are divine."

O supreme generosity of God the Father, O most elevated and marvelous felicity of man to whom it is given to have what he chooses, to be what he wants. The animals carry with them, from their mother's womb, all they will ever possess; the pure spirits, either from the beginning or very soon after, become what they will be for all eternity. . . .

We will not analyse this text in detail. Note only this insistence on the unformed character. It is true that by his faculty of receiving the form of what is other and of being all things according to knowledge, man is in the center of the cosmos, whereas the other cosmic creatures are limited, whether to their individual form, or to sensible and singular forms alone. But when we consider formally this unformedness, this unlimited potentiality, we attain rational nature in its characteristic non-being, and far from occupying thereby the center of

creation, man is at the lowest degree among the intelligent creatures.

Mirandola moreover does not consider this unformedness only in the line of knowledge; for him it is very admirable because it increases the field of liberty. It is not a question of liberty of intellect, but of "deciding by yourself the limits of your nature according to the free will which is proper to you"; the concern is with a faculty for establishing one's proper rules of conduct and of directing oneself, pushed even to the point of being equivalent to a participation in the knowledge of good and evil.

This is an exaltation of unformedness, of the indetermination proper to the rational nature of man, which will become even more striking in the idealism of Hegel, and still more pronounced in the materialism of Feuerbach and Marx. To attribute the perfection of man to this very unformedness and to the subjective power to actualize oneself amounts to affirming the primacy of material and efficient causes. The desire to feel in a very tangible way the infinity of this power as the first principle of his operation, and that which is most his own, pushes man to the point of adoring the infinity of his hands and his tongue, the latter being the organs of practical reason. The infinity which underlies the kind of technical progress that today's *homo-faber* has erected as an end becomes then a horrible thing. Shown for what it is, this infinity projected as an end would become an object of infernal despair.

The liberty of contrariety vis-à-vis the natural end also bears the mark of a properly human imperfection. It can only be considered as a perfection by comparison with beings deprived of will. It cannot exist in an intellectually perfect nature. Is man a masterwork of creation because he can fail, even of the attainment of his properly natural end? Because, therefore, he is composed of contrary natures? Because, therefore, he is defective according to the very idea of an intelligent and free being?

Because he can accept or reject his end, because he can

direct himself to his natural end, is it not given to man to be more *causa sui* than an intellectual nature created in the possession of his end? There is the sophism which underlies the rhetoric of Mirandola.

This is a properly human perversion. The fallen angel took excessive pleasure in that perfection which was in conformity with his nature and which he had received by the very fact of his creation. Man, on the contrary, takes pleasure here in a disordered manner in his potentiality and in the fact of not being established in possession of his end. I say "in a disordered manner" because man can rejoice for not being fixed by nature as irrational creatures are. But it is not permitted to him to "look back"—*Nemo respiciens retro, aptus*. . .

* * *

The exaltation of that poetic activity in which man himself makes objects or imitations which have the character of a term in the line of knowledge and which suffice unto themselves, was a deliberate return to the time when divinities were in a large measure in the image of man, subject to human conditions, and over which the poet could wield dominion. It was not a return to classical art considered in all of its fullness; the latter was, in many ways, truly religious, that is to say subordinated to originals which were recognized as superior. It was rather a deliberate return to classical poetry for as much as the latter could be profane even faced with divine originals. The desire was in sum to have a profane poetry with universal dominion, religious at most by extrinsic denomination. It was to emancipate pure poetry "which has for its object those things which, because of their deficiency of truth, cannot be grasped by reason."⁹⁶ All imitable originals were to stand before the genius of man and be reduced to the condition of operable

⁹⁶ ". . . poetica scientia est de his quae propter defectum veritatis non possunt a ratione capi; unde oportet quod quasi quibusdam similitudinibus ratio seducatur." *In I Sent.*, Prol., q. 1, a. 5, ad 3.

matter. That is what giving primacy to the "infima doctrina" amounts to.⁹⁷

Descartes speaks explicitly of this philosophy which has for its end not knowledge for its own sake, but the transformation of all things for man's profit. Marx is the very faithful echo of the following passage in the *Discourse on Method* (Part VI): ". . . rather than that speculative philosophy that is taught in the schools, there is a practical philosophy by which, knowing the force and the actions of fire, water, air, stars, the heavens and all the other bodies which surround us, as distinctly as we know the different trades of our artisans, we could use them in the same way for all the uses for which they are fitted, and thus make ourselves as masters and possessors of nature. This is not only desirable for the invention of an infinity of artifices which would enable us to enjoy the fruits and all the commodities of the earth without pain, but principally also for the conservation of health. . . ."

To grasp the whole significance of this text, one must remember what Descartes declared about theology. "I revered our theology and had the intention as much as anyone else of gaining the reward of heaven; but, having learned as a thing very certain that the road is not any less open to the most ignorant than it is to the most learned, and that revealed truths which lead to heaven are above our intellect, I could not dare to submit them to the weakness of my reasoning, and I thought that to take them upon oneself and examine them would have required some extraordinary assistance from Heaven and would also have required that one be more than man." (Part I)

Even speculative philosophy is too difficult, too uncertain and insufficiently adjusted to the level of reason. What remains for us then other than this practical philosophy which will, moreover, finish by leaving off ethics and substitute in its

⁹⁷ *La Pars*, q. 1, a. 9.

place medicine and a hygiene to be used to heal and prevent all spiritual ills?

The skepticism of Hume contributes yet further to support the negations which lead to a philosophy which is plainly and openly humanist. The following passage is like a premeditation of his skepticism.

It seems, then, that nature has pointed out a mixed kind of life as most suitable to the human race, and secretly admonished them to allow none of these biases to draw too much, so as to incapacitate them for other occupations and entertainments. Indulge your passion for science, says she, but let your science be human, and such as may have a direct reference to action and society. Abstruse thought and profound researches I prohibit, and will severely punish, by the pensive melancholy which they introduce, by the endless uncertainty in which they involve you, and by the cold reception which your pretended discoveries shall meet with, when communicated. Be a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man.⁹⁸

Man turns away from research and from the contemplation of things which are better than man; or, in other words, he turns away also from what is best in himself. He turns inwards instead to those powers which are most properly his own. Among these powers there is one, in some way the most profound, which touches to those principles which are absolutely first for us: the power of properly human language. One can say and write things that one cannot think. One can say, "It is possible to be and not to be at the same time and in the same respect"; "The part is greater than the whole", though one cannot think such things. But yet, they are grammatically correct phrases. Transcendent power of language: one can say both the thinkable and the unthinkable. Power to use the purely irrational. I can say, "I do not exist". And with

⁹⁸ *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sect. I. Ed. E. A. Burtt, The English philosophers from Bacon to Mill, Modern Library, 1939, p. 587.

that I can found "I exist" on pure non-being. I say it! Who will stop me? Let them stop me. I will say it again. Myself, and myself. Before long, a society of myself.

The liberty of speech is discovered: speech set loose from intellect. "Exterior speaking" has emancipated itself. Thought becomes subject to language. Free, finally. In the beginning, the word of man.

I tell you: on the day of judgement, men will account for every vain word they have spoken. For you shall be justified by your words, and you shall be condemned by your words.

Thus is also discovered the faculty of "composing" history. The latter becomes purely scientific, as our manner of speaking has it. The historian is emancipated from practical wisdom, from the bounds of prudence. The method which we call "critical" considers itself as a substitute for prudence. Does it not allow us to judge historical events in an objective manner, whatever our subjective dispositions might be? The historian no longer needs to be a prudent man whose judgements concerning human actions would be conditioned not by mere knowledge alone, but by the rectitude of his own appetite. And so thus science emancipates us from the principle, "As you are, so you will judge": "qualis unusquisque est, talis ei finis videtur". Finally we are liberated from that terrible word: "As you have judged, so you will be judged, and according to the measure by which you have measured, you will be measured." Thus truth permits the adulterous man to cry on the public place: this woman was taken in flagrant adultery! Why does the beam in your eye prevent your neighbor from having a splinter in his? Is his splinter less objectively there than your beam? Is that not a perfectly impersonal truth? Is such truth not the right of all? Why should the historian not be just as free as the physician? Facts are facts!

And the fear of God?

The attitude of philosophers towards their readers has completely changed. It is no longer the truth they speak, but more rather the reader and the writer who become the principal ob-

ject of their preoccupation. They themselves confess that they always hope, for their own sake, that the reader will approve of their opinions. What is still more important is that the reader for whom they write is no longer the philosopher, but rather that vague individual called the man of good sense on some occasions, the cultivated man on others, and the general reader on others. Compare that procedure with that of Aristotle or of St. Thomas. The *Discourse on Method* is essentially a rhetorical work. It was also one of the first appeals to unformed man precisely as he is unformed, an appeal which will some day shine forth in the appeal to the unformed masses insofar as they are unformed.

Philosophical works take on a form which makes them more and more unrefutable according to right thinking. They are rooted in attitudes. Philosophy becomes more and more the expression of the personality of philosophers. It becomes a literary activity. Who will refute a poem? Who will refute the thought of an author?

Are philosophers really becoming more critical? The critical spirit is one of the greatest lures of history. Never have philosophers postulated so many proofs and so much "prerequisite knowledge". There is perhaps no modern philosopher who has better succeeded in selling his impossible proofs, carefully imbedded in intuitions, and in making others concede to his supposed prerequisite knowledge, than the austere critic of Koenigsberg.

Under the infinite diversity of systems there is nonetheless hidden a profound unity which will soon be brought to light in Marxism—the unity of the end, of the final cause: the emancipation of man, considered purely as man, regarded in his unformedness that is judged a sufficient principle for everything that man can be: the power of his impotence; the fruitfulness of the non-being of man.

Kant's effort to deliver the speculative intellect from the shackles of metaphysics by confining the former to the logical order (of which latter he thought he had quite sufficient

knowledge)⁹⁹ was the most decisive step towards this revolutionary philosophy—the future "armed criticism"—which today openly menaces the whole world. Perhaps we ourselves, succumbing under the weight of this modern tradition, have lost faith in the human intellect to such a degree that we are reluctant to admit that what men think, or what they teach in the apparently peaceful classrooms, can have any serious consequences for the grocer who lives down the street. How could scholarly negations of the principle of contradiction by these wonderful professors ever really affect the working masses? Who would be so simple as to believe that one day the most prominent statesman will himself teach Hegelian dialectic, edited and corrected, to his people and to people of the whole world?¹⁰⁰

Given the kind of emancipation of the human intellect that Kant had in mind, his choice of logic as an instrument for that emancipation was entirely appropriate. One has only to consider the opinion that we have ourselves about logic, to understand the strength of the abuse that one can make of it. The necessity of logic derives from the natural imperfection of our intellect.¹⁰¹ Hence logic is properly and profoundly human. Its works, human artifices, are at the principle of perfect speculative science. It is the most perfect of arts. Its matter is necessary. It is at once art and science—at once regulative and speculative; at once instrumental and transcendental. Remaining entirely within the limits of the intellect to direct the intellect's own speculation, it is the most liberal of arts, but at the same time an art which is purely a "servant"; it is only useful, a pure instrument.

This same art, which has its roots in the potential character of our intellect, becomes the all-powerful method of Hegel. "Method is the absolute, unique, supreme, infinite

⁹⁹ Even his conception of experimental physics was strictly dialectic insofar as its method was interrogative.

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix V, p. 120.

¹⁰¹ *In I Post. An.*, Lect. 1.

force, which no object can resist; it is the tendency of reason to discover itself, to recognize itself in everything." Everything henceforth is in the image of our thought, the latter having become the principle which posits all things.¹⁰²

Further, Hegel bases himself on that part of logic which can serve his end most fittingly—dialectic. Not simply the dialectic of the Topics, but more properly the dialectic which consists of using principles of *logica docens* to attain to reality. Kantian, Hegelian, and Marxist dialecticians have nothing that is merely a matter of opinion. The latter two retain from topical dialectic only the element of conflict and struggle.¹⁰³ But it is very true that beginning with common intentions of reason one can descend to reality, one can deal with the subjects of the sciences and with real beings (*ens naturae*).¹⁰⁴ On this point one finds no fault with these dialecticians. This use of

¹⁰² Compare this with F. C. Schiller, *Hypothesis*, in *Studies in the History and Method of Science*, ed. Charles Singer, Oxford, 1921, Vol. II, pp. 429–430.

¹⁰³ Joseph Stalin, *op. cit.*, pp. 99–100: "Dialectic comes from the Greek word 'dialego' which means converse, polemicize. In antiquity, dialectic meant the art of attaining to the truth by discovering contradictions contained in the reasoning of the adversary and overcoming them. Certain philosophers of antiquity considered the discovery of contradictions in thought and the shock of contrary opinions to be the best means of discovering the truth. This dialectic mode of thinking, extended later to the phenomena of nature, has become the dialectic method of knowing nature; according to this method, natural phenomena are eternally moving and changing, and the development of nature is the result of the development of contradictions in nature, the result of reciprocal action of contrary forces of nature."

¹⁰⁴ "Pars autem logicae, quae demonstrativa est, etsi circa communes intentiones versetur docendo tamen usus demonstrativae scientiae non est in procedendo ex his communibus intentionibus ad aliquid ostendendum de rebus, quae sunt subjecta aliarum scientiarum. Sed hoc dialectica facit, quia ex communibus intentionibus procedit arguendo dialecticus ad ea quae sunt aliarum scientiarum, sive sint propria, sive communia, maxime tamen ad communia." *In I Post. An.*, Lect. 20, n. 5.—Also *In de Trinitate*, q. 6 a. 1, c.; *In IV Metaph.*, Lect. 4, John of Saint Thomas, *Curs. Phil.*, (ed. Reiser) V. 1, p. 278.

logic could not, however, of itself adequately attain to reality unless the logical and the real were identical, and that cannot be unless contradiction were possible. But that is precisely what Hegel maintained. For him, contradiction is simply a fact, and he illustrates it with an example from geometry. "A notion which has simultaneously two contradictory signs or which has neither the one nor the other, for example a square circle, is held to be logically false. But, although a polygonal circle and a rectilinear arc also contradict this maxim just as much, geometers do not hesitate to treat the circle as a polygon having rectilinear sides."¹⁰⁵

The principle of contradiction is a rather important matter. And it is very closely related to our subject, since its negation constitutes the first principle of the modern philosophy of the revolution.¹⁰⁶ "Unlike metaphysics," Stalin says, "dialectics begins from the position that objects and natural phenomena imply internal contradictions. . . ." And he quotes Lenin:

¹⁰⁵ *The Logic of Hegel*, trans. from the *Encyclopadie* by W. Wallace, London, 1892, p. 221. (This edition of Wallace contains a large number of unedited notes by Hegel.)—Friedrich Engels, likewise, finds a confirmation of this verbal negation of the principle of contradiction in the calculus, at least in the calculus as it was understood in his time. "When the mathematics of straight and curved lines arrived thus at its almost perfect development, a new and practically unlimited field opened up in mathematics which conceives the curved as straight (differential triangle) and the straight as curved (curve of the first order with infinitely small curvature). O metaphysics!" *Dialectics of Nature*, International Publishers, New York, 1940, p. 201. The editor of this text takes care to add the following note: "This was of course written before rigorous proofs founded on the theory of limits had been introduced in the textbooks. Engels is perfectly correct for the calculus as it was taught in his time." Note also that Engels is perfectly correct in conceiving the calculus as a result of the application of the dialectic method (*usus logicae docentis*) in mathematics. It suffices moreover to introduce motion into mathematics to convert the latter into dialectic, for strictly mathematical considerations are without motion. His error consisted in believing that one could in fact reach the limit.

¹⁰⁶ Voir G.-V. Plekhanov, *Les questions fondamentales du marxisme*, le chapitre intitulé *Dialectique et logique*, E. S. I., Paris, s. d., p. 97ff.

“Dialectic, in the proper sense of the word, is the study of contradictions in the very essence of things.”¹⁰⁷ Marx, Engels, and Lenin expressed their fear at the lack of respect and the negligence in which Hegelian logic was held by their disciples, and orthodox Marxism continues to accentuate its importance. Let us briefly see, in Aristotelian terms, what Hegel did to convert the principle of contradiction, and how he arrived at proclaiming it as the very principle of all fecundity.

A remote genus is predicable of species with identity, just as a proximate genus is of individuals. Thus the circle and the polygon are the same figure. This predication with identity is possible because the remote genus is not divided by the species, but by the immediate genera beneath it; and likewise, the proximate genus is not divided by the individuals, but by the species.¹⁰⁸ But Hegel identifies the properties of the remote genus with those of the proximate genus. Then it follows that the circle and the polygon are the same plane figure, which means that plane figure is identical with the differences that divide it. This procedure might seem plausible from the fact that one can define the circle dialectically as the limit of a regular inscribed polygon whose sides increase indefinitely in number, giving the apparent tendency of one species to pass continuously into another, by means of a purely quantitative change. If this tendency could really be accomplished, we would finish with an essence which is contradictory, or in other words impossible.

In this way, we can see how the “dialectic of speculative reason” tries, by means of the pure common character of speculative reason—a negative community of abstraction—to derive all things in their differences. We do not mean to deny this dialectical process. We only wish it to be recognized as dialectical. It is a legitimate and fruitful process, provided that one sees it only as a purely logical expedient for tentatively

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Stalin, *op. cit.*, pp. 102–3.

¹⁰⁸ *V Metaph.* c. 6, 1016a25, Lect. 7, n. 863; *In Physic.*, c.14, 224a, Lect. 23, n. 13; St. Albert, *In Physic.* tract. III. c. 17,

surmounting the multiplicity of our means of knowing, a multiplicity in which our knowledge is lacking in the very character of wisdom.

It is very true that the dialectic reduction of volume to area, area to line, and line to point makes our knowledge more perfect and more like Divine knowledge which attains all things in what is most proper to them through a single unique species, a universal means of knowing. We have a better knowledge of the human intellect when we can see it as the limit of a degradation in the very nature of intellect. But, at the risk of destroying the very term of this reduction, one must realize that it is a purely dialectic reduction, that the movement given to things is but a movement of reason projected into objects, and that this reduction remains in the state of tendency. This movement does not have the reduction of the known natures themselves as its end: the reduction occurs in strictly scientific knowledge when one nature is recognized as the explanation of the other, both remaining radically distinct; its end is the reduction of the means of knowing. But a reduction of this sort can only be tentative; if it were to be completed, it would be frustrated by the destruction of the natures which we want to attain to in their difference. Hegel, a victim of emancipated language, holds it possible to engender in this way a new and richer object—the square circle for example.

So then it is merely a scholastic subtlety—a school distinction—that separates us from these dialecticians? So be it. But let us not scorn the distinctions of the School. Hegel is here abusing one of the most powerful instruments of metaphysics for imitating Divine Wisdom. The same is true for that other instrument which is still more human—the negation of negation, whose fecundity becomes striking in mystical theology.¹⁰⁹ Here then is the movement of pure reason, hence reason considered formally in its pure ratiocinative character, and

¹⁰⁹ On the negation of negation, see, F. Engels, M. E. Duhring *boulevé la science (Anti-During)*, V. I, Ch. XIII entitled *Dialectique. Négation de la négation*. Paris, Alfred Costes, 1981, pp. 198–9ff.

negation, that other characteristic of the human intellect: both of them perfectly emancipated and together taking on divine attributes.¹¹⁰

ET FACTA EST NOX

This perversion of human thought at the very root was to bear its fruit in Marxism, which, not content to have this procedure be a mere game to amuse philosophers, brings it into the practical world even to the point of reaching "the pen of Herr Krug"¹¹¹. It is true that Hegelian dialectic was already fundamentally compositive and practical in mode, but it remained practically sterile. Marxism identifies Hegel's dialectical process with things considered in their final concretion. But among the things which surround us it is in fact

¹¹⁰ See Appendix IV, p. 109.

¹¹¹ "It appears that a certain Herr Krug, supposing Hegel to be attempting in the philosophy of nature to deduce all actual existent objects from the pure Idea, enquired whether Hegel could deduce the pen with which he, Herr Krug, was writing. Hegel demolishes the unfortunate Krug in a contemptuous and sarcastic footnote, in which he states that philosophy has more important matters to concern itself with than Krug's pen. And the general position he takes up is that the philosophy of nature cannot and should not attempt to deduce particular facts and things, but only universals. It cannot deduce this plant, but only plant in general; and so on. The details of nature, he says, are governed by contingency and caprice, not by reason. They are irrational. And the irrational is just what cannot be deduced. It is most improper, he tells us, to demand of philosophy that it should deduce this particular thing, this particular man, and so forth. (. . . In my opinion Hegel was wrong, and Krug right, as regards the question of the pen. And Hegel's ill-tempered petulance is possibly the outcome of an uneasy feeling that Krug's attack was not without reason. If we are to have an idealistic monism it must explain everything from its first principle, thought. And that means that it must deduce everything. To leave anything outside the network of deduction, to declare anything utterly undeducible, is simply dualism.)" W. V. Stace, *The philosophy of Hegel*, Macmillan and Co., London 1924, para. 425, 426, p. 308. The context in which we place this footnote should not lead the reader into error—Prof. Stace is not a Marxist!

matter which is the proper principle of their ultimate concretion. Matter will itself become the primordial principle, the 'first reason'. You believe you are ruled by a perfect intellect and an infinitely good will? You are exclusively determined by the conditions of material life. Finality? Scholastic notion!

And just as in Hegel the movement of reason arose from the contradiction inherent in being, so also, for the Marxists, the contradiction of matter shows itself in the motion of matter, movement itself being contradictory for them; contradiction and movement of contradiction from which all things are born. In contradiction, i.e., in birth by destruction, the fruitfulness of privation, of non-being, shines forth—that which you call being, but which in truth is not. That which is not, there is what is! "For the dialectical method," Stalin says, "what is most important is not what seems stable at some moment but is already beginning to perish; rather what is most important is what is born and develops, even if the thing seems unstable at some moment, because for the dialectical method only that which is born and develops is invincible."¹¹² Applied to society, that means that progress must be accomplished by the revolt of the dispossessed, i.e., of the deprived class. In it resides power, for it is what is not. "Social reforms never complete themselves by the weakness of the strong, but always by the strength of the weak."¹¹³ "Feudalism had its proletariat too—the serfdom, which contained within itself all the germs of the bourgeoisie. Feudal production also had two antagonistic elements, which are spoken of as the good side and the bad side of feudalism, as though it were not always the bad side which ultimately wins over the good side. It is the bad side which produces movement and makes history, by constituting struggle."¹¹⁴

You feel pity for human misery, for the lot of the dispossessed? You are indignant against the selfishness and the mean-

¹¹² Joseph Stalin, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

¹¹³ Karl Marx, *Morceaux choisis*, p. 197.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

ness of the rich? Bourgeois! Do you not see then that you are trying to kill the chicken that lays golden eggs? "If it is true," Stalin continues, "that development occurs through internal contradictions coming to light, by the conflict of contrary forces which is destined to surmount those forces, it is clear that the class struggle of the proletariat is a perfectly natural and inevitable phenomenon."¹¹⁵ Far from wishing to smother the conflict by a just distribution of goods, far from having recourse to an "eternal justice"¹¹⁶ to which every man must conform, we must, on the contrary, encourage struggle and push conflict to the point of exasperation. The ways must be opened for the emancipation of non-being! "Consequently, to avoid error in politics, one must follow a political method of the proletariat class, intransigent, and not a reformist political method of harmony of interests between the proletariat and the bourgeois, not a conciliatory method of 'integration' of capitalism within socialism."¹¹⁷ Make an agreement with your enemy, provided that it be the surest means of crushing him. You can count on weakness. In the integrity of his cowardice, he will not dare to expose your cynicism.

Let your cynicism be universal. Let it concern being as a whole. Let yes be no, and no, yes.¹¹⁸

Sit autem sermo vester, est, est: non, non: quod autem his abundantius est, a malo est—

"But let your language be: yes, yes; no, no: whatever is said beyond this is from the evil one."

Where will it finish, this process of deprivation even unto absolute privation? "It was necessary," says Marx, for the human essence to fall into this absolute poverty in order to be able to bring to birth from itself its interior richness."¹¹⁹ Once

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-5.

¹¹⁸ Voir Plekhanov, *loc. cit.*

¹¹⁹ Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

man has broken all ties with anything at all, he will be able to move "around himself, his true sun".¹²⁰

There is the principle of the new order.

The pure I. The I with all it has most from itself as pure subject, willed, this time, as an end. The I rendered proud of that which is not in itself. What could one prefer to that?

"The destruction of religion," says Marx, "the illusory happiness of the people, is a requirement for its real happiness. . . ."

"Religion is but the illusory sun which moves around man, as long as he does not move around himself.

"Religious hypocrisy, which takes from another what he gained through me, to give it to God.

". . . And every critique should be preceded by the critique of religion.

". . . The critique of religion leads to the doctrine that man is the supreme being for man, . . ."

"Philosophy makes no secret of it. The profession of Prometheus: 'in a word, I hate all gods. . .,' is the profession of philosophy itself, the discourse which it holds and which it will always hold against every god of heaven and earth which does not recognize human consciousness as the highest divinity. This divinity suffers no rival. . . . (Philosophy) repeats what Prometheus of Hermes, servant of the gods, said:

'You may be sure that I will never exchange my miserable lot for being a servant to you. I would rather be bound to this rock than be the faithful valet and messenger of Zeus the Father. . . .'¹²¹

There is what Marx says following Feuerbach, Feuerbach the descendent of Hegel, Hegel the descendent of Fichte and Kant, Kant the descendent of. . .

Non serviam!

"Now," says the Mystical Theology, "as we separate by

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 221-3, 237.

negation from Him Who is above all that can be removed and taken away, we must first remove and withdraw that which is furthest and most removed from Him. For would one not rather say that God is life and goodness than say that He is not air or a rock?"¹²² —Marxism, too, has its way of negation to come to the term which it considers most perfect: man as pure man in his most complete deprivation through which is realized his interior hidden richness. He too begins by denying that which is furthest removed and most distant from the term. His first negation is the negation of God. The order is reversed.

What is this human essence that the Marxist inclines to appropriate for himself, the object of this "joy that man gives to himself"?¹²³ What is this interior richness? The question raises indignation. Is the answer not both evident and ineffable? Ineffable. Does the scaffolding of negations not give a sufficient idea concerning it? The Marxist says nothing about it, and he cannot say anything about it.—The perversion is therefore complete. The Mystical Theology continues as follows: "And as now we are going to enter into that obscure mist which is above all understanding, we shall find there not only a shortening of speech, but a complete lack of words and thoughts. . . . For now (that our discourse) rises from below to above, as it rises it becomes shorter and more restrained, and when it has passed as high as it can climb, it will become entirely mute, and will unite itself entirely with Him who can neither be explained nor declared through discourse."

* * *

Who could explain these positions in the light of philosophy alone? Of course we could note "technical errors". There would no doubt remain the weight of "systems" singularly

¹²² Dionysius the Areopagite, *Traite de la theologie mystique*, Ch. III. Trans. of R. P. Dom Jean de S. Francois, *Oeuvres de S. Denys Areopagite*, Nicolas Buon, Paris 1629, 545, 546.

¹²³ Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

enlarged in number by the death of authors and the liberty thereby engendered. But who does not see that such critiques can never reach the ultimate root of these philosophies? We are not dealing with purely accidental errors of a thought which is evolving towards an ever fuller truth, as was the case with ancient wisdom. These errors have their roots in desire.

The practical force with which these authors and their disciples adhere to their errors can only be explained by a love of the errors which is as powerful as death. I say as powerful as death because the Marxist must sacrifice his entire being, he must face total death, the complete annihilation of himself. He must coldly nourish the most complete despair. His action which is always tending towards violence only leads to the total destruction of self. For him, death will be as though he had never existed. No recompense, no justice, no pity. He who only existed for self, exists in order not to exist. Are his painstaking efforts compensated by some heritage which he can leave? Who is his heir? Humanity? Humanity is made of a multitude of selves, all of whom have the same end. For each human individual it will soon be as though he had never existed. What does it matter if he acts or not, if he acts well or badly?

"It does matter!", someone will respond. It is still important to act! Is not this precisely the essential condition for absolutely free human action? Does man not owe himself this absolute generosity? The true Marxist can only live in total abnegation. Power and weakness of negation. Negation cannot destroy all. It finds consolation in living, it desires this life for as much as it permits one to deny. May there always be things, so that negation may live! It perpetuates itself in death by transmitting this negation from one generation to the next. Generosity born of hatred and contempt. Heroism born of total capitulation. In the *Ethics*, this kind of heroism is the excess contrary to heroism—it is called bestiality.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ "Then I saw a beast rise from the sea . . ." *Apoc. XIII, 1*. In the

Negation of what? Against whom are we angry?

Amen, amen, I say to you, if the grain of wheat does not fall to the ground and die, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life will lose it; he who hates his life in this world will conserve it for eternal life.

Why is the cleverness of the wise of this world held out to the masses? What do they see in the crowd? What do they want from the miserable? The question is fitting, because the wise of the world have never shown such profound contempt of those very same masses, even for their purely material good. And why not? A man dies just as does a dog. What does it

Expositio II on the Apocalypse, edited among the works of St. Thomas (Vives, vol. 32), we find the following commentary: *And I saw*, that is interiorly, a beast, that is, a body, a crowd of perverse men living in a bestial way and cruelly devouring other men, that is, causing them either spiritual or corporeal evil. . . . *From the sea*, that is, from the world shaken by the storm of tribulations and temptations, and made bitter by its transgressions, for this beast will be formed of diverse nations of the world. *Et vidi*, that is by internal sight, a beast, that is, a body or numerousness of perverse men living and cruelly devouring others, namely by either spiritual or corporeal harm. . . . *De mari*, that is, from the world tempestuous from tribulations and temptations and bitter by transgression, since from diverse nations of the world this beast will be collected." (p. 298) In the *Desclée* edition, we read at the same place, in a note: "The four beasts of Daniel each represent an empire (vii, 17, 23); that of the Apocalypse, which has in it the characteristics of all the others (v, 2), must necessarily represent all these empires together and be the symbol of political power, of the material force of States, placed in the service of the dragon, in order to oppress the servants of God. It rises from the sea, like the four beasts of Daniel (vii, 1), because the empires arise ordinarily from wars and troubles which agitate the peoples. Then I saw rise from the earth another beast . . . Apoc. XIII, 11. "From the earth: the first beast rose from the ocean, that is from the agitation and disturbance of the peoples; this one arises from the earth, a more calm element: it is born in a tranquil social state, in the heart of civilization. Another beast: all the characteristics which follow make of it the symbol of false science, of the wisdom of this world in the service of the impious. Thus is it designated further on as 'the false prophet.'" *Ibid.*

matter to him to have existed or not? Does one weep upon the death of a man? One weeps for dogs too.

Marx dares to quote this holy passage: "Let the dead bury their dead and cry over them!"¹²⁵

What is there in the masses to draw the attention of the wisdom of this world? Could the astute choose a victim more fitting for its vengeance? This wisdom covets power. What is the power of the miserable crowd? It is true that there lies concealed in the crowd a power of material destruction which is only beginning to be exploited. But there is another such power: the power of its weakness. For the All Powerful, the Lord of mercy, has said:

I pity this crowd. For what the world holds as nothing is what God has chosen to confound the strong; and God has chosen that which in the world is unconsidered and without power, that which is nothing, to reduce to nothing that which is.

We witness here the supreme effort to attack the work of God. There is a desire to take the humble away from Him, those who are most powerful before the All Powerful—the true power of the weak. They shall be tempted to pride, because no one is more unworthy of mercy than he who is both proud and miserable. They will be inculcated with the philosophy of the wise of this world. ". . . Theory too," says Marx, "becomes a material force when it penetrates the masses. Theory is able to penetrate the masses as soon as it makes demonstrations *ad hominem*, and it makes demonstrations *ad hominem* as soon as it becomes radical. To be radical is to take things by the roots. And the root of man is man himself." "As philosophy finds its material arms in the proletariat, so also the proletariat finds its spiritual arms in philosophy, and as soon as the flash of thought has penetrated to the bottom of this naive terror of the people. . . ." ¹²⁶ Thus do the wise of this

¹²⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 83.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 187.

world wish to seduce the *parvuli* by dark wisdom. They have vengeance for God's contempt of their wisdom. Has God not confounded the wisdom of this world with folly?

I bless You, Father of heaven and the earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and the clever, and have revealed them to the little one. Yes, Father, I bless You because it has pleased You to do so.

The intrigues and the intelligence of the human will, thought to be emancipated from the supernatural, are in fact no longer intelligible except as simulations of properly Divine truths.¹²⁷ How can we explain this exaltation of the unformed except as a perversion of the obediential power and the very special capacity for elevation of the least perfect intelligent creature? Why this effort to liberate the words of our thought? In truth we order the Divine names to God insofar as He surpasses our conception of Him. How should we understand this deification of movement, whether it is real movement, the most imperfect of acts, or the ratiocinative movement of reason, the most extrinsic and the most tenuous kind of thought? In the light of revealed doctrine this deification is nothing but a seductive profanation of the wisdom which is more mobile than any mobile thing. The very idea of universal struggle and combat is again a simulation of a real state of affairs which in some way has its principle in the supernatural order. For indeed, without grace the pure spirits, entirely determined in their nature and indefectible, would have always remained since the morning of their existence in a state of perpetual peace. Their order would have been absolutely imperturbable. But the elevation to the supernatural order by that grace which is the principle of merit, and the

¹²⁷ The encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* denounces modern communism as a doctrine of false redemption: "fucata tenuiorum redemptionis specie profertur."—See the remarks of Fr. Alphonse-Marie Parent in his study entitled *Autour du racisme*, in *L'Academie canadienne Saint-Thomas d'Aquin*, 11th session (1941), pp. 113, 122-23.

exercise of a liberty of contrariety: are these not what gave way to the fall and to a combat which invaded the whole of creation, a combat in which God himself takes part by the sacrifice of His only Son? And did God not place an enmity between the creature whom He had created most intelligent and most powerful by nature, and the most humble of human creatures which are at the lowest level of immortal creation? That the victory should be the work of the weak is a monstrous caricature of the Woman who, from the beginning, was destined to crush the head of the master of all pride.

Purely philosophic wisdom is incapable of judging modern philosophies. Christian philosophy must do it. The moderns have challenged the possibility that philosophy might be the handmaid of a higher science. By the same challenge they denied that there could be any principle higher than those principles which are first for us. This challenge cannot be without consequence. It implies the denial of any true wisdom. Man must even deny nature. And, indeed, what natural truth has he not denied?

In other words, modern philosophy has developed outside of natural truth, that is to say outside of philosophy. But it has not been able to escape from that more universal order which the Faith and Theology make known to us. Divine light alone can reach the depth of the night in which the wisdom of the serpent has taken refuge—the night which is a counter-image of the obscure and caliginous depth of the Inaccessible Light.

APPENDIX I: PERSONAL FULFILLMENT

We uphold the necessity of taking account of particular characteristics of an individual, either to encourage natural inclinations and aptitudes or to discourage them, according as they are either good or bad. But it must be remarked that it is the end that is the reason for this necessity of considering the individuating notes of the subject in whom the necessity lies, and that it is the end which is the measure and the criterion

of what is necessary to attain the end. In short, this is a hypothetical necessity, and not a necessity such "that what is necessary be necessary as an end; for the necessary is given on the side of matter (*ponitur ex parte materiae*) whereas it is from the end that the reason for necessity is given. For we do not say that it is necessary that there be a certain end because the matter is such and such; rather, on the contrary it is because the end and the form are such that the matter should be of such a sort. And so it is that necessity is in matter (*ponitur ad materiam*), whereas the reason for necessity is in the end."¹²⁸

Provided that one understand it in this sense, we admit the necessity of respecting, in its order to the end, the good innate traits of the person. The same would have to be said of the family or the nation. There is in this a certain kind of fulfillment, since these traits come from nature which is an intrinsic principle of operation. This fulfillment cannot do anything but better proportion the subject to its end; the end requires this proportion, and is the first principle thereof.

But the humanists, who accord the primacy to material and efficient causes, do not understand it in this way. Through those things which characterize him personally, the individual person is himself the measure of his end; the end, first principle of the ordination of the person to the end, would be identical with the order itself which is inscribed in the person. The accomplishment of the end would then consist, for the person, of returning to himself, of finding and recognizing himself in the interior richness which is entirely characteristic of himself and sealed by his individuating characteristics. He will himself be the first principle of respect and of liberty which are due to him as regards this 'personality'.

¹²⁸ . . . non ita quod id quod est necessarium, sit sicut finis; quia id quod necessarium est, ponitur ex parte materiae sed ex parte finis ponitur ratio necessitatis. Non enim dicimus quod necessarium sit esse talem finem, quia materia talis est sed potius e converso, quia finis et forma talis futura est, necesse est materiam talem esse. Et sic necessitas ponitur ad materiam, sed ratio necessitatis ad finem." *In II Physic.*, Lect. 15, n. 4.

Thence also arises that radical plurification of ends which humanism teaches, as well as the primacy which it accords to art. It is entirely consistent with humanism to see the first roots, the fundamental reason, for the social character of man not in the common good but in the poetic nature of the individual, in the need to express oneself and to speak oneself to others under the pressure of an interior superabundance of pure self. Every object then becomes an original-means for a work which have its real first principle in the I. You understand that then the other person is necessary because I feel the need to have myself heard; because I need someone to appreciate me; I need a person-subject. In short, as for myself, your reason for being is so that you might participate in my personal life. Is it indeed a man who speaks thus? Is that not the excuse that those who are practically personalists would give for their paradoxical horror of solitude and their irrepressible desire to be involved? That is why the humanist teacher has a desire to teach greater than his desire to know. His knowledge has for its end the expression of his self; the need to speak is the very principle of his knowledge. And it is quite logical. Is his liberty not anterior to knowledge? Is it not the most profound element of his *I*?

As we have noted, the nation, understood in the Thomist sense of *patria*, does also have its rights to the fulfillment of certain of its proper characteristics. The common good of civil society requires respect for the proper character of the nation or nations for which it must really be the common good. The common good does not require a homogeneity of subjects, but rather the contrary. But if we say that the common good of civil society is for the nation, we do not mean that the latter is the end of the former, or that the common good is the pure means of fulfillment of the nation. The good of civil society must be conformed to the nation in the sense that it must be 'its' good. It does not follow that the former is subordinated to the latter. To subordinate the good of civil society to the good of the nation is to subordinate reason to nature.

Then one falls into the irrational and voluntaristic nationalism of the *Discourse to the German Nation*. Civil society would be purely a means for the nation to achieve its nationhood, whereas in truth the good of civil society is more divine than that of the nation. The fulfillment of the latter is not even the proper end of the nation, but remains within the order of dispositions and means.

APPENDIX II: EVERY PERSON DESIRES HIS GOOD

Every person desires his good insofar as he desires his perfection. We have seen that 'his good' is distinguished from an alien good, from the good of another considered simply as such. The good of a man, 'his good', does not simply include the proper good of the singular person; 'his good' includes, as one which is more worthy and more divine, the common good. When we restrict 'his good' to the proper good of the singular person, we deprive man of what is for him his greatest good. The person would be reduced to the condition of an animal. He could neither pursue nor defend the common good considered as common good. Selfishness would be perfectly in conformity with reason. The sacrifice of the individual person for the common good would have its principle and term in the self-love of man considered simply as man.

And yet certain personalists, more naive than others, have not hesitated to adopt as their own this very logical and perfectly ignoble conclusion. Consider *The Theory of Democracy*, by Mortimer Adler and R. P. Walter Farrell, in *The Thomist*, 1942, vol. IV, n. 2.

"In short, every act of justice implies a relation to the common good, and as seems paradoxical, is by that very fact selfish, because the common good is not an end in itself; it is a means for the individual happiness that every man pursues, but which he cannot attain and possess except through virtue, including justice. Hence it follows that no obligation

founded on justice can turn a man away from the pursuit of his own happiness towards the pursuit of some alien good, unless this obligation is a part of his individual good, or is a means of the attainment thereof." (pp. 323-24). "As we have seen, the intentions of natural justice are selfish. They do not aim at the good of another man as other, but only as a part of the community which must be conserved for the proper good of oneself. Further, as natural justice and natural love are selfish, so also none of them is heroic. Neither the one nor the other leads men to martyrdom. Although natural love is less selfish than justice, from the fact that it involves a certain real forgetting of self, and although natural love, unlike justice, pushes men to the generosity of sacrifice, it still remains an imperfect kind of action, by which the agent always seeks self perfection at the same time that he seeks the perfection of another, and in fact considers the other as an extension of self—like an alter ego. In this sense, the impulsions of natural love never deviate from the fundamental tendency of natural desire—which consists, for all things, in seeking their proper perfection." (pp. 329-30)

And in a note (256) they add:

"One can object that heroism is an undeniable fact in pagan societies—that Greek and Roman literature, for example, are rich in examples of men who sincerely sacrifice their life for their country in military enterprises. Such heroism can still be explained by the pagan beliefs in the immortality of the soul and in the recompenses reserved to the heroes in the Elysian Fields of the future life. And today one can cite the Japanese as an example of a people in whom one finds heroes—men who come close to committing suicide for the well-being of their country and who act thus because of a 'religious' belief in the Emperor. But looking closer, we believe you shall see that such heroism is counterfeit and that it involves no sacrifice, because it does not involve the forgetting of self; the exploit is accomplished for the sake of a recompense—either a higher rank among the dead shadows, or a more shining and long lasting name and reputation in the memory of men. The predominant motif in the

ancients was not privileges and joys given to the brave in the Elysian fields. Even apart from these myths concerning the future life and these thin "beliefs" in an immortal soul, the pagan 'hero' would have been moved by concern for his reputation—pride for himself and for his family, which had to be satisfied by this kind of 'immortality' which a man enjoys when he is honored in the annals of his people."

This opinion, which does not merit refutation, will be for all future times a testimony to the depth to which we have fallen. To this deplorable opinion we may oppose a certitude, also of our day, and of perfect practical rectitude. It is taken from a letter written in the last hours before the fall of Bataan, which appeared in the *Washington Daily News*:

"I saw horrible things happen, but I also saw admirable acts of courage, sacrifice and loyalty. Finally I have found what I have sought for all my life: a cause and a task in which I can lose myself completely, and to which I can give every ounce of my strength and thought. I have mentally and spiritually conquered the fear of death. My prayer evening and morning is that God will send to you, to you who suffer so much more than I, His strength and peace. In these two last months I have taken part in one of the most cooperative and disinterested efforts ever accomplished by any group of individuals. Errors have been committed, but that has nothing to do with the manner in which my comrades in Bataan, both Philippine and American, have reacted to their baptism of fire. If the same ardor were given to the improvement of the world in times of peace, what a good world we would have. (*The Reader's Digest*, September 1942, p. 14.)

There is the love of the common good.

APPENDIX III: NEBUCHADNEZZAR, MY SERVANT

"But the bad princes themselves are the ministers of God, for it is by a disposition of God that they are princes, to inflict punishments, although that be not their intention, according to the passage in Isaiah, X, 7: *Woe to Assur, rod of My anger!*

The rod which is in his hand is the instrument of My furor; I send him against an impious nation, I give him My orders against the people of My anger, to put them to ruin and plunder, and to trample them underfoot like the mud of the streets. But it is not thus that he understands it, and that is not the thought in his heart; for he wishes only to destroy, and to exterminate nations not a few. And Jeremiah, XXV, 9: I am sending for all the tribes of the Septentrion, and I am bringing them to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; I will bring them against this country and against its inhabitants, and against all those nations surrounding, which I will strike with anathema, and of which I will make a solitude, an object of mockery, an eternal ruin. And also because these bad princes sometimes, when God permits it, afflict the good, which turns to the good of the latter, according to these words: We know besides that all things concur to the good of those who love God." (St. Thomas, *In Epist. ad Romanos*, c. xiii, 3, lect. 1.)

"The will to harm comes from man himself, but the power to harm comes from God Who permits it (*a Deo permittente*). And God does not permit that the evil should harm as much as he pleases, but imposes a limit. *You shall come this far, and no further; here ceases the pride of your torrent.* (Job XXXVIII, 11). And thus the devil did not harm Job, except in the measure that God permitted. Likewise Arius did not harm the Church, except in the measure that God permitted. In *Apocalypse VII*, the angel says (*to the four angels to whom it was given to harm the earth and the sea, in these words:*) *Do no evil to the earth, nor to the sea, nor to the trees, until we have marked with a seal on the forehead the servants of our God.*" *In II ad Tim.*, c. iii, lect. 2.

APPENDIX IV: LUDWIG FEUERBACH INTERPRETS ST. THOMAS

Feuerbach, from whom Marx and Engels adopted their absolute humanism, considers authentic Christian thought as being in evolution towards its own proper *anthropotheismus*. In *Das Wesen des Christenthums*¹²⁹, he opposes the conception

¹²⁹ Ludwig Feuerbach, *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, Dritte umgearbeit-

of Christians to that of the ancients concerning the relation of the human individual to his entire species, to the entire society, and to the universe.

"The ancients," he says, "sacrificed the individual to the species (*Gattung*); Christians sacrifice the species to the individual. Or: paganism conceived and considered the individual uniquely as a part seen in its distinction from the whole of its species; Christianity, on the contrary, conceives the individual uniquely in his unity which is immediate and not distinct from the whole." (p. 211)

Feuerbach takes pains to use St. Thomas when he can and to base himself on St. Thomas, though of course only to go beyond him.¹³⁰ Thus he finds it necessary to explain the doctrine in *I Pars* q. 60, a. 5. Here St. Thomas seems to be entirely in agreement with Aristotle: the good of the whole is better than the good of the part alone. But, says Feuerbach, it is otherwise when St. Thomas places himself in the supernatural point of view and speaks as a theologian. The person is then not only an individual, but a whole and an absolute. Here is how he presents the question.

As is well known, Aristotle explicitly says in his *Politics* that the individual (*der Einzelne*), since he does not suffice unto himself, is in his relation to the state as the part to the whole. . . —It is true that Christians as well "sacrificed the individual", meaning here the singular as part of the whole, of being in general (*Gemeinwesen*). "The part," says St. Thomas, one of the greatest Christian thinkers and theologians, "sacrifices itself by natural instinct for the conservation of the whole. Every part by nature loves the whole more than itself. And by nature every singular loves more the good of its species than the singular good or well being. Each being therefore loves, in its own way and naturally, God Who is the universal good, more than himself." (*Sum-*

ete und vermehrte Auflage, Leipzig, Wigand, 1849. In *Sammtliche Werke*, V. VII.

¹³⁰ See especially pp. 372ff.

mae P. I Qu. 60 Art. V.) In this perspective, Christians think, therefore, like the ancients. St. Thomas praises (*de Regim. Princip.* I. III. c. 4.) the Romans because they placed their country before all and sacrificed their own well being to the well being of the country. And yet, all these thoughts and sentences are valid for the Christian only on the earth, and not in heaven; in morals, and not in dogmatics; in anthropology, and not in theology. As object of theology, the individual is the singular supernatural being, immortal, self sufficient, absolute, divine being. The pagan thinker Aristotle declared friendship (*Ethic.* L. 9, c. 9) necessary for happiness; the Christian thinker St. Thomas Aquinas does not think thus. "The society of friendship is not necessarily required for beatitude, for man finds the plenitude of his perfection in God." "Thus had there been only a single soul enjoying the possession of God, that soul would still be happy, even without another to love. (*Prima Secundae.* Qu. 4. 8.) Thus the pagan considers himself as an individual even in the state of happiness, as an individual and consequently as needing another being similar to himself, of his species; the Christian on the contrary has no need of another self, for the individual is not only an individual but also a whole (*Gattung*), a general being (*allgemeines Wesen*), since he possesses "the plenitude of his perfection in God", and thus in himself. (p. 212).¹³¹

¹³¹ "Aristoteles sagt bekanntlich ausdrücklich in seiner Politik, dass der Einzelne, weil er für sich selbst nicht sich genüge, sich gerade so zum Staate verhalte, wie der Theil zum Ganzen, dass daher der Staat der Natur nach früher sei als die Familie und das Individuum, denn das Ganze sei nothwendig früher als der Theil. —Die Christen "opferten" wohl auch "das Individuum", d. h. hier den Einzelnen als Theil dem Ganzen, der *Gattung*, dem *Gemeinwesen* auf. Der Theil, sagt der heilige Thomas Aquino, einer der grössten christlichen Denker und Theologen, opfert sich selbst aus natürlichem Instinkt zur Erhaltung des Ganzen auf. "Jeder Theil liebt von Natur mehr das Ganze als sich selbst. Und jedes Einzelne liebt von Natur mehr das Gut seiner *Gattung*, als sein einzelnes Gut oder Wohl. Jedes Wesen liebt daher auf seine Weise naturgemäss Gott, als das allgemeine Gut, mehr, als sich selbst." (*Summae* P. I. Qu. 60. Art. V.) Die Christen denken daher in dieser Beziehung wie die Alten.

There are things we could question in this presentation; but let us go directly to the essential point. Is there such an opposition between the point of view of St. Thomas in the *Prima Pars* q. 60 on the one hand and *Ia IIa* q. 4 on the other? It would be ridiculous to say that in the first case St. Thomas is placing himself in a purely natural point of view, or that in the former passage he is only considering the created person for as much as the latter can be considered as a part of the universe, whereas in the *Ia IIae* he is considering things from a supernatural point of view in which the person should be considered on the contrary as a whole. That would imply a strange conception of the subject of the *Summa* and the order of its treatises.

Feuerbach must have recourse to this distinction because he does not see that it is an entirely different thing to be dependent on the whole and against its parts to attain the good of the whole, than it is to attain the good of the whole. The fundamental reason why we call every created person a part is

Thomas A preist (de Regim. Princip. I. III. c. 4.) die Roemer, dass sie ihr Vaterland über alles setzten, seinem Wohl ihr Wohl aufopferten. Aber alle diese Gedanken und Gesinnungen gelten im Christenthum nur auf der Erde, nicht im Himmel, in der Moral, nicht in der Dogmatik, in der Anthropologie, nicht in der Theologie. Als Gegenstand der Theologie ist das Individuum, der Einzelne übernatürliches, unsterbliches, selbstgenueges, absolutes, goettliches Wesen. Der heidnische Denker Aristoteles erklart die Freundschaft (Ethik 9. B. 9. K.) für nothwendig zur Glueckseligkeit, der christliche Denker Thomas A. aber nicht. "Nicht gehoert nothwendig, sagt er, Gesellschaft von Freunden zur Seligkeit, weil der Mensch die ganze Fuelle seiner Vollkommenheit in Gott hat." "Wenn daher auch eine Seele allein für sich im Genusse Gottes waere, so waere sie doch selig, wenn sie gleich keinen Naechsten hatte, den sie liebte." (Prima Secundae. Qu. 4. 8.) Der Heide weiss sich also auch in der Glueckseligkeit als Einzelnen, als Individuum und desswegen als beduerftig eines andern Wesens seines Gleichen, seiner Gattung, der Christ aber bedarf keines andern Ich, weil er als Individuum zugleich nicht Individuum, sondern Gattung, allgemeines Wesen ist, weil er "die ganze Fuelle seiner Vollkommenheit in Gott" d. h. in sich selbst hat." *Op. cit.*, p. 212.

because his greatest good is incommensurable with the good of the singular person as such; it is indeed rather as an individual that the human person is a whole. No created person is either proportioned or proportionable to the absolutely universal good as to its proper good as a singular person. Otherwise every person would be God. And indeed, for Feuerbach, man is God.

How does this philosopher arrive at the divinization of man? Romantic philosophy divinizes the confused universal, and what we call the universal *in causando* would then only be a manifestation thereof. The concept 'animal' would be fuller than the concepts man and beast, because it includes the latter and is their 'superior'. Anteriority according to the order of potentiality is converted into absolute priority. That is why man becomes substituted for God.

For Hegel, as no doubt was true for David of Dinant also, being is a *summum genus*, and this genus is the first explanation of all things. In fact this Hegelian being is none other than what we call 'the first thing known,' that is to say the most common predicate being, the most indeterminate, the most confused, the most superficial concept that one can conceive, the most purely potential concept, which best reflects the pure potentiality of the most imperfect intellect that there can be, which signifies most immediately the pure original subjectivity of our intelligent self. By the movement of reason, the Hegelian being is endowed with the nature of that power which is act. Dialectic has as its function to make explicit the infinite richness of being. Pure potentiality presents itself as a substitute for pure actuality. It is the pure indeterminate which has this fertility which we attribute to pure act.

Just the same, what is this *summum genus*? The question is appropriate. Feuerbach explicitly identifies the infinity of the genus (die Unendlichkeit der Gattung) with the most common predicate being; he identifies the pure commonness of the latter with the subject being of metaphysics; the subject being of metaphysics with the plenitude of being, with God

in Whom thought is identical with being; and, since we are what we know, the plenitude of being will be none other than the proper being of man. God is therefore nothing other than man. Each individual human being is simultaneously part and whole, mere individual and God. As individual, man is limited; as a properly conscious being, he is unlimited, infinite. "Consciousness in the proper and rigorous sense, and consciousness of the infinite are inseparable; limited consciousness is not consciousness; consciousness is essentially all-comprehensive and infinite nature. Consciousness of the infinite is nothing other than the infinity of consciousness. Or: in the consciousness of the infinite, the consciousness of the infinity of the proper being (of self) is the object." (p. 26).

But Feuerbach takes care to note the historic roots of his conception. He quotes St. Thomas for each of his most fundamental assertions. Let it be admitted that once one concedes to this crude total adequation of two kinds of universality, nothing is easier than to turn certain texts of St. Thomas in favor of Feuerbach's anthropotheism. Is the knower not the known? Is the soul not in some way all things? Is it not true that the intellect includes all being? Is intellect not a *virtus infinita*? Is the object of this *virtus* not the *verum universale*? Is the object of our individual will not the *universale bonum*? How could man thus considered be a part?

Feuerbach recognizes also that "man is nothing without an object". As long as man does not recognize himself as unlimited *Gattung*, as long as he does not recognize himself in his pure universality, he is nothing. Does he then depend on an object? Certainly. The object must be conquered; the self must be conquered. As long as the object of man is conceived as exterior to man, man conceives himself as limited; he remains a mere individual, only the part of a whole; he alienates himself in a foreign God, the God of religion. God must be at the very center of man, man the center of himself; man must return to himself as to his own source. "The object to which a subject is essentially and necessarily related is none

other than the proper being of the subject considered this time as an object being (*gegenstandliche Wesen*)". (p. 28) "The absolute being, the God of man, is the proper being of man. The power of the object over man is consequently the power of his proper being." (p. 30)

The German philosopher also believes he can surmount the antinomy between Catholicism and Protestantism by pushing the latter to its ultimate conclusion. "In Catholicism, man exists for God; in Protestantism, God exists for man. (p. 436). The History of Christianity has had as its main result the revelation of this mystery: the realization and the knowledge of theology as anthropology." (p. 435)

The doctrine of Feuerbach is not humanist in the sense that it gives primacy to the affairs of man as understood in the ordinary sense. He likewise avoids vulgar atheism. His God is the God Who was still only a dream for the Jews, the philosophers and the Christians. "I do not at all say—it would be far too simplistic—God does not exist, the Trinity does not exist, the Word of God does not exist, etc.; I only say that they are not what the illusions of theology make them out to be,—that they are not alien mysteries, but mysteries in us (*einheimische*), mysteries of human nature." (p. 15). The God of religion is an exterior God to which man submits as a limited being; it is the infinity of alienated man. In religion, man has not yet become directly conscious of himself (*sich direct bewusst*); religion is the condition of childhood (*kindliche Wesen*) of humanity. (p. 39). The God of anthropotheism, on the contrary, is a God Who has become perfectly commensurable with man. It is man emancipated from the limits of his individuality. It is the very heart of man.

In theology which has become openly anthropology, the Pelagian and the Augustinian must no longer speak in a hidden manner. Both of them have their qualities and their defaults. Fundamentally the difference between them amounts to merely a 'pious illusion.' "The distinction between Augustinianism and Pelagianism consists uniquely in this, that the

first expresses according to the religious mode what the second expresses according to the rationalist mode. The two say the same thing; both appropriate the good to man—Pelagianism however does this directly and in a rationalist, moralist manner, whereas Augustinianism does it indirectly, in a mystical manner, i.e., religious. Pelagianism denies God, denies religion,—*isti tantam tribuunt potestatem voluntati, ut pietati auferant rationem* (Augustine, *De Nat. et Grat. Contra Pelagium*, c. 58)—it is founded on the Creator only, and hence on nature, and not the Redeemer. . . —in short, it denies God, it sets man up as God, insofar as it makes man into a being who has no need of God, who suffices to himself and who is independent. . . . Augustinianism is simply a reversed Pelagianism; what the one sets forth as a subject, the other sets forth as an object.” (p. 59)

Feuerbach's anthropotheism goes far beyond Pelagianism. The latter maintained the integrity and self-sufficiency of human nature; it denied the power of evil. The former, on the contrary, incorporates evil, and seeks therein a depth which makes man commensurable with God. “Human misery is the triumph of divine mercy; contrition for sin brings about the intimate joy of divine holiness.” (p. 308).¹³² Feuerbach's notion that his philosophy is already precontained in religion is, as he sees it, most strikingly proved in the love of God for man, a love which is expressed in the Incarnation. Here is another of these passages in which the most sublime truth is fouled with the most revolting sophism:

The clearest and most incontestable proof that, in religion, man considers himself as a divine object, as the divine end, that thus in religion man is only related to himself—the clearest and most incontestable proof of all this is the love

¹³² In *Ego Sapientia* (Second Part) I insisted on the perverse interpretation one could give to the doctrine of the power of the weak. I did not know then, not having yet read this work of Feuerbach in the complete text, that modern philosophy had really done this in such an elaborate way.

of God for man, the foundation and central point of religion. For man, God divests himself of his divinity. The uplifting effect of the Incarnation consists in just that: the highest being, who knows no need, humiliates himself, lowers himself for man. Thus in God I see the vision of my proper being; I have value for God; the divine meaning of my proper being is thus revealed. How could one express the value of man in a higher manner than this: God becomes man for man, man is the end, the object of divine love? The love of God for man is an essential determination of divine being. God is a God who loves me, who loves man above all. There lies the accent, and in that consists the profound emotion of religion. The love of God makes me to love also; the love of God for man is the foundation of the love of man for God; divine love causes, awakens, human love. *Let us therefore love God, since God has first loved us.* (I John iv, 19) What is it in God that I love? It is love, and, indeed, love for man. But when I love and adore the love with which God loves man, do I not love man; is my love not, albeit indirectly, the love of man? And hence, is man not the content of God, when God loves man? And is what I love not that which is most intimate to myself? Have I a heart when I do not love? No! Love alone is the heart of man. But what is love without the thing itself which I love? That which I so love—there is what my heart is, my content, my essence. (p. 95).

One cannot read these blasphemies without shuddering. But we must nevertheless confront them. Man, then, holds by this view his true greatness not from the fact that God lowered Himself for him; God lowered Himself and divested Himself on account of the goodness of man; He was drawn first to man by the goodness of this creature whom He made; man, so we must say, remained fundamentally so lovable that God could not leave him in this condition of misery in which the harmful indulgence of Adam had placed him; to do so would have been incompatible with the dignity of His creature; it would have been unjust. God loved us first: that means, then, that God discovered us first; if His love is the founda-

tion of ours, it is as the former is considered formally as love for man. The Incarnation would have had as its end to help man become conscious of his proper greatness and his own powers. It was the tearing of the veil which separated man from himself. The things that God chose would be only in appearance the things which are not—*ea quae non sunt*. Merciful elevation? At bottom, it was only the pity which man felt towards himself that saved him; God would be but an instrument of the mercy of man towards himself. In truth, the miserable being delivered himself, elevated himself by the power of his impotence, by the strength of his weakness, as Marx repeats.

These authors have for us the advantage of speaking *in angulis*. This is what this perverse introversion must inevitably have led to, this effort to enjoy the pure self in its most radical subjectivity. Since man is chosen for divine life, what in him is there that the Creator himself of man can find attractive? Certainly not the things *qui sunt*. Does the greatness of man not reside therefore in the things which in him are not? Is it not his very special unformedness, his non-being, that caught the attention of God? Is that in man which is, not simply a defect of his non-being? Behold evil, that positive aspect rooted in privation, which comes to open man to greater power. Does it then make us commensurable with God? And so it is in our non-being that we encounter being? The true being of man is identified with his non-being.

“The Passion”, Feuerbach continues, “is an essential condition of God become man, or in other words of the human God, therefore of Christ. Love reveals itself in suffering. All the thoughts and all the feelings which principally belong to Christ lead back to the idea of suffering. God as God is the sum of all human perfection; God as Christ is the sum of all human misery. The pagan philosophers celebrated activity, especially the immanent activity (*Selbstthätigkeit*) of the intellect as the highest activity, as divine activity; the Christians celebrated suffering, and even placed suffering in God.

Whereas God as *Actus purus*, as pure activity, is the God of abstract philosophy, Christ, on the contrary, the God of Christians, is *Passio pura*, pure suffering—the highest metaphysical thought, the most supreme being of the heart.” (p. 97).

Would one have believed that man would go to this point in order to possess his soul without losing it, in order to possess it of himself and for himself? And is this not the work of the desire to get behind oneself, so to speak, where man will possess his own liberty, where he will hold himself in his own hands, where he will hold himself as God holds him, where he will have the knowledge of good and evil? “Man sinned principally,” St. Thomas says, “by desiring to resemble God in the knowledge of good and evil that the serpent promised him, and which would make him able to decide moral good and evil for himself, or again to foresee the good and evil that could occur to him. He sinned secondarily by desiring to resemble God in the proper power to act, in order to obtain beatitude by virtue of his own nature, by that personal power of which Eve had the love in her soul, as Augustine says.”¹³³

Man thus establishes himself as an absolute, even at the price of an identification of Him Who Is with that which is furthest from Him. There is surprise at the fact that Feuerbach was also a materialist. But it should be noted that the antinomy between modern idealism and materialism is entirely on the surface. The absolute idealism of Hegel is really more materialist than the materialism of Marx. For Hegelian being, being an extreme of indetermination, has much more the character of matter than the matter of the physical order;

¹³³ “Sed primus homo peccavit principaliter appetendo similitudinem Dei quantum ad *scientiam boni et mali*, sicut serpens ei suggestit: ut scilicet per virtutem propriae naturae determinaret sibi quid esset bonum et quid malum ad agendum, vel etiam ut per seipsum praecognosceret quid sibi boni vel mali esset futurum. Et secundo peccavit appetendo similitudinem Dei quantum ad propriam potestatem operandi, ut scilicet virtute propriae naturae operaretur ad beatitudinem consequendam: unde Augustinus dicit, *XI Super Gen. ad litt.*, quod *menti mulieris inhaesit amor propriae potestatis*. *Ila Ilae*, q. 163, a. 2, c.

it is infinitely poorer than prime matter. And indeed the speculative reason of Hegel is really a thoroughly practical reason concerned with being which is transcendently *factibile*. The so called Hegelian speculation is really a revolt against practical truth, against the conditioning of this truth by the rectitude of the appetite.

Here we are fully embarked upon that road opened by David of Dinant "who postulated in the most stupid manner that God is prime matter", and which St. Albert characterized as "consummate stupidity".¹³⁴

APPENDIX V: THE REVOLUTION
OF THE PHILOSOPHERS OF NATURE

In his work *Ludwig Feuerbach*, F. Engels, comparing the German revolution to the French revolution, writes:

Just as in France in the eighteenth century, the philosophic revolution in the nineteenth century in Germany preceded the political revolution. But what a difference between the two! The French in open arms against all official science, against the Church, often even against the State, their works printed beyond the border, in Holland or England, and themselves quite often on the point of heading for the Bastille. The Germans, on the contrary, were professors, teachers of youth named

¹³⁴ Where did this immense scaffolding of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* lead to? To the exaltation of sexual sensuality, in which man-Gattung is fulfilled in a physical, concrete manner. (*Op. cit.*, ch. 18, pp. 222 *et seq.*) "Religion, according to Feuerbach, is the sentimental relation of man to man which . . . now finds (reality) directly and without intermediary in the love between you and me. And it is thus that sexual love becomes, finally, in Feuerbach, one of the highest forms, if not the highest form, of the exercise of his new religion." (Engels, *Feuerbach*, p. 35.) But Marxism too, in spite of the protesting of Engels who finds it all "disgusting" (p. 21), finally leads to an analogous *Dammerung*. What are goods? Material goods. What are material goods? "Nourishment, clothing, shoes, housing, fuel, instruments of production, etc." (Stalin, *op. cit.*, p. 113).

by the State, their works recognized as manuals for teaching, and the system that crowns the whole development, that of Hegel, raised even in some way to the rank of an official philosophy of the Prussian royalty! And the revolution was to be hidden behind these professors, behind their pedantic and obscure statements, in their heavy and boring classes. The men who were then considered as representatives of the revolution, were they not precisely the most bitter adversaries of this philosophy which was sowing trouble in men's minds? But what neither the government nor the liberals saw was seen by at least one man as early as 1833. It is true that his name was Heinrich Heine.¹³⁵

Engels is without doubt making allusion to Heine's *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, in which he concludes his reflections with the following remarks on the destructive character of Kant's *Critique*, and of the apparently detached and inoffensive system of Hegel:¹³⁶

When one saw budding from the philosophic tree such afflicting follies, which bloomed into poisoned flowers; when one noticed especially that the German youth, spoiled by metaphysical abstractions, forgot the most pressing interests of the time, and that they had become unpractised in practical life; then the patriots and the friends of liberty must have experienced a just resentment towards philosophy, and some even went as far as to break their connections with it as with a frivolous game whose results were sterile.

We are not so foolish as to seriously refute those who showed such discontent. German philosophy is an important matter which concerns the whole of humanity, and our great nephews alone will be able to decide if we merit

¹³⁵ Friedrich Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, in *Etudes philosophiques*, editions sociales internationales, Paris 1935; pp. 10-11.

¹³⁶ This text that Professor A. Viatte made known to me several years ago has since then been cited often, but always incompletely. The passages which are omitted are precisely those which, in my point of view, are the most important, namely the passages which directly incriminate philosophy.

praise or blame for having reworked our philosophy first and our revolution afterwards. It seems to me that a methodic people, such as ourselves, should begin with reform, then concern itself with philosophy, and arrive at the political revolution only after having passed through these prior phases. I find this order entirely reasonable. The minds that philosophy has employed for meditation can be cut down at pleasure by the revolution; but philosophy will never be able to use the minds that the revolution has already destroyed. And yet, my dear fellow countrymen, be not worried; the German revolution will be neither more easy going nor sweeter from having been preceded by the critique of Kant, the transcendental idealism of Fichte, and natural philosophy. These doctrines have developed revolutionary forces which are but waiting for the right moment to explode and fill the world with fright and wonder. Then there will appear Kantians who will no more want to hear piety spoken of in the world of events than in that of ideas, and they will overthrow without mercy, with the axe and the sword, the sun of our European life in order to extricate the last roots of the past. Upon the same scene there will appear armed Fichteans, whose fanaticism of will will be overcome neither by fear nor by interest; for they live in the spirit and scorn matter, like the first Christians who were daunted neither by corporal punishments nor by terrestrial pleasures. Indeed, such transcendental idealists would, in a social uprising, be more inflexible than the first Christians; for the latter endured martyrdom in order to arrive at celestial beatitude, whereas the transcendental idealist regards martyrdom as a pure appearance, and keeps himself inaccessible in the fortress of his thought. But the worst of all would be the natural philosophers, who would intervene in a German revolution with action, and would identify themselves with work of destruction; for if the hand of the Kantian strikes sure and forcefully, because his heart is not moved by any traditional respect; if the Fichtean heartily despises all dangers, because they do not exist at all for him in reality; the natural philosopher will be terrible because he is in communication with the original powers of the earth,

because he conjures forces hidden in tradition, because he can call forth the forces of the whole of German pantheism and awaken therein that ardour of combat which we find in the ancient Germans; because he wishes to fight, not to destroy, nor even to conquer, but simply to fight. Christianity softened, to a point, this brutal fighting ardour of the Germans; but it could not destroy it, and when the cross, the talisman which ties him down, is broken, then the ferociousness of the ancient fighters, the frenetic exaltation of the Berserkers that the northern poets still sing today, will once again overflow. Then—and alas, the day will come—the old warlike divinities will rise from their fabulous tombs, will wipe the age-old dust from their eyes; Thor will rise up with his giant hammer and demolish the gothic cathedrals. . . . When you hear the din and the tumult, be on your guard, dear neighbors in France, and stay clear of what we are about here in Germany; it could do you harm. Do not try to extinguish the fire; you may burn your fingers. Do not laugh at these counsels, even if they come from a dreamer who invites you to mistrust the Kantians, the Fichteans and the philosophers of nature; do not laugh at this whimsical poet who expects to see in the world of events the same revolution which has occurred in the domain of the mind. Thought precedes action as lightning precedes thunder. The thunder in Germany is true to the German way: it is not quick and agile, and comes rolling somewhat slowly; but it will come, and when you hear a crack of thunder as has been never heard before in the history of the world, know that the German thunder has finally reached its goal. Upon that sound, the eagles will fall dead from the heights, and the lions, in the most remote deserts of Africa, will lower their tail and retreat into their royal dens. There will be in Germany a drama compared to which the French revolution will be like an innocent romance. It is true that today all is calm, and if you see here and there a few men gesticulating in somewhat lively fashion, do not believe that they are the actors who will be one day charged with representing the revolution. They are merely the dogs who run in the empty arena, barking and exchanging a few bites, before the mo-

ment when the troop of gladiators enters who will fight to the death.

And that hour will come. People will come together as spectators to an amphitheatre, around Germany, to see the great and terrible games. I warn you, French, stay very quiet then, and most of all be sure to applaud. We might easily interpret your intentions incorrectly, and send you back rather brutally following our impolite manner; for if before, in our state of indolence and bondage, we have measured our strength against yours, we may do so much more in the arrogant drunkenness of our young liberty. You know yourselves just what one can do in such a state, and you are no longer in that state. . . . So be careful! I have but good intentions, and I tell you bitter truths. You have more to fear from delivered Germany than from the entire holy alliance with all the Croatians and all the Cossacks. To begin with, you are not liked in Germany, which is nearly incomprehensible, because you are nonetheless very likeable, and you took pains to be pleasing during your stay in Germany, at least towards the best and the nicest half of the German people; but even while this half of the population might like you, it is precisely the half which does not bear arms, and whose friendship will do you little good. Just why you are not liked I have never known. One day in a tavern in Göttingen a young Old German said that the suffering of Konradin of Hohenstaufen, whom you decapitated in Naples, should be avenged through the blood of the French. That is no doubt something that you have long forgotten; but as for us, we forget nothing. You see that when the desire rises in us to have it out with you, we will not be lacking in German motives. In any case I counsel you to be on your guard; whatever happens in Germany, whether the royal prince of Prussia or Dr. Wirth receives the dictatorship, remain armed and steady at your station, and arms prepared. I have only good intentions towards you, and I almost took fright when I recently heard that your ministers proposed to disarm France. . . .

In spite of your present romanticism, you were born classical, and so you are acquainted with Olympus. Among the

joyful divinities that take pleasure there in nectar and ambrosia, you know of a goddess who, amid these pleasant recreations, nonetheless conserves a breastplate, a helmet on her head and a spear in her hand.

She is the goddess of wisdom.¹³⁷

* * *

To be sure, judging by the rather concrete character of this vaticination, the German poet seems to have been a little possessed. Still, let us see if we can find one of the commonest reasons for this fury of natural philosophers.

In the beginning of Book II of the *Physics* nature is defined thus: "principle and cause of movement and of rest of the thing in which it resides first, *per se* and not *per accidens*". In the course of this same book it is demonstrated that nature acts for an end which is the first principle, the first cause, of the nature itself. In light of this demonstration, St. Thomas defines nature as: "a reason (*ratio, logos*) placed in things by Divine art, so that they might act for an end." (*ibid.* lect. 14; also, XII *Metaph.*, lect. 12). For, action for an end supposes intellect, or at least a participation in intellect. Nature properly speaking is therefore a substitute for intellect. *Ratio indita rebus ab arte divina*, even the most irrational nature, is still a Divine *logos*. Even the purely material principle, the passive principle of natural things, it also being properly nature, is like a Divine word.¹³⁸

The goal of natural philosophy is to know, even to their ultimate specific concretion, these Divine *logoi* and the end which specifies each of them and which they call forth; to know perfectly the natural being whose form is separable and

¹³⁷ Heinrich Heine, *De l'Allemagne* (1834). Paris, Calmann Levy, 1878, V.1, pp. 179-183.

¹³⁸ We do not mean thereby that only natures, even natures as understood in the broad sense, are works of the Divine art. Every work of God, everything of which He is the cause, is a work of the Divine art. *Omnia per ipsum facta sunt: et sine ipso factum est nihil, quod factum est.*

the term of all other natures, according to what Aristotle says in the same book of the *Physics*, (Ch. 2) as well as in the first book of *De Partibus Animalium* (Ch. 5). This goal, however, is only a dialectical limit for the study of nature, a term which we can unceasingly approach, but which we can never adequately attain.

Note that the role of hypotheses increases in the measure in which we approach things in their concretion. There is in hypothesis not only the aspect which requires experimental confirmation, but also the more profound tendency to anticipate experience and to deduce it as a conclusion. Given the method which we must use in the road towards this ultimate concretion, it would suffice to isolate this tendency in order to have in the limit a universe which would be entirely of our own making. Considered in this way, the limit to which experimental science tends is the condition of a demiurge. The method of invention of reasons which anticipate experience is a method of reconstruction. In this very precise respect considered abstractly, to reconstruct the universe is in some way to construct it.¹³⁹ And if *per impossibile* this limit could be accomplished, the universe would be nothing but a projection of our own *logoi*. But to attain this limit, we would have to have a practical knowledge of natural things; it would be necessary that natures themselves be operable things for us.¹⁴⁰

It must be said that the Renaissance became very aware of this role of hypothesis, although its most eminent thinkers

¹³⁹ See the quotation from Marcile Ficin (note 95, p. 81).

¹⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that in the most advanced treatises in the way of concretion, Aristotle opposes natural doctrine to the speculative sciences: "however the case may be, the mode of proof and of necessity is other in natural doctrine (physica) than in the speculative sciences." (*I De Part. Animal.*, Ch. 1, 640a.) He also opposes this same treatise to the treatises composed "according to philosophy." (*ibid.*, 642a5). In certain respects natural doctrine, art and prudence are likened to each other in a quasi-genus opposed to metaphysics and mathematics, according to what St. Thomas says.

did not formulate an exact notion of scientific hypothesis. They did nonetheless recognize the anticipative and creative aspect of hypothesis. They exalted the fertility of the creative intellect, a fertility to which a practical power over things was added. It is in this perspective, it seems to me, that one must see the primacy of the Cartesian *Cogito*. Enthusiasm increased in the measure in which the application of the method of limits, born of Platonism and secularised by Nicolas of Cusa, was further extended. At bottom, this method is the very basis of any hypothesis.

We have already said that the attempt to see the entire cosmos as a great flowing, an immense torrent continuously overflowing from a unique *logos*, from a first reason, in which natures are like flowing vortexes, is very praiseworthy, indeed essential to a sapiential view, provided that one recognizes the limits and conditions of this method. But naturalism—I understand naturalism in the profound sense in opposition to the vulgar naturalism of a mechanist materialism for example—tries to push this method to the point of substituting our reasons for natures, in other words to the point of eliminating Divine *logoi*. And that is indeed what Hegel tried to accomplish.

"Thus," says Marx, "the metaphysicians who in making these abstractions imagine that they are analyzing things, and who to the extent that they detach themselves more and more from objects imagine that they are approaching them to the point of penetrating them, these metaphysicians are right to say, in their turn, that the things here below are embroideries of which logical categories are the canvas. That is what distinguishes the philosopher from the Christian. The Christian has only a single incarnation of the *Logos*, in spite of logic; the philosopher never ceases to have incarnations." (*op. cit.*, p. 64)

Hegel did not recognize that for the deduction of each species he could not but presuppose this species, just as with the straight line, which notion is absolutely anterior to its

character of being a limit, the latter never being anything but phenomenal. It is true that dialectical Reason presupposes the Understanding, but it is the former that will always be the root of the latter.¹⁴¹

When one expects this method to achieve the results that the Hegelian expects from it, it shows itself to be just as sterile as it is fruitful when properly understood. Marx clearly recognized this sterility. The study of nature can never renounce the primacy of sensible experience. The pretensions of idealist deduction are nothing but "hypocritical turns of speculation, which constructs *a priori*. (*op. cit.*, p. 47) He also clearly recognized that all these constructions of our thought have only the character of means. Hegel surmounts natures in themselves only in a purely apparent manner.

For us, these intermediate constructions have as their limit the Divine natures, the Divine *logoi*, the seminal reasons, which are not operable by us, even though as we approach them our practical power over the world increases unceasingly. Marx has just as much against nature in itself as Hegel, but he does not content himself to only conquer it phenomenally; he seeks a practical conquest. And, in truth, there could be no other conquest. Nature as a thing in itself, as an object which escapes power, represents therefore for Marx an alien power. Anything which is properly nature is an obstacle, but a useful and necessary obstacle. The thing in itself must be converted into a thing by us and for us. The idealist dissolution is not bad insofar as it is a dissolution; it is bad because it allows objects to remain under the pretext that they are from us at least as objects. That is an illusion. Idealist dialectic hesitates

¹⁴¹ It is also true that the relative anteriority of the absolute Idea presents difficulties of interpretation, but it remains that each category beneath the first, and each species, is transcendently the fruit of pure becoming, of the movement of reason by means of contradiction. The impossibility of making clear the relation between the first reason and the absolute Idea makes sufficiently clear the impossibility that Hegel himself was up against.

before the practical, concrete destruction that victory over alien forces requires.

"In its 'mystified' form," says Marx, "dialectic was a German fashion, because it seemed to transfigure existing things. In its rational form, it is a scandal and an abomination for the bourgeois and their doctrinal spokesmen, because in the positive understanding of existing things it implies at the same moment the understanding of their negation, of their necessary destruction, because it conceives all forms in the course of change, consequently from their ephemeral side, allowing itself to be imposed upon by nothing, being essentially critical and revolutionary." (*op. cit.* p. 68).

There is what Marxism owes to Hegelian philosophy: the power of dissolution, but pushed to its limit. "There is nothing," says Engels, "that remains definitive, absolute or sacred before it; it shows the transitory character of all things and in all things, and nothing exists for it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of the transitory, of the unending rising of the inferior to the superior, of which it is itself, moreover, merely a reflection in the thinking mind. It is true that it also has a conservative side; it recognizes the justification of certain stages of development of knowledge and of society for their epoch and their conditions, but only in that measure. Conservatism seen thus is relative; its revolutionary character is absolute—indeed the only absolute that it allows to remain standing." (*op. cit.*, p. 13).¹⁴²

¹⁴² Here is a passage from the book *Hitler Told Me*, by Hermann Rauschning (Paris, 1939):

"I pointed out to him that that way one arrived at Bolshevism and communism, as in Russia."

'But no, but no,' replied Hitler, 'you're the victim of an old sophism that must be cleared up. What remains of Marxism is the will towards revolutionary construction, which no longer needs to be supported on ideological crutches, and which forges for itself an instrument of implacable power in order to impose itself on the popular masses and on the whole world. Thus from a teleology with a scientific basis there comes a true revolutionary movement, provided with all the necessary means

Given this intellect in revolt, the world of natures must be converted into operable matter, and the resistance of natures must serve as a lever for action turned against those natures themselves. Anything which would tend to have the character of a natural stability, anything which would help a nature perfect or complete itself thus becomes a constraint upon our liberty, an obstacle to overcome; therefore not only the entirely natural society of the family, but even political society whose roots are natural must be exterminated.

The Word must be followed in all that it speaks, all that it made, even to the most remote confines of creation. Every word of God will trouble the silence of our night—like thunder.

We say, "even to the most remote confines of creation." The natural philosopher will therefore take hold even of that cause which is the most feeble, the indeterminate cause which consists of chance and fortune, a cause which is "without

for the conquest of power.'

'And the end of this revolutionary will?'

'There is no precise end. Nothing that is fixed once and for all. Is that too hard for you to understand?'

I replied that indeed I was a bit disconcerted by these unordinary ideas.

'We are a movement. That is the word that says all. Marxism teaches that a giant uprising will transform the world suddenly. The millennium will fall from the heavens like the new Jerusalem. After which, the history of the world is finished. There is no more development. Everything thereafter is decided. The shepherd pastures his flock. The world is at its end. But us, we know that there is no definitive state, nothing durable, that there is a perpetual evolution. What ceases to transform itself is dead. The present is already past. But the future is the inexhaustible river of infinite possibilities for an ever new creation.'" (p. 212).

A Marxist could show that this opinion is more orthodox than one may think. "Communism," Marx wrote, "is a real phase in the emancipation and the renaissance of man, a necessary phase for the following historic evolution. Communism is the necessary form and the energetic principle of the coming future. But communism is not, as such, the end of human evolution—it is a form of human society. (*Morceaux Choisis*, p. 228).

reason" (*paralogon*)¹⁴³; he will rationalise it, in order that the world may be really ours and that nothing may escape from our domination. Especially will he do so in order to deny the existence of ineffable Providence which is so much the more striking in those chance and fortuitous events of which Providence alone is the determinate cause. Profane reason will be substituted for the Reason which governs history. Marxism will therefore be a historic materialism. The judgement of history will supplant the Judgement of God.

It is a terrible idea. And the revolution of the natural philosophers is indeed terrible also. Those who think otherwise are its surest instruments—the lukewarm who will be vomited from the mouth of God.

¹⁴³ *II Physic.*, c. 5, 197 a 18; *Lect.* 9, n. 4. Also *III Contra Gentiles*, c. 99: "Ordo enim inditus . . ." etc.