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Gilson's Epistemology

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GILSON'S EPISTEMOLOGY

by

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I

BIOGRAPHY

Gerard van den Hurk was born on May 13, 1913 at Eindhoven (Netherlands).

He made his studies for the priesthood in the preparatory and major seminaries of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (Dutch Province), becoming a member of the order on September 20, 1931. After ordination on August 10, 1937, he completed his theological studies and was sent to the Apostolic Vicariate of Manado, which comprises the northern part of the Island of Celebes, Indonesia (former Dutch East Indies). There he was appointed a teacher of philosophy at the Major Seminary for natives. The capture of the island by the Japanese, January 10, 1942, stopped all missionary activity; all the missionaries spent the next three years and eight months in prison. Post war conditions made it impossible to start the seiminary again after liberation (September 1945), and Father van den Hurk was appointed pastor of one of the stations of the vicariate. In addition, he became editor of the Malayan Catholic monthly Geredja Katolik. Because of the changed political situation his Bishop sent him to the United States to obtain the masters degree in philosophy before resuming his faculty post at the reopened seminary. Father van den Hurk started his studies at Loyola University in September 1950.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GILSON'S EPISTEMOLOGY.

INTRODUCTION.

Thomism like every system, movement or society, has its conservatives and its progressives. Conservatives are those who think that the strength of Thomism lies in sticking as closely as possible to St. Thomas. According to them, he has the solution to every problem and question. Every investigation of the opinions of modern non-thomistic thinkers is sheer waste of time. Nothing can be added, and certainly nothing can be altered in his philosophical teachings. Philosophy reached its summit in his writings, to which all later generations have to go back as to the source of all philosophical wisdom.

On the other hand, the progressives are of the opinion that the doctrine of Thomas was only a stage in the evolution of philosophy, albeit a high and unsurpassed stage in the history of philosophy. They do not deny, but rather expect further evolution. They are inclined to study other philosophical systems, in the opinion that every human thought must have its hidden element of truth, which should not be despised but valued as a vestige of that ineffable Truth from which it stems. They stand for, as G. B. Phelan says of Maritain, "a living, not an archaeological Thomism."[1]

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1 G. B. Phelan, Jacques Maritain, New York, 1937, 31.

There certainly is place in Thomism for a sound tradition; on most fundamental problems Thomas gave the answer once and for all; and deviating from him, we might easily drift away in that endless stream of subjective error which modern philosophy often seems to be to one who studies it from the standpoint of a Christian. On the other hand it would be strange, to say the least, if Thomas were the ultimate phase in the evolution of human thought, if philosophy had reached in him its final perfection and were susceptible of no further development. St. Thomas himself certainly was not of this opinion. For him philosophy was the search of mankind for truth. But as truth finally coincides with the Divine Being, there is no limit to the development of philosophy. Man will forever discover new treasures in the hidden mines of being.

St. Thomas's reverence for truth made him investigate the systems of pagan philosophers, and no man ever looked more painstakingly for the least particle of truth in their writings. Had he written in our time we would find quotations from the works of Kant, Bergson and James as we find them now from Averroes, Avicenna and Maimonides, and even from a charlatan like David of Dinant whom he calls "most silly". Trying to enrich Thomas's philosophy with the discoveries of modern philosophers is, therefore, undoubtedly ad mentem divi Thomae, wholly in accord with his intention. This is also the teaching of the Popes from Leo XIII's Aeterni Patris to Pius XII's Humani Generis, who, though he warns Catholics against the grave errors

of modern philosophy, also says: "we may enrich our philosophy with the fruits of the progress of the human mind"[1]. The Pope is no advocate of narrow-minded traditionalism.

A striking example of the different attitudes toward modern philosophy in Thomism, of the struggle between conservatism and progressivism, can be found in the problem which is the subject of this thesis. How far can Thomism go in its adaptation to modern systems? There is, I think, no more convincing argument to show that Thomism is a living philosophy and not a dry fossil whose place is in a museum, than the history of thomistic epistemology. This history shows how Thomism is still able to seize a modern problem, and, with the use of its ageless principles to solve it and incorporate it in itself-- not in the way of eclecticism but making it into a homogeneous adaptation.

When Thomism awoke in the 19th century, after a long period of lethargy, it found itself confronted with many entirely new problems, the most important of which certainly was the problem of knowledge. For many centuries man had used his intellectual faculty without ever asking himself whether the knowledge it gave him accurately represented reality existing outside himself. He had always taken it for granted that real things existed outside himself and that his intellect gave him

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1 Pius XII, Humani Generis, New York, 1950, 15.

reliable information about them. Philosophers had asked themselves whether the intellect was a suitable instrument to lead to truth. This was the so-called sceptical problem, which was almost as old as human speculation. But man had never asked himself whether the intellect reached reality outside his mind, extramental reality. He had never doubted that. The question had never been raised and, therefore, had never been the object of scientific investigation. Though realism was at the basis of all philosophical inquiries up to the Renaissance, it had never been scientifically proved and is, therefore, called "naive realism". Van Steenberghen says that Thomas's realism cannot be called "popular realism" (his equivalent of naive realism) because "the doctrine of abstraction and the doctrine of judgment, the doctrine of reflexion and the theory of truth, the criticism of the first principles and the universals, the doctrine of quiddities and all the Thomistic logic, are not merely doctrines of common sense".[1]

This is certainly true; the above mentioned doctrines are no doctrines of common sense but the results of profound philosophical speculations. However,-- and this Van Steenberghen seems to forget-- they are all in the field of psychology and logic and not in the field of epistemology strictly speaking. Nowhere in the works of St. Thomas will you

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1 F. Van Steenberghen, Epistemology, New York, 1949, 58.

find an exposition of the idealistic problem, whether and in what degree the intellect reaches extramental reality, what is the value of intellectual knowledge. St. Thomas, like all philosophers of his age, took realism for granted. Therefore, his must also be called naive or popular realism, i.e., not scientifically justified.

At the beginning of modern times, however, Descartes stated the principles from which idealism arose. Disappointed with the poor results of late-scholastic speculation he left the path of scholastic method in search for a method which would give him more satisfactory results. He found it in the method of mathematics. This method was bound to loosen the relation between thought and reality and was, therefore, the first step to idealism. Though Descartes himself always remained a realist, his use of the mathematicl method and the doctrines it led him to justly earned for him the name "Father of Idealism". For example, he was a medietist, teaching that the mind knows directly only its ideas.

A new problem had been created, the idealistic problem, the problem of the value of human knowledge. It soon became so important that it was considered the major, and in many cases the only problem of philosophical speculation. For many modern systems the solution of this problem means also the end of their philosophy.

The revivers of Thomism in the 19th century understood that a very important part of their task would be to give a satisfactory solution of this problem. They regarded the problem as a real one and tried to give it a solution. Whereas the solutions given to it by modern philosophers were all idealistic, modern scholastics understood that an idealistic solution would mean death for Thomism. They were confident that Thomistic principles would lead them to a realistic solution.

For the method to be used in this investigation they looked toward modern philosophers. There they found that the method generally used since the time of Kant was the method of critical investigation. Many Thomists tried to come to a solution by using this method of a critical investigation (for this reason calling their investigations Critica), and many also used another method of modern philosophy, viz. Descartes' methodical doubt.

The whole development of Thomistic epistemology shows that it is very much indebted to modern systems, both in regard the accepting of the question and the methods leading to its solution. Reaction to the idealistic tendencies of early neo-scholastic solutions to the epistemological problem was bound to come. Alread in 1929 J. de Tonquedec wrote:

> "the theory which makes methodical doubt the first stage of critical philosophy is a badly digested theory, unrealistic and full of superficial viewpoints: the psychological data are analysed in it

> in an inexact way, distorted and presented in a false light- which is on the whole the light of modern idealism."[1]

Before him Charles Boyer had already criticised the same thing. His opinion was that some Thomists had gone too far in their adaptation to modern idealism. And indeed the critical problem is a delicate one. Too large concessions to idealism may make it insoluble.

Moreover it is a problem with far-reaching philosophic consequences, which demands more than the usual prudence. Some critics thought that apologetic considerations had made several Thomists lose sight of this prudence. They wanted to refute idealism from the standpoint of the idealist himself, forgetting Gilson's warning that once you start as an idealist, you are condemned to remain an idealist forever.

These criticisms, however, were directed only against individual points of neo-scholastic epistemology. But in 1936, in a little book Le Réalisme Méthodique[2] Etienne Gilson criticised the epistemological method used by Thomists up to his time, i.e., the method of critical realism. As its chief representatives Gilson took Mercier and Noël; but his criticisms were not restricted to specific teachings of Louvain.

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1 J. de Tonquedec, Critique de la Connaissance, Paris, 1929, p. 445.

2 Etienne Gilson, Le Réalisme Méthodique, Paris, 1936.

Gilson's critics pointed out that his blanket condemnation of critical realism was supported only by arguments against the critical realism of the Louvain school, chiefly that of Mercier and Noël.[1]

Moreover they were anxious to hear how he would defend realism if not by means of a critique. Therefore, he wrote a second book in which he tried to show that his criticisms not only struck Mercier and Noël but all Thomists who held critical realism. He expanded the list to include all outstanding Thomists in epistemology and also tried to prove that without a critique he could still hold a philosophically justified realism. This second book was Réalisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance.

In the preface to his second book he says that he has been shocked by the expressions of Thomists, "for whom the notion of evidence seems to have lost all value, and that of human knowledge all signification", and he presents his book as "a critical analysis of cartesiano-thomism and kantiano-thomism". Among the Thomists for whom the notion of human knowledge seems to have lost all significance, we are astonished to find Noel, Rolland-Gosselin, Maréchal, Jolivet, Maritain, quite a gallery of prominent modern Thomists. He promises to

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1 Etienne Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance, Paris, 1939, p. 5.

criticise what he calls the "debauches of philosophical concordism".

Even before taking note of Gilson's criticisms in detail, everybody will agree that these are expressions typical of conservatism. According to R. Verneaus in a study of Gilson's epistemology, in connection with this book, Thomism such as Gilson professes must be called with a word of Maritain "antimodern".[1] "Thomists who put the critical question are ipso facto disloyal to Saint Thomas".[2]

Fr. L. Régis, who shares the views of Gilson, puts his indignation in a beautiful metaphor saying that "Thomism has been pulled for too long by an idealistic tug-boat".[3] Fr. Smith, also a staunch defender of Gilson's views, calls his books enthusiastically a "date in the history of epistemology", dividing epistemology into two periods "ante Gilson and post Gilson".[4]

What makes this discussion so extremely interesting is that we witness a struggle between the two wings in Thomism, Traditionalism and Progressivism, a struggle in which the most

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1 Etienne Gilson Philosophe de la Chrétiente, Paris, 1949, p. 217.

2 ibid, p. 216.

3 L. M. Régis, Saint Thomas and Epistemology, Milwaukee, 1946, p. 8.

4 G. Smith, The Maritain Volume of The Thomist, 1943, p. 248

outstanding Thomists of our days are involved. Moreover, the subject of the question is not a philosophical problem of minor importance, but the question around which the whole philosophy of modern times pivots. I intend, after an exposition of Gilson's criticisms to subject them to a critical examination and finally to say a word on his positive teachings on epistemology.

CHAPTER I.

GILSON'S CRITICISM OF CRITICAL REALISM.

In order to obtain a more objective view of Gilson's thought about critical realism a first chapter will be devoted to an exposition of his criticisms contained in the two books without critical remarks. In this way his opinion will be shown to better advantage, without objections blocking the smooth flow of his thought.

The teaching of the two books will be explained separately, since there is a certain progress in his criticism of critial realism. Van Riet points out in L'Epistémologie Thomiste[1] that three periods can be distinguished in Gilson's epistemology. There is a slow evolution from 1927 to 1942, from what Gilson calls pure methodical realism to a philosophically founded and defended attitude in his latest edition of Le Thomisme. In Le Réalisme Méthodique and Réalisme Thomiste we have two stages of this evolution as well in his arguments against critical realism as in his own epistemological doctrine.

A. LE REALISME METHODIQUE.

In this first book Gilson's criticism of the position of his opponents is less apodictical. He says that "the way of explaining Thomism, he (Noël) offers us, is hard to reconcile

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1 Van Riet, L'Epistémologie Thomiste, Louvain, 1946, 496.

with the spirit of Thomism"[1] but also that Noël perhaps uses the word "critique" in another sense than he (Gilson) and that, therefore, "we are not so far from each other as may seem"[2].

What he denounces are concessions made to idealism by Thomists, and the word "critical realism" finds no favor in his eyes. To look for a critical realism is to look for a contradiction; it is like seeking a square circle[3]. He even says that a realistic critique of knowledge is worse than a square circle.[4]

The thesis of this book may well be thus expressed: modern philosophy and Thomism are irreconcilable; idealistic elements must be kept out of Thomism, because they will prove fatal to it.

Eminent historian, Gilson outlines in a few pages modern philosophy with the roles played in it by Descartes and Kant, neatly pointing out the essence of their systems and how a fundamental error necessarily brought them to it. Setting Scholasticism against modern philosophy, he shows how they are

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1 Gilson, Le Réalisme Méthodique, 43.

2 ibid, 27.

3 ibid, 10.

4 ibid, 83.

as different as two worlds and how there is an unbridgable gap between them.

"Every compromise with idealism," he concludes, "has to be avoided"[1]. Concessions made to idealism must prove fatal to Thomistic realism. Over and over he repeats as a warning: "He who starts as an idealist is bound to end up as an idealist"[2]. There is no passage possible from the world of idealism to realism.

In modern history the figure of Kant stands as a warning. His attitude of criticism forbade him to establish a world of reality. He saw very clearly that once the critique of knowledge was his point of departure he would never be able to assert anything about reality. His sound reason, however, told him that this was an impossible point of view. Therefore, he resorted to postulates and gave his philosophy this feature of discrepancy, affirming and denying reality at the same time. Idealism and realism do not form an amalgam.

Yet this is just what we see happen in modern Thomism. These philosophers take as their point of departure the critique of idealism. They try to establish the value of intellectual knowledge by a critique as Kant did. This criticism is nothing

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1 ibid, p. 86.

2 ibid, p. 4, 10, 48, 83, etc.

else but a form of idealism. Therefore, it can never lead to realism even though these philosophers claim that it does. The reason why it cannot is that critique supposes that realism has not yet been established. If it were established there would be no reason for critique. But if the first act of the intellect is not about reality, no subsequent act can lead to reality.

The whole question depends on "what is the meaning of the word "critique". Is it being used by Thomists in the same sense as Idealists use it? Gilson says that it is, and that it must be. He distinguishes three possible meanings of the word "critique of knowledge" as he says in Le Realisme Methodique.[1]

Critique of knowledge can mean a reflexive analysis to show the role of subject and object in the act of knowledge. Or it can mean a critique of different kinds of knowledge (intellectual and sensible) to decide which are the marks of truth and falseness. Gilson does not have any objection against these two kinds of critique, because their point of departure is realism. Once we already have established that our intellect can reach reality, we start examining in what degree it can and what are the conditions.

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1 ibid, p. 85.

There is a third kind of critique of knowledge, however, which consists in submitting the intellect to an examination in order to investigate whether it can attain reality or not. This is the kind of critique used by the critical realists. In order that it be a really critical investigation one has first to abstain from realism. It must be an a priori examination, as Gilson says. But, therefore, one has to abandon realism and adopt idealism.

There is no escape, however, from idealism. The critical approach might possibly lead to mediate realism, which must ultimately come to idealism also, but certainly not to immediate realism as Noël wants. Mediate realism is itself one of these concessions to idealism. Thomists of the early neo-scholastic renaissance (mediate realists) did not see that there was no way out of their problem but idealism. Afterwards they discovered that they had gone too far. Today mediate realism has no adherents among Thomists.

On the other hand Gilson explains: "From the moment one admits immediate realism, it is impossible by definition to demonstrate or prove the existence of the exterior world."[1] Immediate realism excludes critical realism. If Noël is an immediate realist, he must be such notwithstanding his critical point of departure.

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1 ibid, p. 40.

To put the whole question in a few words, Gilson's argumentation amounts to this: If realism has to be proved, at what point of departure can one begin? If one begins with a realistic point of view, then no real proof is possible. If one begins with an idealistic point of view, realism cannot be proved. There is no escape from idealism.

A second objection is connected with this. An unbiased critical examination of human knowledge, in which realism is not to be supposed, makes epistemology the first of philosophical sciences. Metaphysics treats about being. But it is clear that the question whether we can know being has to be established before we start working on being.

But, as Gilson says, it cannot be proved. Anyone who insists on its proof must necessarily be led to idealism, which destroys metaphysics. Therefore, "we see no other alternative today, except to renounce metaphysics or to return to a pre-critical realism"[1].

He gives this advice to Thomists: "what one has to do is, to liberate oneself from the obsession of epistemology as a preliminary condition to philosophy"[2].

Critical realism gives Thomism this ambiguous attitude, it uses an idealistic method to reach a realistic goal.

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1 ibid, p. 15.

2 ibid, p. 14.

Neither idealists nor realists find this satisfactory. Noël for instance uses Descartes' doubt and establishes immediate realism by means of it. He really never leaves reality. Idealists will say that he did not understand Descartes, or if he did, he seems to be dishonest. It seems as if he pretends to use an idealistic method, in order to bring idealists back to realism, whereas he really does not use it.

On the other side neither does it satisfy Thomists because they feel this bringing of idealistic elements into Thomism as being unfaithful toward St. Thomas. Critical realism is, therefore, "one of the most serious obstacles to the full flourish of a renewed realism".[1]

In the last chapter, which is called "Advice for a beginning realist", he says that a modern man may find it very hard not to be allowed a critical attitude, but that "the realist has to submit oneself to it for the critical spirit is the very point of idealism".[2]

B. REALISME THOMISTE ET CRITIQUE DE LA CONNAISSANCE.

Because of the many reactions Le Réalisme Méthodique evoked, Gilson felt compelled to explain himself more clearly. Although his criticisms in Le Réalisme Méthodique were directed chiefly against Mercier and Noël, other Thomists, calling

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1 ibid, p. 84.

2 ibid, p. 98.

themselves critical realists, saw their system threatened by his attacks.[1] Moreover there was a general curiosity about how Gilson was going to build up an epistemology if not by way of a critical investigation. Therefore, he wrote this new book, as he explains in its preface.

The first six chapters are devoted to criticisms of various Thomists, in the last two he gives a positive exposition of his epistemolcgy. It is not the purpose of this thesis to follow his criticism in detail. We are not so much preoccupied with answering particular criticisms as with defending in general the lawfulness of using the critical element in a Thomistic epistemology. Moreover his criticism of the different systems always amounts to the same charge, of using critique in establishing the value of intellectual knowledge and thereby deviating Thomism from its realistic position into idealism. In this book his criticism is much more developed and explained in a clearer and more convincing way.

His criticisms can be summed up in two thesis:

(1) The critical method used by Thomists to establish the value of intellectual knowledge must lead to idealism; or,

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1 To speak of critical realism as "the doctrine of the Louvain School" is certainly not correct. Jolivet calls critical realism "common in Thomism" Jolivet, Le Thomisme et la Critique de la Connaissance, Paris 1933, p. 29. Gilson opponents in Le Réalisme Méthodique were mainly Mercier and Noël, but in Réalisme Thomiste they are for the most part not from Louvain.

if it does not, it is useless, because then it does not establish anything.

(2) This critical method makes metaphysics dependent on epistemology and thereby destroys its unconditional primacy.

GILSON'S FIRST THESIS

As we have stated this first thesis, it is given in almost the exact words of Gilson.[1] We shall attempt to reproduce here his explanation and defense of the position represented by this thesis.

What do Thomists mean when they speak of "critical realism?" Historically the term is used in contradistinction to a so-called naive realism, a realism based on common sense. This is the realism of the non-philosopher, of the man on the street. It is not scientifically justified. Though this realism is perfectly all right, in order to be useful as a basis for philosophical speculation it must be philosophically established. This is done by way of a reflexion.

Gilson agrees with all this. Naive realism is non-philosophical. In order to make it philosophical, reflexion has to be used. This makes it a realism which is conscious of its reasons and which, therefore, lacks the spontaneous

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1 Etienne Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste, p. 38, footnote.

certitude of common sense.[1] But does this make it a critical realism? It makes it only a reflexive or philosophical realism. Otherwise the whole philosophy may be called critical.[2]

The word "critical", therefore, is entirely superfluous; it has no meaning. The realism of every philosopher must be a philosophical or reflexive realism, but that is not sufficient reason for calling it a critical realism. The word "critical" is not only superfluous but also confusing. It was first used by Kant, who gave it a special meaning intimately connected with his idealism. The Kantian use of the term raises serious objections against a Thomistic use of the word. If it means anything more than reflexive or philosophical realism, it must mean something in a Kantian or idealistic sense and, therefore, gravely compromises Thomists who use it.

Among the most clear-sighted critical realists, Gilson finds the work critique used in the sense of reflection only, without any other meaning; and he quotes as an example a sentence of Msgr. L. Noël.[3] Maritain too is placed in this category, although the latter very clearly distinguishes between critique and a philosophy, and definitely vindicates the notion

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1 ibid, p. 39

2 ibid, p. 38

3 ibid, p. 37.

of critical realism. 1

Other Thomists however, according to Gilson, give the word critique a meaning different from reflexion. They want to state something more than that this realism is brought from a common sense to a philosophical stage by a reflexion only. According to their opinion this reflexion does something more. In that case they must take the word critique in the sense given to it by Kant, who first used it. He was the first to raise the so-called critical problem. Moreover the critical problem was introduced into Thomism in order to give an answer to Kant's idealism. But in order to answer Kant Thomists must start from the same problem. This was indeed the big problem of the earlier Neo-Scholastics: how to answer the idealists. Their dogmatic realism did not contain a satisfying answer to the idealistic position. So they tried to find an answer to Kant from Kant's own viewpoint. This was the beginning of critical realism. Gilson doubts whether this was a very wise move for Thomism.

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1. On account of the deference with which Gilson treats Maritain, whom he mentions only in a footnote, although Maritain is also a critical realist, Msgr. Noël makes the naughty remark: M. Gilson traite M. Maritain avec beaucoup plus de ménagement que la collection de soutanes - blanches, noires violettes ou meme rougMes (obviously referring to Rolland-Gosselin O.P., the Jesuit and secular priests, Msgr. Noël and Cardinal Mercier)- qu'il bouscule avec entrain à tous les coins où il les trouve"

L. Noël, Le Réalisme Immédiat, p. 61

A brief historical survey of how Kant came to his problem and how he solved it, may help to understand the position of Thomistic realism.[1]

Kant tried to find the reason for the wonderful progress of the sciences he discovered and on the other hand the decay of philosophy. That reason, he thought, was that philosophy used the wrong method. Therefore he tried to give philosophy a better method. He distinguishes between analytical and synthetical, a priori and a posteriori judgments. He found that synthetical a priori judgments are the only ones which augment our knowledge and at the same time have scientific value. Analytical judgments have no value because they do not add anything new to our knowledge. By analysis we can only see what the judgment already contained. Nothing new is found. Synthetical a posteriori judgments are useless for science also, because they never lead to generally valuable knowledge. The only thing they give us are concrete facts; they cannot give us laws which we need for science. The possibility of philosophy therefore depends on the synthetical a priori judgments. With this knowledge Kant institutes a critique in order to find out whether there are in the intellect principles which form these synthetical a priori judgments, what principles they are, and how they operate. This is his critique of pure reason.

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1. E.Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste p. 162

This critique is an a priori examination prior to any sensible experience. It has to be, because, if it were not, it would not be a critique or judgment of pure reason. Something else outside the activity of the intellect would be involved. No a posteriori elements may become involved because that would bring in sensible knowledge, which would lead the philosopher outside scientific metaphysics. For Kant this a priori element is essential. He has to start from the pure intellect prior to any sense activity.

Evidently such critique can never end with realism. It purposely excluded realism at its point of departure. Therefore if Thomists take the same attitude as Kant's they have to start from idealism also, but that will prevent them from ever reaching realism again. It is clear that no Thomist can hold this.

But although they do not hold this, they must hold something similar in order that their critique really remains a critique and does not become just a word without any particular meaning. What is it then that Thomists talk about when they use this word "critique"? They cannot take it in exactly the same sense Kant understood it, because that would force them to become Kantians all the way through. Yet they cannot take it in an altogether different meaning either. It has to remain a critique, a judgment. Therefore it is necessary that the standpoint from which the judgment takes place is not the same as it

conclusion, because otherwise no real judgment would be possible. There must be a certain stage of suspension first, in which a decision has not yet been taken. A certain a-priori element is necessary. Without it there is no critique in the real sense of the word.

Critical realism cannot start with realism. If it did, Kant would justly protest and say: "This is no real critique. The case has already been decided before the beginning of the judgment."

We arrive at the same dilemma as in Le Réalisme Méthodique. When one takes realism as one's point of departure, there is no real critique, no unbiased judgment; and when one takes a standpoint outside or prior to realism, it must be an idealistic standpoint and one never will arrive at realism again. When critical realists assert that the affirmations of realism receive a new and firmer certitude after the critique, Gilson asks whether this certitude was not sufficient before the critical reflexion. If it was not, the critical reflexion cannot make it more evident, because it only makes more clear what was already there in the original act of the intellect. Any lack of evidence in the act of the intellect must affect also the reflexion. For realists there can be no other point of departure but realism. This makes a critique impossible.

The difficulty becomes the greater when we consider that realism here is supposed to be immediate realism, i.e., a

realism which professes to attain extramental reality immediately. How can an intellect which immediately grasps reality ever take a position other than realism, the real being its immediate object? For immediate realism a critique of knowledge is certainly an impossibility, even a contradiction. The word immediate realism excludes critique.

Gilson concludes: "Therefore with all due deference to its defenders, I persist in thinking that the problem to find a critical realism is as contradictary in itself as the notion of a square circle." [1]

Thus the first thesis seems to be proved: the critical method used by Thomists to establish the value of intellectual knowledge must necessarily lead to idealism, if it is a real critique, i.e., a judgment of the intellectual activity. If it is not taken in the sense of being a real judgment it is no real critique. In that case it is useless, because it does not prove anything, and it had better be avoided as a confusing and misleading term.

GILSON'S SECOND THESIS

Gilson's second objection against critical realism is that it makes epistemology the first science and in so doing destroys the primacy of the philosophy which has being as its

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1. ibid, p. 11

object, metaphysics. Indeed most critical realists say that epistemology is the first science and has to be treated as an introduction to metaphysics. This is natural from their point of view. Metaphysics has as its object reality or being. It reaches this reality through the intellect. But is it not natural then, that a kind of investigation precedes to find out whether this intellect is really an instrument suited to know reality?

Medieval philosophers were never aware that this question could be raised. Their problem, the problem of the universals is a problem among realists in the modern sense. Jolivet writes about this: "The medieval realists opposed the nominalists in a field which is greatly different from the one in which the problem is raised today; in fact, it is not the same problem which is treated; the Middle Ages have been preoccupied for a long time with the question of the nature of the concept; they never doubted that its content had been borrowed from the object, and even less that the object really existed." [1] They took it for granted that the object of the intellect was extramental reality. But once the question has been raised by somebody in more modern times, then a large group of scholastic philosophers believe that they can consider it as a legitimate question. When it is a legitimate question however, has not

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1. R.Jolivet. Le Thomisme et la critique de la connaissance. p. 32.

the solution to be given before one proceeds to metaphysics?

This is what Msgr. Noël states in his Réalisme Immédiat: "There is no good metaphysics without critical prolegomena, and Kant, and before him Descartes, taught philosophy once and for all, something which constitutes an essential progress of human thought".[1] It is very clear where these modern scholastic critical realists got their inspiration. For all modern philosophical systems the epistemological problem is the first problem to be solved. Several never get any farther. Should Thomists follow their example? Is it possible to follow them without renouncing St. Thomas?

Gilson thinks it is not. His doctrine is very clear: "I contest the priority of epistemology in regard to primacy philosophy or metaphysics, while Msgr. Noël affirms that the ontological theory of knowledge is logically posterior to epistemology".[2] Critical realism destroys the unconditional primacy of metaphysics.[3] It is a subversion of Thomism.[4]

The first object of the intellect is being; the first science, therefore, must be the science about being as being, which is metaphysics. It starts with the concept of being and

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1 L. Noël, Le Réalisme Immédiat, Louvain, 1938, p. 23 - 24.

2 Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste, p. 36 footnote. Specially also p. 106 sq.

3 ibid, p. 106.

4 ibid, p. 108.

the first principles which are necessary for all science. No realistic philosophy, i.e., no philosophy which holds that the first human knowledge is the knowledge of being, can deviate from it. Metaphysics furnishes the base for all further scientific knowledge and, therefore, justly occupies an unconditional primacy among them.

At the time which saw the beginning of modern philosophies, however, the interest shifted from being to knowledge. The science of knowledge became more and more important, but this emphasis obscured the relation between knowledge and being gradually and paved the way for idealism. Metaphysics lost its primacy among the sciences, which went to the new science of knowledge. Realism disappeared and idealism took its place.

The critical realists do not seem to be aware that realism implies that metaphysics is the first science. Putting up another science before metaphysics is to forsake realism. Another notion comes before the notion of being, the notion of thought. Instead of "in the beginning was being" comes "in the beginning was thought" but this implies abandoning realism. If anything, then realism is the heritage of Thomas, and that is certainly the reason why Gilson calls critical realism an overthrow of St. Thomas.

Not only is metaphysics, the science of being, the first of sciences, it also has the primacy among them. It is

the science of the first principles and the first causes. All other sciences have to use its conclusions; all depend on it.

According to the critical realists, however, metaphysics itself becomes dependent on epistemology. Epistemology judges it. Metaphysics only becomes a legitimate science when its legitimacy has been proved by the critical examination of epistemology. Epistemology decides whether or not it is possible to have a metaphysics. That means that metaphysics, the queen of sciences, has been dethroned by epistemology or that realism has been abandoned.

Moreover, what kind of principles is epistemology going to use in this examination if not principles of metaphysics? By shoving back metaphysics, however, to a second place, it has no right to use them. Nobody has the right to use scientific principles before their scientific value has been established.

Thus explained in simple and clear terms, the contradiction of critical realism is apparent, so apparent in fact that one can hardly believe that its adherents do not see it. They have, however, a certain vague and confused way of exposing their doctrine, about which Gilson complains; moreover they are convinced that there must be a way to conquer idealism without supposing the opposite; as it were from inside.

To this last charge, that critical realism would make metaphysics subordinate to epistemology, critical realists have an answer. They say that the relations between epistemology and metaphysics are mutual. Epistemology first establishes metaphysics as a legitimate science, but once established, metaphysics becomes the first of all sciences and judges them all, also epistemology under its aspect of treating about being. Knowledge certainly falls under the laws of being, but the first examination of knowledge must be instituted from a standpoint which as Rolland Gosselin says, "is outside every metaphysical presupposition".[1]

Ultimately this second objection of Gilson against critical realism, that it destroys the unconditional primacy of metaphysics, has the same ground as his first. This second thesis can be brought back to the same dilemma we saw at the end of the exposition of the first one.[2]

> If the first principle is being-- which after all is at least possible--, ens est quod primo cadit in intellectu,- every statement at once implies the affirmation of being, and decides the question in favor of realism. If on the contrary a separate discipline can be formed without positing being, thought, not being, is the first principle. In that case, the question is decided in favor of idealism. But in either instance, the decision has already been made.

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1 ibid, p. 110.

2 ibid, p. 112.

Gilson reproaches critical realists that they go too far in adapting Thomism to modern philosophies. While their purpose is to conform Thomas's perennial truth to modern times, they seem not to realize that instead of promoting it they rather endanger what is primary in it, i.e., its realism. It is a sign that modern thought has been profoundly contaminated and corrupted by Kant's critique, that outstanding Thomists do not see the implications of a non-realistic standpoint at the entrance of philosophy. The endeavours to refute idealism by using its own method must certainly be praised. But the thing just can't be done. It is impossible. Though many answers have been given by Thomists since the beginning of neo-scholasticism, none of them have proved to be satisfactory. They either water down their critique so that they only seem to use the same method as idealists whereas they really do not, or they have a real critique but become entangled in many insoluble problems. Critical realism misses the clarity which is a characteristic of Thomism, as it is a characteristic of truth. This might have led its defenders to a suspicion of its lawfulness.

There must, therefore, be another answer to idealism and another way out of the problem of knowledge. These are Gilson's conclusions in the negative part of Réalisme Thomiste.

CHAPTER II
AN ESTIMATE OF GILSON'S CRITICISM

If Gilson is correct in his criticism, modern Thomism is suffering from a serious malady. Almost the whole of it would seem to be infected with the disease of idealism. And that is exactly what Gilson says. In his preface to Réalisme Thomiste, he speaks of Thomism as presented by some modern Thomists, as being in "a state of advanced decomposition".[1] Although he applies this phrase of the introduction only to certain modern Thomists,[2] the body of the book makes clear that it applies, in Gilson's thinking, to the leaders of contemporary Thomism. Critical realism is, according to Jolivet,[3] the common teaching of Thomists today. Certainly, they use the word "critique" freely, quite unaware, it would seem, of its dangerous implications. As Gilson puts it, "they are playing with dynamite".[4]

Thomistic thinkers are by no means infallible, not even as a whole. But it is difficult to believe that they, as a group, would have fallen into the serious blunder of which

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1 ibid, p. 7.

2 ibid, p. 7

3 R. Jolivet, Le Thomisme et la Critique de la Connaissance, Paris, 1933, p. 29.

4 E. Gilson Réalisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance, p. 67.

Gilson accuses them, and then persisted in the same blunder for almost 50 years, teaching it in their schools and developing it in their "critiques of knowledge", while all the time none of them was aware of the fact that he was undermining Thomism instead of promoting it. Moreover, Gilson's criticism is neither so subtle nor so profound that it could possibly have escaped clear thinkers.

He himself says that it surprises him that it did, and he thinks the reason is that Thomists were too preoccupied with defending realism against idealism in a way acceptable to idealists. Their eagerness must have made them lose sight of the danger.

The facts are, however, that Thomists have always been aware of the danger of idealism. A study of epistemologies made at least professedly ad mentem divi Thomae, such as Van Riet's L'Epistemologie Thomiste, shows that they became gradually more purified of dangerous elements, which they certainly contained in their early stages.

In the first stage Thomists adapted themselves too much to idealistic positions. They started from an idealistic point of departure, or they invoked the principle of causality like Descartes,[1] to arrive at reality. But these were the first hesitant attempts of a philosophy searching for a solution

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1 e. gr. Cardinal Mercier, Reinstadler, Frick

to a new problem. Eventually, the suspect elements were eliminated, and Thomism found the proper approach to the epistemological problem. Though all the Thomistic solutions to the epistemological problem are not identical, all have a substantial unity. In their main points, i.e., their methods (critical approach) and conclusions (immediate realism), most Thomists today are in complete agreement.

Properly to evaluate Gilson's criticism, we must know exactly what he understands by "critique". According to his understanding of the term, it cannot be reconciled with realism. The two words are not compatible. "Critical realism" is a contradiction in terms.[1]

But "critique" is not an easy word to define, Gilson says.[2] However, if it means anything, it must mean a certain judgment. The greek word, indeed, means "to judge, to decide in a cause, to discern". In epistemology, therefore, it must mean, to pronounce a judgment on the activity of the intellect or on human knowledge in general. A judgment, however, has no value if the judge is prejudiced, if he has already decided beforehand what he is going to say. All the testimonies of defendants and the pleas of lawyers are useless in that case.

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1 E. Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance, p. 77.

2 ibid, P. 41.

Such a judgment is not a judgment; it is only a farce.

In human knowledge we have the same case. Either we take as our point of departure realism, but then the critique has already been decided beforehand and is no more than a farce, or we take a point of departure prior to realism. In that case we have a real critique, but we will never again arrive at realism.

The very word critique implies a point of departure other than and prior to its term. If the term is realism, the point of departure, therefore, must be an idealistic one.

Is this definition of critique as an a priori judgment of the value of human knowledge the only possible one? Speaking of Gilson's epistemology,[1] R. Verneaux points out that there are various other kinds of critique, as literary critique, musical critique, military critique, etc. In all these combinations the word "critique" indicates a critical estimate. It does not seem to imply that a priori element which Gilson stresses. Verneaux wants, therefore, to see the critical approach maintained.

To this Gilson certainly would answer that in these combinations the question is a quite different one. In the case of literary critique, e.g., it is assumed that there are

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1 Etienne Gilson, Philosophe de la Chrétienté, p. 223.

literary values. These are taken as a criterion or rule to find out whether a given work of literature or an author has any value in that field and how much. In the case of a critique of knowledge, however, nothing has been established yet. The question is about the very first judgment about human knowledge, to find out whether it has any value or not in regard to a possible extramental world. In such a judgment nothing can be presupposed. It certainly cannot assume the truth of a realism which it is asked to establish.

Once the value of human knowledge has been established there is room for critique to determine the various degrees of value of the different kinds of knowledge. Gilson agrees with that. He says: "Realism does not refuse a critique of knowledges, on the contrary it accepts it, it asks for it; but it refuses any a priori critique of knowledge".[1] This critique of the different kinds of knowledge to determine their degrees of value in attaining extramental reality can be compared with literary, musical, military critique, etc., but the first critique certainly cannot.

Nevertheless the question can be asked, whether a critique of knowledge, because it must be an impartial judgment, cannot start from realism. A judge who is convinced

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1 E. Gilson, Le Réalisme Méthodique, p. 81.

of the innocence or guilt of a party can still pronounce a perfectly impartial judgment. It all depends on whether he lets his previous conviction play a part in his judgment or not. If his decision is already made beforehand, and he is determined to stick to it, whatever evidence may be brought forth by defendant or lawyer, his is certainly not an impartial judgment. But a judge, on the other hand, who, although he is convinced of the innocence of the defendant, is prepared to listen to all the evidence that will be brought forth against him and to pass his sentence according to it, cannot be reproached for being partial.

The critique of knowledge seems to provide a similar case. Although a Thomistic philosopher is a realist, if he does not let his realism influence his investigation, but is prepared to accept the result of an impartial judgment, his seems to be a perfectly acceptable critique.

Starting this investigation he is a realist, but not qua philosopher. His is the realism of the common man in every day life, which is certainly not philosophically founded. It is the same case as with the judge, who is starting with a completely open mind qua judge. In the reflection itself, the philosopher as a philosopher does not "suppose anything, not even realism".[1] His initial attitude is "outside the plan of

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1 L. Noël, Revue Néoscolastique, 1940, p. 54.

philosophical research".[1] Philosophically speaking it is a hypothesis for him.

All Thomists stress the necessity of this impartiality. Thus Van Steenberghen says in his Epistemology: "Epistemology is an objective and disinterested inquiry; it studies the nature, conditions and value of knowledge without deciding beforehand what the results and consequences of its study will be".[2]

Monsignor Noël writes in the same strain when he defines the purpose of the critical method as:

> "To try to give to philosophy an incontestable point of departure, on the matter of which no further question can be asked; the critical method refuses no question and dispenses with all presuppositions. "Radical sincerity" is necessary to oppose this attitude to the one which has been practised by so many dogmastistic systems, which ask that there be forbidden questions and which try to impose upon the mind the acceptation of indisputable prejudgments".[3]

The critical method dispenses with all presuppositions", means that it starts with the fact of human knowledge without anything else. On the existence of human knowledge everybody agrees. Investigating this knowledge the critical method refuses any interference from whatsoever. It does not start with a certain definition of that knowledge. It neither asserts that it excludes reality (the idealistic position)

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1 ibid, p. 41.

2 Van Steenberghen, Epistemology, p. 21.

3 L. Noël, Le Réalisme Immédiat, Louvain, 1938, p. 134.

neither that it includes it (the dogmatic position) but takes human knowledge simply as it presents itself, with a totally unbiased mind.

According to Maritain the critical question is: "While thought presents itself from the first as guaranteed by reality (assurée sur les choses) and measured by an esse independent of thought itself, how is one to judge if, how, under which conditions and in what measure it is that way".[1]

Rolland Gosselin speaks in the same wise: "Critique will take as matter of its examination knowledge as it presents itself spontaneously; it will study this knowledge in the free play of its development but will reserve the question of its value for a philosophical reflexion".[2]

They all accept as their starting point knowledge as it presents itself, that is knowledge which is about extramental things, but they all stress the necessity of impartiality and objectivity in the critical examination. Knowledge as it presents itself is realistic. This is the realism of the man on the street, the unphilosophical or naive realism.

Gilson's criticism would be; how can it be a real demonstration of realism if the point of departure is already realistic? How can a realistic point of departure ever be

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1 J. Maritain, Les Degrées du Savor, Paris,1932, p. 142 (trad. The Degrees of Knowledge, New York, 1938, p. 89.

2 M. Rolland Gosselin, Essai d une Etude Critique de la Connaissance, Paris, 1932, p. 14.

called an impartial or objective one?

The answer to the first question is that there is no real demonstration in the sense of a demonstration which can be put in a syllogism. The value of knowledge cannot be proved that way. The critical realists agree on that. "Realism cannot be demonstrated", says Msgr. Noël.[1]

The critical investigation which takes place by means of reflexion is nothing else and cannot be anything else than a becoming conscious of something which already was there, and of which the intellect was already somewhat conscious in a vague and unscientific way.

Everybody knows that intellectual knowledge reveals truth about extramental things. The intellect presents its knowledge as such. This is the knowledge of the ordinary man. He is conscious that he knows extramental things. But this is not a scientifically founded knowledge. He never examined it. And in fact, it might happen, that, when he met an idealist who showed him the difficulties that arise from thinking that knowledge deals with the extramental world, he would start doubting whether it does so at all. Therefore, philosophers start an impartial and objective examination of this common consciousness in order to investigate if there is really a foundation for it.

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1 L. Noël, Le Réalism Immédiat, p. 27.

Noël put it very clearly in a lecture he gave at the Sixth International Congress for Philosophy at Harvard in 1926.

> "Every judgment implies a comparison between thought and things. It also implies an elementary reflexion which makes that comparison and formulates its results. Epistemology has nothing more to do than to retrace in explicit and technical terms the steps of that elementary reflexion".[1]

The affirmation that the intellect attains reality is always there but it is not a critically examined affirmation. As a basis for science or philosophy it is useless. It can easily be shaken by doubt. Scientifically considered, it is no more than an hypothesis. Another hypothesis is idealism. When an examination has been instituted, this examination by way of a reflexion shows that the former popular conviction was right. After this critical reflexion the affirmation is definite and provides a sound base for further speculation.

During all the time of the critical investigation the philosopher remains certain of realism, but this certitude is outside his philosophical inquiry, as Noël explains in his answer to Gilson. It is a natural and instinctive certitude or an attachment to tradition, but philosophically me may be said to be not certain.[2] Scientifically we may say that there is doubt.

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1 ibid, p. 273

2 Revue Néos-Scolastique, 1940, p. 51

Space prevents us from treating extensively this question of doubt, but nevertheless we must say something about it, as it is intimately connected with this impartial attitude at the beginning of the epistemological question.

Some authors indeed mean nothing else by their doubt than this objectivity or impartiality to be observed in the investigation. Msgr. Farges defines his doubt as "a mere abstaining from taking sides in order to make our examination absolutely impartial".[1]

This bringing in of the term "doubt" may have been misleading and have caused the impression that they borrowed more from idealists than they actually did. The term "doubt" moreover underwent quite a series of changes in its use by Thomistic epistemologists, and we do not want to prove that it did not have, at least in some of them, a greater element of idealistic thought than was justifiable in a realistic philosophy.

However, doubt or no doubt, the impartiality of the investigation was the thing that really counted, and doubt may have been stressed too much just because of the importance of the objectivity. There was a time when the question of doubt seemed to be the all important question of epistemology, and countless were the contributions written about it. Now Van Riet's conclusion is that the question of doubt is "a mere

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1 Van Riet, Epistemologie, p. 232.

question of words which has held too long the attention of the Thomistic epistemologists and which would deserve to be definitely dropped from critical discussions".[1]

The main point is that this critical examination, though it is not a demonstration in the strict sense of the word, nevertheless, proves realism by way of a reflexion, making it a scientifically justified conviction. The reflexion is "since the time of Plato and Aristotle a classical procedure of scientific inquiry".[2] It is a real judgment of what takes place in one's consciousness in order to determine the validity of knowledge.

Gilson says in his Réalisme Thomiste that not every reflexion has to be critical and that Msgr. Noël is wrong in supposing that it does: "it is certainly a poor critique, which consists in the becoming conscious of the fact, that what was immediately evident for thought, was indeed immediately evident".[3] Gilson here oversimplifies the teaching of the critical realists. The reflexion does do something more, viz. it is a real judgment on the value of knowledge, and gives a scientific base to realism. Because of that it can be rightly called a critique. It certainly confirms the realism of the intellectual act, but this confirmation is not just a simple

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1 ibid, p. 637 - See also p. 338

2 Van Steenberghen, Epistemology, p. 32

3 E. Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste, p. 75

repetition. It is a scientific judgment, and raises knowledge to a higher level, makes it an appropriate base for metaphysical speculation.

The philosopher does not have to take for his critical investigation the mere concept, abstracting from its relation to reality. The concept as such is not that which the mind naturally presents to us. The intellect always presents its knowledge as the knowledge of something; at the same time that the concept is presented, reality is presented in the idea. As St. Thomas says:

> "Species intelligibiles, quibus intellectus possibilis fit in actu, non sunt objectum intellectus. Non enim se habent ad intellectum sicut quod intelligitur, sed sicut quo intelligit. Manifestum est enim quod scientiaesunt de his quae intellectus intelligit. Sunt autem scientiae de rebus, non de speciebus, vel intentionibus intelligibilbus.[1]

The concept as such without that relation is something which has already been worked upon; it is not the first datum. The concept as such is, therefore, not an impartial or objective point of departure for a critical examination. The natural data of the intellect have already been interpreted by the mind. The mind is no longer an unbiased observer and interpreter of what the intellect presents to it.

The object of examination is the concept as it presents itself, with its whole content. But the concept is

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1 St. Thomas In lib. de Anima, III, lect.8

nothing else than "a thing in us". "Its first claim" as Maritain says, "is to be nothing else but the thing itself, the extramental being, the ontological object, transported into us".[1] Spontaneously every intellect is realistic. We could not take another starting point without ceasing to be objective. "The thing is given at the same time as the object and through it, and it is absurd to want to separate it".[2]

This does not mean, however, that we already are sure of the results of our inquiry at the beginning. Our startingpoint is the realistic one, but our conclusion might theoretically well be idealistic, as far as our initial attitude is concerned. Other considerations may prove the impossibility of it. What we want to stress is that we do not prejudge the case. There is no prejudice whatsoever as to the results of the inquiry. They depend on what the critical examination shows us. The result of the investigation will be the facts that we find the initial and spontaneous realism of our intellect really justified. After the reflexion we know explicite and in actu signato what every act of the intellect teaches us implicite and exercite.[3]

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1 J. Maritain, Réflexions sur l' Intelligence, Paris, 1930, p. 42.

2 J. Maritain, Les Degrées du Savor, p. 181

3 Ch. Boyer, Cuasus Philosophicus, I, p. 113

Not only is the realistic point of departure not a partial one, but it appears the only impartial one. The idealists are the ones who corrupted the question by deviating from the original data.

Thomistic critical realism offers a "true and complete apology for knowledge, which founds a realism, not a naive realism, nor a neo or paleo-realism, but the eternal realism, eternal like truth itself",

This reflexion also seems to be a real judgment. Although the judge himself is a realist, he is, however, ready to give up his realism if the inquiry leads him to it. Being a realist might lead him to invincible difficulties; it might make knowledge altogether incomprehensible. He wants to institute an unbiased investigation. The intellect tells him that it talks about extramental reality, but is this so? Could not it be that this was an illusion? Indeed many serious philosophers, some of them after a lifetime of study, think it is. Are they wrong? This is what the philosopher wants to find out. Therefore, he wants to examine the activity of the intellect and pronounce a judgment. It is, therefore, a real critique, a real judgment. This word critique is not more or less meaningless in Thomistic critical realism, as Gilson seems to hold.

Far from using the word critique only or mainly for apologetical reasons, the Thomistic critical realists use it

in the meaning it had first in idealistic thinkers, i.e., in the meaning of an impartial judgment of human knowledge. They think that this critique is a good element in idealism and in taking it and incorporating in into Thomism they believe they are contributing towards the progress of Thomism. They think that Gilson's dictum: He who starts with Kant or Descartes is bound to end up with Kant or Descartes is only partially true. Idealists like all other philosophers are not wrong all the way through. Among them are some of the most gifted philosophers of all times. There certainly are elements in them which can be used.

Modern Thomists, moreover, are aware of the danger lurking in a question which concerns the validity itself of philosophy, a danger more serious here than in other branches of philosophy. A misstep, the insertion of a wrong principle would endanger the life of philosophy itself. And not only that, but it would have consequences for revelation as well.

Still they think that Descartes and Kant made their contribution to the evolution of human thought, that they brought something into philosophy, which had not been there before, which may give man a fuller understanding of truth. And although it did not do so in the systems of Descartes and Kant themselves, because it was mixed with too much error, still the element is there. And while their own systems only show deficiencies and failure, their true greatness appears in

Thomism when their contributions are used for the fuller unfolding of truth. As Msgr. Noël says: "Descartes and Kant once and for all taught philosophy something which constitutes an essential progress of human thought".[1]

Take the case of Descartes. Undoubtedly he is the Father of modern Idealism. As Gilson points out, idealism was born on the day when he decided that the mathematical method should be the method of philosophy.[2] The mathematical method proceeds from thought, not from reality. It abstracts from concrete reality. By taking this method, therefore, Descartes loosened the bond of thought with reality and the gap which was thus opened between reality and thought was to grow wider and wider. Instead of taking as his point of departure that with which and in which was the object is given, the natural presentation of the intellect, he first severed thought from its object and then made this artificial statement his point of departure.

This is the mistake of Descartes. But this has nothing to do with the question as such. Descartes was right in asking the question whether the intellect was an instrument fit to attain truth. In his time, the period of decline of scholastic philosophy, there certainly seems to have been reason to put the question. He was right in looking for an

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1 L. Noël, Le Réalisme Immédiat, p. 23.
2 E. Gilson, The Unity of Philosophical Experience, New York, 193 p. ch. VII.

incontestable point of departure for metaphysical speculation. He could have been right, also, in taking cogito as his point of departure, though in his assertion that the cogito is the only lawful point of departure, his error already becomes manifest. Reality is implied in every thought, not only in the thought which has the self as its object. But Descartes had a wrong notion of thought and, therefore, he put a legitimate question the wrong way.

> His mathematical preoccupation had made him lose the natural notion of knowledge, for "knowledge as it appears immediately to itself is consciousness.. is an act which is dominated by an object. It is an activity marked by receptivity and even by passivity. It is a spiritual consciousness which, through corporeal organs, opens on a corporeal world".[1]

For Descartes knowledge is not open, it is closed. Still, as Noël explains, in his first work he seems to have had another notion. There he speaks about thought containing reality.[2] In this early stage his critical inquiry would have led him to a realistic philosophy. But gradually thought and reality grew farther and farther apart. In this stage there was logically no escape from idealism.

The fault is not in his question, which was a legitimate one but in his trying to solve it from a prejudiced point

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1 Van Steenberghen, Epistemology, p. 147.

2 L. Noël, Le Réalisme Immédiat, p. 43-46, where we find a substantial citation from Descartes, analysed by Msgr. Noël.

of view. The question can be solved by one who approaches it in an unbiased way, taking thought with what it implies, the object. "Not even for one moment does the critial realist face certitudes which might be purely subjective, i.e., without an object".[1]

In Descartes we must distinguish that in which he was right from that in which he was wrong. It does not seem necessary to borrow the wrong with the right. Critical realists, thought some of them went too far in the beginning, think that they can raise his question, about the validity of human knowledge, without giving the same answer, because the answer was not caused by the question but by approaching it in a prejudiced way.

Though we should not forget the enormous damage Descartes inflicted upon modern philosophy in being the trailblazer of idealism, we can also agree with Noël when he says: "We believe that Descartes rendered a real service to the progress of thought".[2]

What is true of Descartes is true also of Kant, who marked the second stage of idealism, the stage in which idealism became conscious of itself. More explicitly than Descartes,

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1 J. de Tonquedec, Critique de la Connaissance p. 441.

2 L. Noël, Le Réalisme Immédiat, p. 134.

Kant raised the question of the validity of human knowledge. But whereas Descartes was influenced by mathematics, Kant's preference went to physics. He wanted to give philosophy the same stability as science had. Only synthetical a priori judgments, he claims, can give it this stability. Therefore, Kant's question is limited to the possibility and conditions of a priori judgments. More clearly than in the case of Descartes, we can see that Kant's standpoint was the idealistic one. Synthetical a priori judgments are judgments which by definition have only a very limited relation to reality. They are constructions of the mind in which the role of the object is a minor one.

We are not surprised to hear that this investigation led to idealism. It is idealistic from the beginning. Here again the fault lies not in the question but in approaching the question with a prejudiced mind. Thomists can raise the Kantian question, make a critical examination of the power of reason, make reason its own judge.

It was lack of knowledge of traditional realism that made Descartes and Kant put the question the wrong way. But it certainly is not true, that he who puts the Kantian question, has to give the Kantian answer, as Gilson says.[1]

When Fr. Régis writes that the Cartesian and Kantian positions are "consequences which result from a metaphysical

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1 E. Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste, p. 108.

postulate as to the nature of the real",[1] we entirely agree with him but we do not see how this should forbid us to consider the same problems as Descartes and Kant. What he says is that they brought metaphysical postulates-- elements which they did not prove and could not prove, because they were idealistic-- into the problem, and by doing so corrupted the issue. But in pointing out their error in not treating a question the way it should be treated, in not taking an impartial objective attitude towards it, he does not condemn the question itself.

This is indeed the distinction that has to be made between the question and the method by which it should be answered on the one hand, and the solution on the other. It is very well possible (and in the case of Descartes it has indeed happened) that other elements have crept in. Neither the question itself nor the method of critical investigation can be held responsible for their idealistic solution. The fault lies in certain presuppositions, in a prejudiced attitude, implied neither in the question itself, nor in the method. Critical realists agree that they raise the same problems as Descartes and Kant, and they also take their method (the search for an incontestable point of departure in philosophy, the impartiality of Descartes, be it called doubt or not, and the critical examination of knowledge of Kant);

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1 L. M. Régis, St. Thomas and Epistomology, p.85

but they claim immunity from Cartesian and Kantian errors, because these are not necessarily connected either with the question itself nor with their methods, but were "the results of metaphysical postulates, as to the nature of the real". They followed from a wrong notion of knowledge which was already there when they approached the question, and vitiated the solution.

When Régis writes that he calls attention to the oppositions and irreconcilability of Thomism and Idealism,[1] everybody agrees with him. All critical realists know that there is a basic opposition between Idealism and Thomism. What he should prove is that those elements the critical realists borrow from idealists are contrary to Thomism. Critical realists differ from idealists even as far as the initial attitude towards the problem. An overall-condemnation of idealism does not hit the positions of the critical realists.

The fact that the expression "critical Realism" is not older than Kant may make it suspect, but it certainly is not reason enough to condemn it, as Gilson seems to do. To condemn the term is ultra-conservative. No Thomist should deny his system the opportunity to profit by the progress of human thought, wherever it may be found. Besides such an attitude would make Thomism appear to be an antiquated system which does

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1 ibid, p. 8.

not keep up with modern times. But, however it may appear, Thomism also really becomes poorer when it refuses to consider the problems which confront modern man.

Gilson's second objection against critical realism, viz. that it makes metaphysics dependent on epistemology, has the same foundation as his first one. Taking as his starting point his definition of critique, he says there must be an unbridgable gap between metaphysics and epistemology. Epistemology is the a priori investigation of the power of human knowledge. No realistic principles can be used in it, because that would make the investigation worthless. A science, however, prior to the science of being, is a contradiction to a Thomist.

But when one thinks that a critical examination from a realistic standpoint does not lose anything of its critical value, there is a link between metaphysics and epistemology.

In regard of the place, however which epistemology should occupy there is no agreement among Thomists. Gilson must make it part of metaphysics. Maritain, though a critical realist, makes it part of metaphysics too. He gives two reasons for this- "Epistemology supposes a long continued effort to know, not only scientific but also philosophic and psychological, logical and metaphysical".[1] Therefore,

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1 J. Maritian, Degrees of Knowledge, p. 96.

epistemology cannot be the preliminary condition of philosophy. The second reason is, that "to give epistemology a separate existence as a discipline distinct from metaphysics, is to interpose a third term between realism and idealism".[1] Although Maritain remains a critical realist, he seems to be here under the influence of Gilson. His view seems to be ambiguous, it is far from clear.

His conclusion is that there is interdependence between epistemology and metaphysics. Epistemology, according to Maritain, is prior in one order of causes, metaphysics in another, according to the principle of causae ad invicem sunt causae. That there is a certain priority of epistemology he states explicitly: "In the endeavour to posit any just ideal of speculative philosophy and of the two typically distinct degrees of knowledge it implies- the philosophy of nature and metaphysics- it is in effect necessary to treat first of all of noetics, and to establish a certain number of propositions concerned with the much more general problem of the relation between thought and reality".[2]

How can Maritain hold that there is no distinction between metaphysics and epistemology after such a statement? The distinction between the two seems indeed obvious. It is the same distinction there is among the different philosophical

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1 J. Maritain, Degrees of Knowledge, p. 92.

2 ibid, p. 98. The application of the principle of causae ad invicem is explained on p. 79.62.

disciplines, as cosmology, psychology, metaphysics. All treat of being, but all consider a different aspect of that being. Metaphysics is a scientific investigation into the nature of being, what being is; epistemology is an investigation into the question whether our intellect attains being or not. Its question can be said the question whether being is the object of the intellect. Metaphysics has for its object the question quid sit, what being, the object of the intellect, is, and epistemology the question an sit, whether being is the object of the intellect. It is clear that epistemology is prior to metaphysics because metaphysics starts with the presupposition that being is the object of the intellect, a question which is solved by epistemology.

> Therefore, we cannot agree with Régis when he says: "The whole neo-scholastic epistemological problem consists precisely in establishing that the knowledge of common sense is true, i.e., that it has a certain being as its object. But it belongs to metaphysics to define being as being and its diverse modes; and that is why it belongs to metaphysics to establish the realism of common sense".[1]

If metaphysics considers being as being and its diverse modes, it does not consider the relation between being and knowledge. Therefore, epistemology which considers that relation is a discipline distinct from metaphysics. Certainly, the object of epistemology is not something outside being; but

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1 L. M. Régis, St. Thomas and Epistemology, p. 77.

then the object of any science cannot be outside being. This argument, then, would prove that there is only one discipline, i.e., metaphysics.

Neither is epistemology part of psychology. Both have the same material object viz. human knowledge; but whereas psychology considers human knowledge under the aspect of its structure, epistemology considers its value. They differ in their formal object.

Psychology analyses the acts of knowledge, inquires into their ontological structure. Epistemology considers the acts of knowledge from another standpoint. It does not consider those acts in themselves, but in their relation to something else, i.e., the extramental world. It tries to investigate what, if any, is the relation of our knowledge to extramental being.

Psychology and epistemology are different disciplines of philosophy. They have their different fields of observation. It may happen that in a certain era one is highly developed while there are hardly any vestiges at all of the other. Medieval Thomists show this picture. The advanced stage of their psychology should not persuade us to put them on the list of epistemologists. Van Steenberghen seems to have made this mistake, as was pointed out in the introduction.[1]

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1 Introduction, p.4

Psychology and epistemology are not so independent, however, that the teachings of psychology do not have any influence on epistemology. On the contrary, there is an intimate connection between the two disciplines. So much so, that a special psychological explanation of the structure of the act of knowledge, can make a realistic epistemology impossible. Mercier was not entirely wrong when he treated epistemology as a part of psychology.

At the root of the Cartesian and Kantian epistemological errors we find misconceptions about human knowledge which pertain to psychology. Misunderstanding of the mechanic of the human intellect made them go astray in the field of epistemology. These disciplines are interrelated. They depend on one another. A mistake made in one must necessarily lead to false conclusions in the other also. But that does not prevent us from calling them different disciplines, since they all have their own field of activity, their own formal object, sometimes even their own method by which they differ one from another.

There is another discipline with which epistemology is related, viz. logic. It has even been called Logica Major. But for the same reason that it is no part of metaphysics or psychology, it is no part of logic either. The object of logic is human knowledge but it does not consider this knowledge in its relation with reality, but merely in itself. It is a

practical science and its purpose is to find the rules which have to be observed in order to arrive at correct knowledge. It comprises the technical part of knowledge. It sees knowledge as an instrument and it teaches man how to use this instrument in a correct way. It does not investigate in the value of human knowledge, but takes that for granted.

Epistemology is not a practical science but a speculative one. Its end is not to teach rules but to prove a theory. Incidentally, the special epistemology (in contradistinction to general epistemology) provides also rules to be observed in the different kinds of knowledge, because it lays down the conditions under which these various kinds of knowledge are trustworthy. Its only end, however, is to justify the knowledge itself.

Epistemology, psychology and logic are similar in their material object which is human knowledge, but they differ in their formal object, the aspect under which they consider this knowledge. Psychology considers its nature or ontological structure; logic its technical structure in order to find rules for its correct use; epistemology considers not its structure but its value. Therein it differs both from psychology and logic. Therefore, it is better not to call it Logica Major or Psychology but to give it its own name of Epistemology. It is a discipline different from all other philosophical disciplines.

As for the place it should occupy among them, even those authors who do not want to call it a discipline different from metaphysics want to see it treated at the beginning of metaphysics.

This goes without saying. The question 'an sit' always must come before the question 'quid sit'. Epistemology treats about the question 'an sit', whether being is the object of human knowledge. The scientific value of human knowledge-whether human knowledge attains reality has to be established before this same human knowledge is used in scientific investigation. That this can be done without calling in question naive realism has been shown already. First epistemology scientifically establishes the fact that human knowledge teaches us about being, afterwards metaphysics tells us what being is. But must we not know what being is before we can find out that the human intellect really attains it, ask those who side with Gilson? Must not we first establish that our intellect is a fit instrument to lead us to being, is the question of the critical realists.

This is the same problem which appears everywhere in philosophy where the question 'an sit' must be considered. How can one talk about the existence of a thing before knowing what it is? The same question arises in natural theology where the existence of God has to be proved before the question who He is, and the difficulty is how this can be done.

So in epistemology the question is whether human knowledge attains being; and this question has to be treated before metaphysics, which treats about that being. The solution to this problem is that we need not have made a metaphysical inquiry into the nature of being. A common knowledge of what being is, is sufficient to tackle the problem. The treatise of metaphysics later will certainly clarify what has been treated in epistemology, in the same way as the treatise about God's nature in natural theology will clarify what has been said in the first chapter where His existence was being proved. Epistemology sheds its light upon metaphysics and metaphysics does the same for epistemology, because they are interrelated.

Metaphysics does not seem to be necessary for epistemology. What is required is only a common non-scientific knowledge of reality (being) and an impartial attitude, which, as has been shown, implies a realistic position.

Does not this then destroy the primacy of metaphysics? By no means. What do we understand by the primacy of metaphysics? Primacy of metaphysics means that metaphysics, because it treats of being, which is the first and deepest notion, covers the field of all other sciences in a way. They all consider being under some special aspect; metaphysics considers it as being. Therefore, metaphysics sheds its light on all other sciences. Metaphysics is the queen of sciences.

In a certain way all other sciences are dependent on metaphysics, as metaphysics gives the ultimate explanation of all reality. In this epistemology which treats of being like the other ones, is dependent on metaphysics also. But from another point of view the dependence may well be the other way. The specific question for epistemology is not about being as being, but about its relations to knowledge. The very existence of metaphysics depends on these relations. This is the interrelation of the sciences which is possible because of the different kinds of causality, causae ad invicem sunt causae.

Metaphysics and epistemology are interrelated; but, in the order of being, metaphysics certainly has the primacy over epistemology as over all other sciences.

The conclusion is that there seems to be no contradiction here either. As already was being pointed out, the main error of Gilson is a wrong notion of critique. This seems to be the beginning of the whole trouble.

Maybe it is possible to find a still more profound reason of Gilson's error. Van Steenberghen points out that Gilson defines being as that which is ontologically independent of consciousness. "Gilson is wrong in taking "real" to mean something ontologically independent of consciousness and opposing it on that accountto the cogito. Everything is real, including the cogito. The distinction of an objective real

from a subjective real is given just as immediately as the dominating character of the object. But the ontological independence of the objective real, with respect to the subject is not at all evident".[1] All this seems to be very much a question of stress. Gilson never says explicity that the idea has no reality, but when he speaks about reality he means extramental reality, independent of the idea, the object as such, and not the object as object. He opposes too much thought and reality. According to him the danger is "exalter la réalite des idées".[2] This had its repercussions on his solution of the epistemological problem, according to Van Steenberghen.

The only sound point of departure for a Thomistic epistemology is the concept as the intellect presents it, the concept which has not yet been worked upon by philosophers. This concept is presented not only as a form of the mind, but as a form which has a definite content. This concept provides a base for a critical investigation of human knowledge which must satisfy everybody who is not prejudiced. As the case of the idealists and, in the Thomistic camp, of Gilson shows, however, it seems to be extremely difficult to adhere to this impartial point of departure.

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1 F. V. Steenberghen, Epistemology, p. 97.

2 E. Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste, p. 75, also p. 177 note.

CHAPTER III

GILSON'S POSITIVE EPISTEMOLOGY

If, as Gilson claims, there cannot be a critical approach to the epistemological question, is there really an epistemological question left? It would seem that one either has to institute a critical investigation into the relations between knowledge and reality or make a postulate out of them. The statement that there is no place for a critique, for a judgment of knowledge in realism, that realism is indefensible, seems to leave no other possibility but to accept realism as a postulate.

Gilson seems to hold something like this in his Le Réalisme Méthodique. There he says: "We see no other alternative now-a-days than to give up all metaphysics or come back to a pre-critical realism".[1] A few pages before he had stated: "Scholasticism affirms the existence of an object, distinct from the subject, more like a postulate than like a conclusion".[2] Indeed there seems to be no alternative than this, for where is the epistemological problem, if one has to accept realism as a postulate?

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1 E. Gilson, Le Réalisme Méthodique, p. 15.

2 ibid, p. 10.

Noël drew this conclusion in his paper on Thomistic Epistemology at the Second International Thomistic Congress at Rome in November 1936. There he stated:

> "The legitimacy of epistemology has been called into question by outstanding thinkers.. One must reject every epistemology, get rid of the problem of knowledge which is only a false problem",[1]

The context of this statement pointed toward Gilson, and in his Réalisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance the latter defended himself and said that he did not deny the legitimacy or necessity of epistemology, but only Msgr. Noël's method in epistemology.[2] He says: "It is evident that every philosophy can and must ask itself about the problem of knowledge. Plato, Aristotle, Saint Thomas and many thinkers of the Middle Ages did the same.[3] There is a real problem of knowledge, but the solution has to be given in metaphysics. There is no real epistemology as a discipline distinct from metaphysics. On the other hand, he says also in Réalisme Thomiste that the existence of the extramental world is no problem. The fact that some philosophers make it a problem, does not mean that it is a real problem. The existence of the extramental world is evident. It cannot be denied except by those who view it from a wrong position and don't admit its

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1 L. Noël, Le Réalisme Immédiat, p. 282.

2 E. Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste, p. 36 note.

3 ibid, p. 84.

evidence.[1]" But then one asks oneself, if the existence of the extramental world is not a problem, what then is the epistemological problem, which Gilson says does exist? Is not the epistemological problem the question whether our knowledge really attains extramental reality, as it says it does? And does not this mean the question of the existence of the extramental world? For is it not our knowledge which unites us with the extramental world?

In Réalisme Thomiste Gilson explicitly denies that realism is a mere postulate. He defines a postulate as a proposition which one is asked to admit as true, but which is neither evident nor demonstrable".[2] For a realist the existence of extramental reality is evident and, therefore, cannot be a postulate.

Gilson's position in epistemology has not been the same from the beginning, as has been indicated already. There is progress, even between the two books of 1936 and 1939. His attitude toward realism has changed. This is evident even from the titles. While the first is called Methodical Realism, which words do not leave any doubt about the intentions of the author but indicate what is going to be defended, the second book is just plain Thomistic Realism.

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1 ibid, p. 235.

2 ibid, p. 194.

Gilson's changes are misleading even for his followers. Thus Fr. G. Smith writes in the Maritain volume of the Thomist: "As to the issue itself, - do we or do we not know existents, - it is one whose resolution is anterior to demonstration and self-evidence. It cannot be proved, disproved, named self-evident or a postulate".[1]

This is mixing up Gilson's opinions of the various periods. He always held that it could not be demonstrated,- and so do the critical realists, - but whereas he considered it more as a postulate or a method to be used in his Le Réalisme Méthodique, in his Réalisme Thomiste the stress falls on the evidence. Moreover if a thing cannot be demonstrated, and is not evident either, and cannot be accepted as a postulate, what else is left?

As we did in the first chapter we shall treat the two books apart and give first an explanation of Gilson's epistemology as it can be found in his Le Réalisme Méthodique, and then as it appears in Réalisme Thomiste.

LE REALISME METHODIQUE

Gilson wants to go back to the position of Thomism before modern times, because Thomism in modern times has deviated by looking too much to idealism. What were these ancient Thomists and St. Thomas himself? Undoubtedly they were realists. Theirs was the sound realism of a healthy reason not

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1 The Thomist Maritain Volume p. 248.

yet corrupted by modern decadence. They never asked themselves the question whether the intellect was an apt instrument to teach them about reality. Their realism was, as Gilson says, precritical. It certainly was not a conclusion after a scientific investigation into the structure and activity of the intellect. It was more of a postulate. One can say that St. Thomas' method in philosophy was realism; a method about which he did not ask himself any questions.

Gilson wants to go back to this attitude, using realism merely as a method. Therefore, he gives his book the title Le Réalisme Méthodique or Methodical Realism. His concern is to flee the dangers of idealism and the refore his urging: "Back to the Middle Ages". "Scholasticism is a conscious, reflected and intended realism, but a realism which is not based on the solution of a problem, raised by idealism, because the data of this problem imply necessarily idealism as its solution".[1]

"In 1930", writes Van Riet in L'Epistémologie Thomiste, "Thomistic realism is a purely methodical realism for Mr. Gilson; it justifies itself only through considerations drawn from history".[2] This is still very much the case in 1936, the year in which Le Réalisme Méthodique appears. History shows

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1 E. Gilson, Le Réalisme Méthodique, p. 11.

2 Van Riet, L'Epistémologie Thomiste, p. 514.

that idealism does not lead to a satisfactory philosophy but on the contrary is the gateway to scepticism. Therefore, let us stick to the attitude of medieval Thomism and use realism as a method, without asking any questions. We will have to choose between methodical realism with the salvation of metaphysics on one hand, and critical realism with the ultimate loss of metaphysics on the other. The sound method is to start from realism, because metaphysics is safe with it.[1]

"Idealism shows its impotence to construct a viable philosophy".[2] Time and again Gilson insists on the sterility of modern philosophy.[3] Scholastic realism, however, is "the realism of the traveller, who proceeds towards a goal, and, seeing that he approaches it, trusts that he took the right direction".[4]

All this does not sound very convincing. His critics reproached Gilson that it looked more like pragmatism. We are realists because realism is the best foundation for a philosophy, or as Gilson says "it leads to a science as well as to a metaphysics; therefore, it is a sound method to start with".[5]

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1 E. Gilson, Le Réalisme Méthodique, p. 86.

2 ibid, p. 12

3 ibid, p. 51, 83.

4 ibid, p. 15

5 ibid, p. 86.

Practical reasons, however, never were much in favor in Thomism. True philosophy inquires into the nature of things, the ultimate causes. Truth is its criterion, not usefulness. It may very well be that a workable hypothesis turns out not to be the true one.

It seems that Gilson does not have a firm conviction at this stage. A doctrine can either be proved, or it is evident, or it has to be accepted as a hypothesis or a postulate. Gilson was sure that it could not be proved. He calls it evident, but on the other hand he does not want to stress this, because he is aware of the fact that too many serious philosophers do not see the evidence at all. It certainly is a strange thing to call a doctrine evident when it is being denied by many outstanding philosophers. There must be something wrong with the evidence. Therefore, no other alternative remained for him than to say that it was a postulate or hypothesis or method. The proof for a hypothesis, however, lies in its workability. So Gilson was brought to insert this strange element in his philosophy. He invokes a pragmatic justification for a thing he already calls evident. "Thomistic realism is based on the evidence of its principles and justifies itself by a critique of idealism which shows the impotence of this doctrine to construct a viable philosophy".[1]

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1 ibid, p. 12.

We can find the same sort of reasons, inspired by pragmatism in Régis's "St. Thomas and Epistemology". He looks for a satisfying explanation of the unity and plurality we find in the universe, and concludes by saying that idealism is wrong, because "it excludes the diversity of the real".[1] At which an idealist will probably answer: "So what? This is what the question is about". Every idealist knows that his system makes reality unique. A refutation cannot take as its point of departure the thing that has to be proved.

When Régis says that Thomistic realism is the only realism that truthfully takes account of the complexity of human knowledge,[2] everybody will agree with him, but another question is, whether it is true because of that reason. Thomistic realism is not true because it is a method of which the workability can be shown afterwards.

When somebody objects that by rejecting critical realism he is bound to become a dogmatist, Régis answers by pointing to a certain evidence: "there is a wisdom which takes account of the realistic instinct of this knowledge, of which wisdom will make manifest the part that is true".[3] Nowhere

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1 L. M. Régis, St. Thomas and Epistemology, p. 48.

2 ibid, p. 54.

3 ibid, p. 38.

else in his lecture does he explain these cryptic words. Régis's lecture shows the same mixture of realism as a method, as evident and as a workable hypothesis that we find in Gilson's Le Réalisme Méthodique.

There is not much that is positive in Le Réalisme Méthodique. Thomistic realism defends itself by showing that idealism cannot lead to metaphysics. "If idealism had succeeded in constituting a set of evident principles and proved its explicative fecundity, scholasticism would have nothing to object".[1] The justification of Thomistic realism is a negative one.

Although he mentions reflexion he does not say much about it. This is understandable. The role of reflexion in his epistemology is a minor one. He does not need reflexion as the critical realists do.

Realism is evident and its evidence is provided by a sensible intuition. "The existence of the exterior world is evident, but by the concrete and direct evidence of a sensible intuition which translates itself in an abstract and direct way into a judgment".[2]

The sensible experience guarantees the realism of our knowledge. The senses bring us into contact with extra-mental reality. This is evident. Intellectual knowledge is

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1 ibid, p. 12
2 ibid, p. 48

realistic because it is a direct translation of sense knowledge, it is based on sense knowledge, and therefore, shares in its realism. It has no evidence of itself, however, but depends on the evidence of the senses, for, as Gilson says, "the sensible intuition alone guarantees the existence of its object".[1]

This sensible evidence has to be accepted as such. It cannot be transformed into a rational deduction or induction. No demonstration is possible. That would destroy realism again.

This is all that Le Réalisme Méthodique contains in the way of a positive exposition of epistemology. No wonder that his opponents complained and asked him if there was much difference between this epistemology and accepting realism simply as a postulate. Did not Gilson himself say that he accepted it because of the disastrous consequences of idealism? The evidence did not sound very convincing.

REALISME THOMISTE

According to R. Verneaux in L'Epistémologie de M. Gilson[1] the epistemology of Gilson would consist of three parts: first a critique of the attempts of concordism, i.e., a refutation of those thinkers who defend realism by means of

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1 E. Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste, p. 195 - 196.

2 Etienne Gilson, p. 218.

a critique of knowledge. Gilson calls them concordists because they intend to reconcile Thomism with Kantian and Cartesian Idealism; secondly a critique of idealism, by showing that it is based on a mere presumption and that it necessarily leads to scepticism; thirdly a positive expostion of knowledge not defending its realism but showing how sensitive and intellectual knowledge attain reality.

Gilson's realism according to Verneaux is a methodical, dogmatic and reflexive realism. We already saw that in this second book the stress falls more on its evidence than on its being used as a method. Its being methodical was a factor of importance in Le Réalisme Méthodique, because therein Gilson saw its justification. Afterwards, however, he became more and more convinced not only of its being evident, but of the fact that its justification could be found in its being evident. It still can be called methodical realism, because the method Thomists use in their philosophy is the realistic one, but the name methodical is no longer characteristic. Realism does not find its justification in its being used as a method.

It is dogmatic realism, which means not that it is a postulate, but merely that it cannot be demonstrated. It is evident; it does not need a demonstration. Gilson calls it dogmatic in Réalisme Thomiste. "Everything can be critical in a realistic philosophy except its realism itself. That is the

true position of dogmatic realism which we defend".[1]

It is a reflexive realism, the reflexion making it a philosophical realism, distinguished from the naive realism of common sense. This reflexion, however, is not a critique; it does not establish anything, it does not differ from any other reflexion. It is the same reflexion as is being used all over philosophy.

Gilson no longer uses the pragmatic arguments he used in Le Réalisme Méthodique. Realism is not the true system because it leads us to a metaphysics, while idealism does not. Realism is true because it is evident. Still the refutation of idealism plays a very important role in his epistemology. When Gilson describes the course that an epistemology should follow he mentions first the "defense of truth against those who contest the first principles".[2]

The second thing to do, according to Gilson, is "to let the first principles appear in full light, in their evidence as principles".[3] This stage is what critical realists would call the most important part of epistemology, the epistemological problem, whether human knowledge knows extramental reality

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1 E. Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste, p. 160.

2 ibid, p. 227.

3 ibid, p. 238.

or not. " They disagree, however, in the object of the critical reflection. Some of them take the sense perception (Gény, de Tonquedec) others the intellectual judgment (Van Steenberghen, Noël) others the cogito (Picard) still others the first principles (Maritain in a way). Gilson dismisses it with saying that it is evident. And when somebody objects that if it really is evident it should be evident for everybody, he answers that even for idealists it is evident as men, but it ceases to be evident for them as philosophers. Why don't they accept the same things as philosophers as they do as men? The fact remains that it is evident, and he makes us institute a reflexion to show that our senses do not deceive us,[1] though he does not use the word reflexion.

The greater part of his epistemology is devoted to the question how to explain the fact that our faculties attain reality. In Being and Some Philosophers, which is a further development of his doctrine, he sums up his position as follows:

> "The two prerequisites to the possibility of existential judgments are that reality should include an existential act over and above its essence, and that the human mind be naturally able to grasp it.. That the human mind is able to grasp it is a fact, and if so many philosophers seem to doubt it, it is because they fail to grasp the cognitive power of judgment".[2]

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1 ibid, p. 196.

2 E. Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers, Toronto, 1949, p. 202.

«That there is an extramental reality and that the human mind can attain it are the two prerequisites. According to Gilson they are evident. The major problem of his epistemology consists in explaining <u>how</u> the mind grasps this reality, not whether the mind grasps it. Critical realists can agree with Gilson in his further expositions. When the fact has been established that the human intellect attains reality, both Gilson and the critical realists follow the same path; bot have to show <u>how</u> the mind reaches that reality, in what operation and at what point exactly.

For the following considerations it is of no importance whether one is a critical realist or not; the discussion takes place in a further stage. Our criticism of Gilson is, therefore, not affected. We maintain that he is wrong in condemning the way followed by the critical realists to establish realism and that his own position, even his final one of evidence, is an unsatisfying one, but we think that his analysis of the activity of the human intellect is profound and worth considering, although as we shall explain further on, it pertains more to psychology than to epistemology.

It belongs to metaphysics to define what reality or being is and that is, according to Gilson, why it is part of metaphysics to describe how human knowledge attains it. In the second chapter we have explained what to think of that view.

Metaphysics teaches us that the element which makes reality real is existence. Gilson's Being and Some Philosophers is devoted to that problem and he gives some very profound and revealing expositions on the matter, showing how it has been treated by the greatest thinkers throughout the history of philosophy. He points out that all those philosophies which did not accept the act of existence resulted in failures.

The act of existence then, has to be attained by human knowledge, if it would claim to attain reality. This is where the problem starts. Existence is no sensible quality. The senses perceive only the accidents, quality, quantity, etc., they never penetrate into the essence of the thing, still less into existence. The senses only teach us about the accidental properties of things.

On the other hand, our intellectual knowledge is abstract. It works with ideas, concepts. When we know man intellectually, our knowledge is true of really existing men, but it is not verified as such in any living man. Existence, however, is always concrete. There is no abstract existence. Existence is, by definition, that what makes the essence this actual concrete essense. Consequently there cannot be a conceptual abstract knowledge of existence.[1]

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1 L. M. Régis denies this in an article on Gilson's Being and Some Philosophers. Modern Schoolman 1951, p. 121.

Existence, therefore, cannot be the object of our ordinary abstract knowledge. This is precisely what St. Thomas says when he states that the object of our intellect is essences.[1] Our conceptual knowledge is about the quiddity, obtained from the phantasm by means of abstraction. Our concepts have only an intentional existence. They do not exist as such in reality.

Existence does not have a content, content being something of essence. Existence does not add anything to essence; it only makes the essence real, actual. As existence does not provide a content in the actual thing, does not add to anything to its essence, so it cannot give a content either to an intentional existence in a concept. We cannot reach existence in its concreteness in the concept.

The question, therefore, remains: how do we know existence? It cannot be known by our senses. Our senses give us knowledge only about external accidental appearances. Their knowledge is in the order of essences. As a principle of a concrete being it should come nevertheless under aperception.

The activity of the intellect on the other hand is not perceptive but conceptive. It works by making abstract concepts by means of the concrete phantasm. But existence

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1 De Spiritualibus Creaturis, A. XI. ad 7.

being the principle of a concrete thing and itself individual too, should be perceived not conceived in an abstract way.

The solution is that existence has to be apprehended in the sensible datum. "In order that a man perceive existence with his intellect, it is necessary that existence be given to him in an existent, which is perceptible to his sensibility".[1] Existence cannot be perceived otherwise than in the actually existing thing. But this thing is only presented to the knower by the senses. Therefore, in the existing thing which is present to the knower in the phantasm, the intellect must perceive its existence. This is a certain kind of an intellectual intuition, as Van Riet observes.[2] It marks a substantial development of Gilson's epistemology since Le Realisme Methodique. There he had only the sense perception as his explanation of realism; here it is a sensitive-intellectual evidence.

When does this intellectual perception of existence take place? Gilson answers: in the second activity of the intellect, the judgment. "When the concept of being is abstracted from a concrete existent perceived by the senses, the judgment which predicates existence of this existent attributes existence to it in the way the intellect sees it,

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1 E. Gilson, Realisme Thomiste, p. 215.

2 Van Riet, L'Epistemologie Thomiste, p.509, also 503-504.

i.e., in the sensible datum from which the intellect abstracts it".[1]

"We directly know perceived data as beings so that our direct knowledge of them includes an intuitive experience of their very acts of existing".[2]

It is indeed only in a judgment that the intellect affirms existence of an essence. The abstract concept "man" itself does not say anything about existence. Existence is not given with the idea, not contained in it. This required a second operation of the intellect, the judgment. Then the intellect affirms: "Man exists".

This is St. Thomas' doctrine, who writes: "Prima quidem operatio respicit ipsam naturam rei.. secunda operatio respicit ipsum esse rei".[3] But as both the essence and the existence are necessary for the real thing, so also both acts of the intellect are necessary for the complete knowledge of the thing. Only when I have a concept of a thing and in a judgment attributing existence to it can my knowledge be said to be complete. In reality they always go together, and "there are no concepts without judgments nor any judgments without concepts. Not even the simple apprehension of being can be

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1 E. Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste, p. 225-226.

2 E. Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers, p. 207.

3 Thomas Aquinas, Im Boethium, De Trinitate, qu. V, Art. 3.

without judgment".[1] Since essence and existence always go together in the world of reality, so they must also go together in the world of knowledge.

Concrete existence is not present to the intellect in its concreteness, because the union of thing known with the knower takes place by means of a species which is the abstract representation of the thing known. Still, in the judgment the intellect affirms existence; and, therefore, it must perceive it in some way. This can be in no other way than in the phantasm. There and only there, the union of the knower with the concrete thing known takes place. There must, therefore, be an intellectual intuition of concrete existence in the phantasm of the senses.

The importance of the intellectual judgment appears in this doctrine. It is the judgment which gives the ultimate perfection to our knowledge. This is entirely in accordance with St. Thomas' teachings, as Gilson points out. "The judgment is the most perfect operation of reason because it is the only one that is capable to attain--beyond the essence of beings which is apprehended by the concept-- that ipsum esse, which is known to be the very source of all reality".[2]

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1 E. Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers, p. 209.

2 E. Gilson, Le Thomisme, Ve ed, Paris, 1948

The intellect can perceive this concrete existence in the phantasm because of the unity of the knower. "Being is neither intuited by a sensibility nor understood by an intellect, but known by a man".[1] Or again, as St. Thomas says it: "Non enim proprie loquendo sensus aut intellectus cognoscit, sed homo per utrumque".[2]

Man is not divided in separate compartments which do not stand in relation with each other. A too specific consideration in psychology of the various faculties might lead us to such an opinion. The union between the faculties is not an artificial or factitious one, but the union of a living being. Philosophy should never lose sight of the concrete reality it studies.

Intellect and senses are both united in the subject. This makes it possible for us to accept this intellectual intuition which must accompany every act of intellectual knowledge.

More and more modern Thomists invoke a kind of intellectual intuition. Maritain gives a description of the states in the process of knowledge in "Existence and the Existent", in which he shows how the intuition takes place:

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1 E. Gilson, On Being and Some Philosophers, p. 106.

2 Thomas Aquinas, De Veritate Qu. 2.a-6. ad 3.

> The second stage is the "formation - in one simultaneous awakening of the intellect and the judgment, which mutually involve each other- of an idea ("this being" for simply "this thing" in which the idea of being is implicitly present) and a judgment composing the object of thought in question with the act of existing (not with the "notion" of existence but with the "act" of existing): "this thing exists or "this being exists".
> In forming this judgment the intellect, on the one hand, knows the subject as singular (indirectly and by reflexion upon the phantasms) and on the other hand, affirms that this singular subject exercises the act of existing. In other words, the intellect itself exercises upon the notion of this subject an act (the act of affirming) by which it lives intentionally the existence of the thing. This affirmation has the same content as the "judgment" of the estimative and the external sense (but in this case that content is no longer "blind" but openly revealed since it is raised to the state of intelligibility of act); and it is not by reflexion upon the phantasms that the intellect proffers the affirmation but by and in this "judgment" itself, and in this intuition of sense which it grasps by immaterialising it, in order to express it to itself. It thus reaches the actus essendi (in judging)- as it reaches essence- (in conceiving)- by the mediation of sensorial perception".[1]

The solution of the problem lies in the unity of human knowledge. When we realize that neither the senses nor the intellect knows but that man knows, that senses and intellect, though they are different faculties, are nevertheless the faculties of one living being, we can understand the relation between them.

There is a continuity from senses to intellect, a continuity that is possible because both are in the same subject.

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1 J. Maritain, Existence and the Existent, p.27

This makes it possible to understand how the intellect can reach concrete reality, while it cannot express it in a concept. The analysis of the cognitive faculties and their operations show us their structure and way of acting, and a realistic notion of man as a living being makes us understand how their combined activity grasps reality.

This positive part of his epistemology certainly shows Gilson at his best. His analysis of the intellectual knowledge is profound and clear. In a convincing way he shows where and when exactly the human intellect reaches reality.

His perfect realism is another merit of his exposition. In this regard he shows himself a true disciple of Bergson who first made European philosophy take the road back to realism. Bergson showed him, as he did Maritain and so many others, the fatal consequences of idealism, and endowed him from the start of his philosophical activities with that passion for realism which was the characteristic of his own philosophy. In Thomism, however, Gilson found a safer and more perfect realism than Bergson could give him. Thomism still developed this sense for realism, after he got thoroughly acquainted with it for realism is essential in Thomism as in no other system. Those other seekers of realism in modern times, the existentialists, also had their influence on him in making him more aware, where exactly to find this reality. The succeeding editions of Le Thomisme show this clearly as Noonan

pointed out in an excellent article in the New Scholasticism.[1]

Finally his positive epistemology is entirely based on St. Thomas. The many quotations from his works show convincingly that it is fully in conformity with the teachings of the angelic doctor. In a clearer and more explicit way than is done by St. Thomas, the stress is put on realism, for, although St. Thomas is unmistakenly a realist, realism was never a problem for him. Therefore, it is not brought into full evidence by him. Gilson presents the texts and shows their content of realism to full advantage. Idealism in its various forms made Thomists conscious of their realism. Only in the presence of the enemy truth receives its proper emphasis.

Far, then, from criticising this part of Gilson's Epistemology, we can only praise it as a real advancement of Thomistic thought. Critical realists can agree with it and will consider it as a fine achievement which fits entirely into their system. In fact, we find the same opinions as Gilson's in some of their works though not in so developed a treatment. Thus Msgr. Noël already had pointed to the intellectual intuition as a solution for the question how the intellect contacts reality: "In the reality of our psychological life, there are no two awarenesses, the one sensible, the other intellectual, but only one which is both at the same time.

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1 John Noonan. "The Existentialism of E. Gilson". New Scholasticism Oct. 1950, p. 417-438.

There is an intellectual quasi-intuition of the realities present to sensible experience".[1]

One question could be asked, however, viz. if this part of epistemology does not more belong to psychology than to epistemology. Epistemology, if it wants to be a discipline distinct from psychology, should have a different formal object. The inquiry into the value of human knowledge is, as has been shown, a question which apparently does not come under psychology. However, when we start analysing the intellectual act of knowledge to find out how it attains reality, we are already in the field of psychology, the formal object of which is the structure of the ontology of human knowledge. This is also Van Riet's opinion: "Our opinion is that the ontology of knowledge has no proper critical value, but that it transposes and interprets very well the conclusions of the description of the cognitive phenomenon in order to evaluate it. In the analysis one 'sees', in the ontology of knowledge one 'understands'.[2]

This makes us understand also why Gilson can produce so many quotations from St. Thomas, because this is psychology. As was explained, St. Thomas has a highly developed psychology, whereas it will be extremely difficult to find texts in his

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1 Cit. in: "Some Tendencies in Modern Thomism", by Dom Illtyd Trethowan. Downside Review. Spring 1949, p. 154.

2 Van Riet, Epistémologie Thomiste, p. 656.

work of a strictly epistemological character.

However, the distinction cannot be stretched too far. As the object is given in the act of knowledge and there is no act of knowledge possible without an object, epistemology and psychology cannot be entirely independent of each other. There is and always must be an intimate connection between the two. When we forget this, we fall again in the old error which was the cause of idealism, viz. considering as distinct in reality, what in real life is one. We cannot consider thought without the object which it implies, considering thought without its object made Descartes the Father of Idealism.

IV

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In the introduction to Being and Some Philosophers Gilson writes that it is false to think that "fundamental philosophical oppositions necessarily happened between truth and error, instead of being between partial truths and the whole truth".[1] The history of Christian philosophy is there to prove this statement. From the earliest days of Christianity, when the Apologists looked for confirmation of their faith in the works of Greek philosophers, philosophy has always started with an examination of the pagan philosophers (Plato and Aristotle), separating truth from error and adapting the truth in their system or building their system with its aid. There has been no more diligent searcher for truth on all places in which it could be found than the greatest of Christian Philosophers, St. Thomas Aquinas. His was certainly not the attitude of the conservative mind, which fears to agree with propositions of pagan philosophers because of the error that may be contained in their system. He was the fearless champion of truth; and it is doubtful that we will ever find out what he had to endure because of his intrepid stand. Then as well as now and in any time, the large army of the mediocre kept the field; true progress never came through the masses.

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1 E. Gilson. Being and Some Philosophers, p IX.

"It is astonishing, however, that one who in his books proves to be such a devoted disciple of the great master, and is well aware of the presence of truth amid error, deviates from this attitude in epistemology. For here he not only condemns idealism but seems unable to distinguish any element of truth in it. He seems not to be aware that idealism also, as all other erroneous systems before it, may contribute its share to the further progress of human thought. Not everything in Descartes and Kant is error. Why then condemn them completely and refuse to examine these great philosophers to see if some truth might be found in them which can be incorporated into the pattern of Thomistic philosophy?

Philosophy is a living science. There can be no going back to Plato or Aristotle or even to the Middle Ages. Truth is eternal and there is no change in it, but the human race is developing and philosophy happens to be <u>not truth</u>, but what man <u>grasps of truth</u>. Every time has its own problems. The philosophy of another time will not fit, or not fit entirely to this time.

The epistemological problem is preculiar to modern times. Whether this problem is the result of a period of decadence in the study of philosophy is not important; the only question is whether or not it is a lawful question. Gilson himself denies that he has ever said that the

epistemological problem was a false problem.[1] But if it is a lawful question, it should receive an answer from Thomistic philosophy. There can be no going back to a precritical stage.[2] Thomism has to adapt itself to the requirements of the modern mind.

That is what most Thomistic philosophers saw quite clearly and what led to critical realism. In ordinary life everybody is a realist, even the idealists are. But "what men so infallibly know qua men, they so often overlook qua philosophers".[3] But is not there then a way to show that this realism of everybody is scientifically justified? Critical realists think there is, and that is exactly the way idealists use in their attempt to prove their idealism, viz. the critical examination of human knowledge.

Emmanuel Chapman gives an excellent summary of it:

> "The crude knowledge of genuine common sense, charged with ontological densities, unrefined as yet by the special techniques of the empirical and mathematical sciences, must be defended philosophically against both the idealist and the empiricist, who will not admit any knowledge as valid other than what conforms with their preconceived notions. The philosophy of critical realism does not dismiss, nor look down upon, but justifies, what is valid in the prescientific knowledge of common sense.[4]

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1 E. Gilson, Réalisme Thomiste, p. 36-note.

2 E. Gilson, Le Réalisme Méthodique, p. 15.

3 E. Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers, p. IX.

4 E. Chapman, "To Be - That is the Answer". Maritain Volume of the Thomist, p. 152.

To institute this critical examination of our knowledge, that is what Kant and Descartes taught modern philosophy. Although they were wrong in the conclusions they drew, their error proceeded not from the question itself but from the fact that they did not approach it with an unbiased mind.

Everybody will agree that idealism is a real danger. Thomists should always be on their guard against it. It is certain that in the past some of them have gone too far in their adaptation and thereby have endangered Thomism. Nothing is more contrary to the spirit of Thomism than idealism. Although some mistakes were made when a reawakened Scholasticism was confronted for the first time with the problems of modern philosophy, the outstanding Thomists of our times are aware of the danger. They are unanimous in critical realism.

That Gilson has a special concern with realism is understandable. He witnessed the struggle for a realistic philosophy of his master Bergson. He showed him the deplorable state to which two centuries of idealism had led European philosophy. It took the gigantic efforts of geniuses like Bergson, Husserl and others to make European philosophy conscious that it had been infested by idealism as by a contagious disease. And notwithstanding all their efforts, idealism is far from dead but still has its chairs in the prominent universities of Europe.

Gilson is aware of the danger idealism contains for philosophy, and that accounts for his repeated warnings. Modern Thomists certainly appreciate these warnings, especially when the come from an authority like Gilson. But when these warnings become actual accusations, and Gilson says that they have already fallen into idealistic error, critical realists think that he is wrong. Careful reading of their treatises shows how careful they have been to avoid this error, how they never lose sight of the danger of idealism.

The fact, however, that there is danger connected with critique does not make them refrain from it, for they think that although "critique may have been born from the ignorance of traditional realism",[1] it became necessary, nevertheless in modern philosophy, and does not contain in itself anything which is in contradiction with it.

The merit of Gilson's works of epistemology lies in the positive part, the analysis of the act of knowledge. Here Gilson shows his craftmanship. These pages are full of penetrating insights in the structure of knowledge, and betray the man who has been a constant reader and student of St. Thomas' works for years.

Gilson's later works as Being and Some Philosophers and L'Etre et L'Essence, are the further development of what can be found already in Réalisme Thomiste et Critique de la

1 L. Noël, Revue Néoscolastique, 1940, p. 58.

Connaissance. In a more extensive way he explains there the existential value of human knowledge. More and more he becomes convinced that only actual contact of our intellect with the concrete existence can constitute a genuine knowledge of reality, and that this contact takes place in an intellectual quasi-intuition. His expositions there are certainly a real progress over the earlier explanations of critical realists, though they also have been aware of this and stressed the importance of the judgment in epistemology.

In Gilson's epistemology, in a fuller sense than in the preceding critical epistemologies "philosophy becomes again the full intellectual activity of the whole man confronting the whole of experience".[1]

This was also what philosophy was for St. Thomas. He never had the problem himself, "Neither Aristotle nor St. Thomas felt the need to qualify themselves as realists".[2] But the philosophy of St. Thomas is certainly a realistic one. His whole system asks for a realistic interpretation. One cannot explain it in an idealistic way without destroying it. St. Thomas is one of the "great realists" as de Tonquedec calls them;[3] he is the greatest of them.

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1 E. M. Chapman. The Maritain Volume of the Thomist, p. 136

2 J. Maritain. Degrees of Knowledge, p. 87

3 J. de Tonquedec. La Critique de la Connaissance, p. 449.

Therefore, critical realism can appeal to St. Thomas. It is entirely in accord with him and can be called a further development of Thomistic principles. It is a Thomistic answer on a question asked by moderns. The fact that we do not find it in his work is no reason to reject it. It would be if it could be proved that realism is in contradiction to Thomistic principles. St. Thomas's system shows a gap in this respect that he has no epistemology. Modern philosophers have the task to give a solution to problems which he himself never considered, provided this solution is in accordance with his principles. This shows the greatness of his philosophy and its value for all times, that every age can use it to find the solutions for its particular problems, for "the greatness of a philosophy comes from its aptitude to reach beyond the problems it poses, and to triumph over those it did not even suspect".[1]

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1 H. Gouhier, cit: G. Van Riet.-Epistémologie Thomiste, p. 518.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Gerard van den Hurk, M.S.C., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is therefore given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

May 30, 1951
Date

J. Q. O'Callaghan, S.J.
Signature of Adviser