

Dear Dr. Adler:

Being the heaviest of burden in our faculty, excuses for not writing you at this time are accumulating so fast that I have decided to send you the notes I made after reading your "Tradition" and "What man has made of man" as they stand. They are quite a jumble of incoherent reflections that I had intended to clear and put in order, but your letter of May 20 is both weighing on my conscience and giving me enough assurance to take the chance. To be taken too seriously would be about the worst fate that could befall them. I am really opening to you a private drawer.

32-6  
As the Customs Office did not specify title and author of the book that had arrived for me, I did not have it picked up till I received your letter. Without any intention of flattering you I must say that I read you with greater pleasure than any of our contemporary authors treating these subjects. This notwithstanding that I feel you have not enjoyed the rigorous schooling of a scholastic, that you have done without this is the more admirable. Even this is a gross understatement, for men like yourself, "quasi ab ipsa veritate coacti" and drawn to perennial philosophy by its intrinsic value are what we are in need of today. Though I am no meritainist, no one can deny that he has done more for Thomism in the modern world than any flock of scholars hatched in the coop. What strikes me is your thorough understanding of the man across the track. How does that F. Alexander feel after having been tricked into writing that monstrous foreword? I read the whole thing to my students in class, and your repique was a real clinic. The two hundred students that followed that class literally roared.

I fully agree with you that we should argue with our adversaries. Had I read your "St. Thomas and the Gentiles" before writing the notes, I might have been more moderate on the impossibility of a dialogue. You might class me among those who have been loath to absent themselves from the felicity of moving further into the interior of philosophical thought, when there is pressing work to be done on the border. My only excuse is that I still have essential work to do such as reading Cajetan, Banez, John of St. Thomas, and start St. Thomas all over again, etc. Though I remain convinced that we have no adversaries worth attacking for the sake of philosophy, I agree with you that in the practical order we should not ignore them. But intellectual speculation extensions fit practicality. I want to make this extension worth while, the more so that I am sure that it is every day that the study of the others gives deeper insight into our

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meeting modern philosophers on a common ground, they are essentially dogmatic. They are forever telling us. They speak like poets who are not to be interrupted.

They cannot stay on first principles. On the other hand, they always start from a flood of evidences which I completely fail to grasp. A complete absence of critique seems to be the fundamental characteristic of critical philosophies.

They start half-way. They impart their views. They do not exchange them. They have never listened and they do not intend to. Hence there can be no common ground between modern philosophy and philosophy as we understand it. Philosophy proper must be preceded by dialectics in aristotelian sense; we must prepare the terrain in order to determine the problems and definitions. Dialectics is essential as an introduction to philosophy, not that philosophy itself is essentially conditioned thereby, but it is "quod non". This Descartes has thrown overboard. Again the result is: philosophy itself becomes dialectical.

The modern conception of philosophy is not in the least philosophical: it is conceived as an art. The absolute opposition between Aristotle, *Metaph.* I, c. 1 & 2, and Descartes, *Discours*, parts I & 2, has always struck me that way. All the properties assigned to philosophy by Descartes are really characteristic of art. His tone and procedure are such that cannot expect to communicate with him; neither does he in fact expect scientific communication. He presents his philosophy as a "tableau", as a "fable". He merely asks us if we like it. His examples are all drawn from the arts. (For example the one drawn from architecture and the building of a city) From them he concludes directly that we must do in philosophy what is being done in the arts.

And therein lies the disguised cognatism of all modern philosophies. What has been called "emancipation of the individual" is in philosophy the equivalent of the emancipation of art as a substitute for science. When today we oppose science and philosophy, and when philosophy is rejected, we are really distinguishing pure science (philosophy) and the sciences which are also essentially arts, i.e., logic, mathematics, and the experimental sciences.

And what is sought for in the latter is not the scientific aspect, but formally the artistic, the fabricative, the making and the shaping. Such is the case of John Dewey, and of dialectical materialism. If there is any distinction to be made between these two, it is founded on Dewey's mediocrity, his failure to draw logical conclusions.

If this is modern philosophy there can be no communication in science, but only communication of products which have their principle not in the object, but in the maker. Then modern philosophers go beyond science, they become pure artists. They have individual evidences, quite legitimate in certain domains of art, which by definition need no justification. One does not argue about Bach. Philosophers have adopted the attitude of the artist. When they do argue, they do so as if they did not like men of science. They start from principles which cannot even expect us to call into question.

In science the object is first, in art the subject is first.



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On the contrary, modern philosophy is not in the least a practical science, but a purely speculative one. In modern philosophy, the object is the intellect. Intellectual dictatorship is the very essence of modern philosophy. Now, can we converse with dictators in philosophy? We cannot even indulge in disputation, for we have no common subject. The philosopher makes the subject all he can do is tell us.

Going back to Descartes, we may consider him as the true father of all modern philosophy in that he made philosophy a practical science, that is, an art or a *poiesis*. "On lient de cette philosophie speculative sur un enseignement des lettres, on en peut trouver une pratique par laquelle, nous pourrions... nous rendre comme maîtres et possesseurs de la nature". (Disc. part 6)

Starting from this principle, the only logical system of philosophy today is dialectical materialism, a purely artistic conception of reality, a complete denial of speculation and nature. In so far as modern philosophy has enclosed itself in the field of art, it has deliberately cut away the very possibility of communication. It is a philosophy that negates itself as philosophy.

Incidentally, the very startingpoint of Descartes implies that his philosophy must be an art: *le bon sens, la chose du monde la mieux partagée*. As Saint Thomas says, men succeed "ut in paucioribus" in the speculative sciences and in "agibilibus"; on the contrary "quantum ad factibilia, non deficit nisi ut in paucioribus". (Ia, q. 83, a. 7, ad 8; Q. de Potentia, a. 3, a. 8, ad 5; In sentent. B. I, d. 29, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4, etc). Aristotle's philosophy was a "daying" science. Descartes' is human.

2. If all this is true, how can we expect to cooperate with modern philosophers, and exchange views? We cannot lead them back to more fundamental principles, since they start from their negation. The mind that calls itself modern seems to be naturally incapable of going back to first principles and staying on them for a while. This inability is so fatal that it probably has physiological reasons. More probably the reason may be that all too many people have invaded the field called philosophy: all can talk, and as loudly as one wishes. (See Plato, *Republ.*, VI, 483e, et seq.) The mass is naturally incapable of speculation. Throughout the modern period true philosophy has led a hidden life. Cajetan, for instance, and John of St. Thomas, who did very little about their times. What else could they do?

The modern mind lacks the natural quality of the philosopher: the ability to grasp the transcendental import of first principles of the "est" and "non est". It has the obscure confidence of the animal. In fact, it does not need philosophy. Its actual needs are so easily satisfied; the nature of the things it wants is essentially platitudinous. It cannot find what it does not naturally search for. I can feel no sympathy for its ambition. As one who devotes himself to philosophy, I see a speculative science, not apologetics or practical ethics, and not even care. I am not in a position to expect anything more. I do not wonder. It is all very natural. Must philosophy become a humanistic science?



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...could have been... would... and...  
the philosopher... cannot...  
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experiences? The average American philosopher is merely a student  
that has learned to write.

As one who desires only to know, I am content, rightly  
or wrongly, to understand that modern philosophers cannot  
think otherwise than they do. They are merely part of the  
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who desires to know for the sake of knowing? I might learn  
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Philosophers have no elections to win; they do not have  
to take seriously any one who happens to open his mouth to  
speak, as politicians must do. They are concerned primarily  
and formally with speculative truth, and they can communicate  
only with men who search for truth for its own sake. This  
is a condition sine qua non.

The line along which modern philosophy develops has  
nothing to do with this subject-matter. It starts from a desire  
to make, not to know: the unknown is synonymous of unknowable.

This procedure starts with Vasquez (1551-1604) who held:  
"veritas transcendentalis consistit in sola denominatione  
extrinseca". This doctrine is the most explicit foundation  
of modern idealism.

Cajetan had refuted modern mathematics in his attacks on  
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Scotus, Suarez, Vasquez, Molina, are the real modern philosophers.  
Though they lead to the negation of philosophy, their errors  
are still strictly philosophical: communication is not  
impossible. But Cajetan could not have argued with Luther,  
neither could John of St. Thomas with Descartes. They did not  
even dream of it. They saw much too far and the perfect  
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attitude. This interpretation is discouragingly superficial.  
Gilson however must make these reproaches: is not all philosophy  
dialectics in his view? Gilson does not believe in  
science. That is why his philosophy can be christian. One must  
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In the above mentioned authors, the fundamental theses  
of modern philosophy (unknown to modern philosophers) are clearly  
stated. As I said, modern mathematics begins with Scotus' univocism;  
thus mathematics (with its essential homogeneity)  
which is a science, but also essentially an art, again occupies  
the very summit of thought and being. Logically this will lead  
to being a "subject for fabrication": a prime matter to work  
upon.

Vasquez takes the next step: we impose truth on being.  
Natural forms are imposed upon prime matter which is nothing  
but privation in all respects. Prime matter is not a nature  
in his opinion, hence there is no violence relative to prime  
matter. Thus we are brought back to Plato who did not distinguish  
matter and privation. (Arist. Physics, I, c. 9)

Together with Suarez and Molina he takes exactly the same  
attitude toward freedom: free will is not a faculty, it is  
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As one who desires only to know, I am content, right or wrongly, to understand that modern philosophers cannot think otherwise than they do. They are merely part of the world I have to explain, and doing so, I derive the impossibility of communication. Who argues with a tree. Can we argue with John Dewey? If we could, would it help me at all as one who desires to know for the sake of knowing? I might learn from him if life were "doing", not knowing. I can learn from him on condition that I have already abandoned philosophy.

Philosophers have no elections to win; they do not have to take seriously any one who happens to open his mouth to speak, as politicians must do. They are concerned primarily and formally with speculative truth, and they can communicate only with men who search for truth for its own sake. This is a *conditio sine qua non*.

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This procedure starts with Vasquez (1551-1604) who held: "*veritas transcendentalis consistit in sola denominatione extrinseca*". This doctrine is the most explicit foundation of modern idealism.

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absolute cause. In the eyes of a Thomist, the Molinist must be the most formidable and at the same time most interesting opponent; interesting because its initial positions are so fundamental, and consequently, its logical implications so far-reaching.

Molina gave the fullest possible expression to humanism in his theory of free will. (I am of course referring to logical implications). If I were asked to imagine what philosophy is most profoundly opposed to the Aristotelian and Thomist spirit, I would answer "humanism". I mean that a more profoundly opposed philosophy is inconceivable. There is no corrective for humanism, for it is by definition based on the primacy of freedom. No amount of distinctions can mitigate this opposition. A Thomistic humanism is a contradiction in terms, the essence of Thomism being the absolute transcendency of God of which the most profound implication is predetermination.

It has become a ~~custom~~ custom with modern scholastics to consider freedom as the very essence of personality. They give as reason that personality is something absolute. They place the accent on "*substantia individua*". They neglect the "*rationalis naturae*". Natura is the most profound element of the definition, the other elements merely serve to render it more nature. Now the essence of nature is communication of itself. (See splendid art. in *S. de Potentia*, q. 2, a. 1) The more this communication is necessary the more perfect it is. That is the case in the Trinity. The divine processions are necessary and interior to one nature from which they are not distinct. There is no question of freedom here in this most exalted form of personality, and there is communication of nature.

Freedom always implies some imperfection, either in the subject or in the object. God's freedom regards finite being. The creature's freedom relative to the most perfect object (God as known indirectly) implies imperfection in the creature.

The incommunicability of personality is a condition of communication. Paradoxically: the more a suppositum is incommunicable, the more it is a principle of communication.

This throws overboard the false implications drawn from the distinction between individuality and personality. Authors such as Maritain claim that man as a person is above society, for instance; and that he is a member of society as an individual. This purely and simply false. Man is a member of society because he is a person. That is why ants are not members of a society. This principle is true transcendently: in the Trinity, in the Church, in angelic universes.

If human society is based on nature, ~~freedom~~ reason and freedom, this does not mean that an individual may choose not to be a member of society.

The persons are the principium a quo of the common good. We call the members of society individuals in so far as they are receptive relative to the common good, that is so far as the fulfillment of a need implies potentiality in the subject.

are putting the issue on freedom. To a thomist, the issue is in creating free will. God, literally, alienates his power as absolute cause of all things. Freedom thereby becomes something supreme relative to being. I am convinced that in philosophy the most extreme limits of opposition have been reached by thomism and molinism. In the eyes of a thomist, the molinist must be the most formidable and at the same time most interesting opponent; interesting because its initial positions are so fundamental, and consequently, its logical implications so far-reaching.

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II. ~~... would be an end in itself. This is dialectical materialism. Then all determination becomes imperfection, and freedom is opposed to nature, nature becomes privation.~~  
Paradoxically, if freedom is an end, then the persons must be absorbed by the state; for in so far as persons imply determination, they too are opposed to freedom. Dialectical materialism must end in the destruction of the persons, because as determinations they are obstacles to the expression of freedom. Suicidal accusation is a logical consequence of this position. - I'll come back on this point.

In the light of these fundamental positions dating back many centuries, modern philosophies are merely indeterminate superficial and unconscious deductions from these initial positions which are inherent to the modern mind. We could not discuss with modern philosophers unless they consented to go back to these sources. That would mean to start all over again the arguments on analogy, being, predetermination, speculative and practical sciences, etc. But this is clearly impossible, since the very possibility of such a come-back is contrary to the first principles of modern philosophies.

3. Modern philosophy has accomplished this complete alienation by the manner in which it posits the problem of knowledge. It is founded on the negation of the "object"; we might define it as a revolt against the dictatorship of the object.

Vasquez' position concerning truth implies that object and subject are essential to knowledge as such, since his logical truth has a priority on transcendental truth; then the subject has priority on being as to truth; hence the accent must be placed on the subject.

But to imply a subject in knowledge as such will lead to the negation of the object as such; the object will become a mode of the subject as subject.

Modern philosophy does not posit the problem of knowledge. It starts from consciousness as an indefinable. Then the first problem which occurs will be that of the value of consciousness. It will ask: is it objective? Is it certain? etc.

This is an example of starting halfway, and of taking the inevident for the evident.

Aristotle and St. Thomas were much more radical. They started from "what is knowledge?". "*Esse aliud ut aliud*", aliud meaning "object" as opposed to "subject", subject implying potentiality i.e. subjectivity. Hence their definition of knowledge is a definition of objectivity: if there is no "*aliud*" there is no knowledge; if there is an aliud, there is knowledge.

Hence absolute knowledge means complete absence of subject. God is object pure and simple, i.e. "*intelligere subsistens*". Our knowledge, being composed of act and potency, and more particularly of matter and form, our knowledge, though necessarily objective as knowledge, will be restricted by our potency. There can however be no such thing as subjective knowledge: this would be a contradiction in terms. "Less objective" does not mean subjective, just as "less actual" does not mean that the act is potency. Hence, to determine the degree of knowledge means to determine the degree of objectivity.

From this I think it is clear that the procedure of modern



philosophy is that of Vasquez.

4. The modern mind is naturally at ease in the infinite, that bottomlessness the Greeks abhorred. This is to me its most irritating ingredient. That contentment in irresolution, that resignation before death, that insensibility toward nothingness, that willingness to sink back into prime matter.

At the same time it proclaims as a first principle "le plus grand bien de l'Humanité". It is completely satisfied with a humanitarian ideal, an ideal which feeds on death and "corruptio". This ideal is only possible if at the same time it does not care where humanity leads to. It is content to make the best of a bottomless world. Things must both die and go on indefinitely. Avowedly modern civilization can exist and have meaning only in so far as it leads to an overlasting nowhere. It is conditioned by the negation of finality. It comes into being as a pact with death.

So long as it cannot be terrified by the very idea of the absence of finality, of absolute finality, it shall not be even disposed to philosophize. It has no fear of the "nihil". It is like the stupid unconscious man who braves death without fortitude. (*Fortitudo est principaliter circa timores periculorum mortis*). All this characterizes an innate platitude against which very little can be done. That is the point: we would have to do things. The inquisitor tried to do things. That is about all that could be done. But philosophy has no concern with the doing, unless of course with meritain we believe in a practical philosophy distinct from prudence and from art. (This confusion is responsible for his philosophie chrétienne and his unfortunate mingling with politics. He implicitly postulates some sixth habitus of the intellect, a habitus at the same time practical and speculative.)

Why must we recognize men who have not even the stuff of a philosopher?

5. The thinking of modern philosophers starting from Descartes is more like a transitive action than immanence. They must have an audience. The "alibi tradere" is prior to "contemplantur". Without an audience there would be no certainty and no reason for philosophy. Notwithstanding his much affected isolation and his cogito, monsieur Descartes never for a moment thought for the sake of thinking. He really abhorred solitude: "Je crois qu'il serait très nuisible d'occuper souvent son entendement à les méditer (les principes métaphysiques)". This fear of transcendence pervades all his writings. In his meditations there is not the faintest trace of meditation. He always describes his philosophy as invented "comme utile à l'humanité", "pour l'honnête homme"; "Pour moi, je n'ai jamais présumé que mon esprit fût en rien plus parfait que ceux du commun". Nevertheless, when he writes "mon dessein n'est pas d'enseigner ici la méthode que chacun doit suivre pour bien conduire sa raison", he is acting like a politician. All his thought is governed by an initial preoccupation to teach.

So long as we cannot cut modern philosophers away from their audience through which they hid themselves, we cannot

communicate with them. We are separated from them by that element of vulgarity so obvious in a Brunswick and a Bergson. Perhaps certain German Idealists are at least in part an exception to this rule in so far as least as it concerns moral character. ~~But~~ The French never had a philosophy for the mind alone. No Frenchman has ever been alone, or spoken to himself. Bergson is not French, neither in character nor in preoccupation. And though he has the stuff of a true philosopher, he lacks the greatness to be one. So many things are obvious to him.

5. It is said that the "prise de conscience" is actually a contribution of modern philosophy, that it is characteristic of the modern spirit. And this is interpreted in a favorable sense.

But I cannot see where it is anything but retrograde. I mean that it does not concern the self as an object, but as a subject. It leads to a "prise de conscience de la liberté" a freedom isolated from an object, except the pure expression of its freedom. The modern mind is bent upon the possibilities of his potentialities as they may be exploited by pure freedom, that is freedom without an object, freedom with a subject to be constructed without "imitation" (mimèsis).

Strictly speaking, the modern mind does not even believe in art, for art implies mimèsis, and mimèsis implies some pure object. (That is mimèsis of nature; nature as a work of divine art is a mimèsis of divine nature which is the object). The art the modern mind has in view is one completely affranchised from nature, as in dialectical materialism. Such a conception alone is compatible with pure freedom.

The true freedom that we do encounter in our times is no product of the modern mind though the latter preys upon it. The genuinely modern freedom is that of dialectical materialism. Communism is the modern democracy.

6. I am at a loss to find in modern philosophy any positive contribution to philosophy. It is merely negative. There can be no question of communication. To us it can be no more than a spectacle. We can observe it, but we cannot speak to it. However we can speak of it to ourselves. And in this respect it is a tremendous lesson, the greatest possible negative contribution that might be made.

Such negative contribution is absolutely necessary to philosophy, just as necessary as the "non-est" to our "est". But we can no more argue about it than about the principle of contradiction.

In this respect, and historically, philosophy implies ever growing contraries, a left tending toward "nihil", a right toward "being". Progress means deepening of the gap, ever growing irreconcilability.

The left holds to the priority of art affranchised from nature; the right holds the priority of science. This shows what happens when we get the speculative and the practical intellect mixed up. This confusion itself is already due to art. When the practical intellect becomes supreme, all that remains for us to do is to construct, to work upon reality conceived as prime matter, pure potentiality, considered, not as a nature, but as privation (Plato had failed to make this distinction). Even mathematical logic

as enfranchised construction ultimately entails dialectical materialism.

David of Dinant's prime matter, deprived of all natural form (or perhaps deprived because of natural form) is an essential condition of what is meant by freedom today. Freedom itself we conceive as a faculty of undetermining.

The primacy of art is distinct feature of ~~Platonism~~ the method of platonism, not only because of its dialectical character, but because of the priority of the good. This we find again in the voluntarism of the franciscan tradition. It is even remarkable that this tradition tended to confound art and prudence, prudence becoming an art as politics is today, and as it was in Plato. (A notable point is that Aristotle never advocated philosophers as rulers of the State. This is the function of the prudentes, the men who do not gaze at the stars and fall into ditches). Dialectical materialism is ~~namely~~ the most absolute form of voluntarism, though I wonder whether the philosophy of Nirvana is not even more logical and radical in its direct selfextinction, instead of passing through the laborious phases of an active dialectic. But then a comprehensive voluntarism cannot be very logical, it must employ devious ways, it must be dialectical. For it aims not only at the enfranchisement of self, but at the enfranchisement of all reality, the self being implied in the process as a part of the whole. The self-accusing bolshevist differs from the oriental mystic in that he is not ascetic and self-castigating, but rather carried off by the general process.

7. Aristotle's hylomorphism is fundamentally opposed to dialectical materialism. In Aristotle's philosophy of nature there are three principles: matter, form and privation. In Plato's there ~~was~~ were only two: form, and privation which he identified with matter. In Aristotle there is no opposition between forms, I mean they are not contraries, nor is there contrariety between matter and form. The contrariety exists between form and privation, and because pure contrariety would be contradiction, we must posit a subject: prime matter (Phys. I, c. 7, 190b29). If prime matter were privation pure and simple, then the contraries would desire their own

destruction; and the form would desire itself as something. On the contrary, matter is object being the form, the something divine. Prime matter as a nature, an appetite deprived of what it tends

Dialectical materialism matter as ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ a desire for privation. Aristotle's form as a perfection. Hence, matter from this we obtain Aris

Hegel's triad is the new compositum is, contrariety of form, generation seems to be in Aristotle, ~~xxxx~~ generations, and



Privation is a principle, but not a cause, and in this it differs from matter and form which are *causa*, i.e. both principles and causes (*arche kai aitia*). Prime matter is a "non-ens per accidens", privation is a "non-ens per se". On the contrary, in Hegel, privation must really be non-ens per accidens from which something may proceed.

In dialectical materialism the form, being a determination, is an obstacle to freedom. The process of dialectic will then consist in ~~the~~ freeing matter from its determinations. Logically this would lead to some absolute in which matter deprived of all form, i.e. pure privation, and freedom are identified: freedom would be as the form of prime matter.

Industrialisation is a phase of this ~~prachaxda~~ process of "depouillement". Nature being our enemy, we master it by art: we impose upon it artificial forms, which are already less determinate than natural forms. We strive to make anything out of anything: we strive to make everything absolutely plastic: a tomato sauce that is at the same time a hair tonic and a shoe cleanser and a laxative etc. This *depouillement* is necessary for the fulfilment of our needs. However, the artificial forms which we impose upon things, thus pushing the determination of nature more and more into the background, they too are still forms, i.e. determination. Now nature is an obstacle because it is determination (all the more because it is an intrinsic determination). Hence artificial forms too remain contraries: they too must be suppressed in turn, and so on indefinitely. That is why the worker has no right to his product. He must remain detached as much as possible. The ideal worker is one who shall turn his back to his products as soon as they are accomplished. Freedom meaning *affranchissement*, it must remain separated, and bent exclusively on deprivation.

This dialectical process of undetermining leads logical to the alienation of the self, for the self too is a determination. But the process being dialectical, this undoing of the self must follow the rules and circumstances: when the circumstances allow it, or rather demand it, as in the Stalin-Trotsky conflict, it is really an ideal. (I believe that the present suicidal self-accusations are perfectly deliberate and logical. It is noteworthy that in all cases the individuals implied belong to higher circles of communism: they are thoroughly convinced. To say that they are induced by constraint seems to me a very superficial view of the facts, and a misunderstanding of the very doctrine).

Capitalistic industrialisation differs from that of the communists by its mediocrity: the capitalist does not understand the logical implications of his doings: that is what makes it pragmatic. For it too feeds on the indefinite. Even in our country things are less and less worth possessing: the creations of industrial civilisation constitute a heraclitean universe. Fixed things become either values as signs of the past, or freakish, like the cars of two or three years ago. No object is really worth possessing. We can live only on ~~endless~~ indefinite progress. Finality would destroy existence as we conceive it. (*finis habet rationem termini*). Motion then becomes a contrary of possession which has quality and immobility, immanence.

A philosophy is bent either on prime matter, or on pure

8. I was glad to see you draw the parallel between Marx and Aristotle. Of all modern philosophy, dialectical materialism is certainly the one most intelligible in terms of perennial philosophy. The two philosophies are contraries throughout. We merely have to reverse Aristotelianism to obtain Marxism. In this respect I am sure that a dialogue is possible between a Marxist and an Aristotelianist; it would serve at least to bring out clearly defined differences. I had been studying this problem together with Jacques de Monléon (who comes to Laval annually from the Catholic Institut. Paris for one semester; is a former pupil and suppléant of Maritain, but by no means a disciple) who has prepared a fine study on Marxism, which is to be published soon.

But it would not be enough to oppose Marxism and Aristotle. Marx goes even beyond that: he reaches into the field of supernatural theology, as Hegel had done. The most fundamental dogma of Catholic theology is that of the Trinity. New Marxism is a thorough negation of generation. In the Trinity we find generation in its highest form: in the procession of the Son. The divine processions are communications within the identity of divine nature. If there is anything the dialectical materialist should attack in virtue of his logic, it is this. And that is exactly what it does. Catholic Theology is avowedly its greatest enemy, and more specifically Thomism, for ~~the~~ even the terminology is almost the same, but it is used to designate contraries. Marxism is an absolute negation of Thomism throughout. It is the "I am the spirit that denies" of Goethe's Satan in Faust.

Marxism as negation takes diabolic proportions. It's very essence is negation. And it is profound in a negative sense. As you point out, it could not be content with a superficial scientism or a mechanical materialism: it is a deepening out of scientism. This is probably the reason for its success among the younger professors of science in modern universities.

9. The contribution of modern thought (I mean positive contribution) is to be found exclusively in mathematics and the experimental sciences. It has suggested principles for the philosophy of science, but it has given no philosophy of science.

It has however suggested much that as a Thomist I have no difficulty to deal with. We can justify its method to the last word. And if Maritain, for instance, has quarrel with Einstein, it is because of his own confusions. He himself confuses quantity with the "modi quantitativi" of the "sensibilia communia quae omnia reducuntur ad quantitatem", and with metrical structure. If he rejects indeterminism in nature, it is because he has fallen in line with the Jesuit tradition. In his ~~Reflections~~ "Réflexions sur la nécessité et la contingence" (Angelicum, Jan. 1937) he is really defending Molina's supercomprehension, according to which it is enough that God know all the ingredients of the world to know the future in the presence of eternity, it is enough to know all the possibilities of matter to know what will actually happen. And if Maritain does not, as Molina, apply this to freedom, it is because he is not logical. According to St. Thomas, God knows future contingents, not formally because they are present in eternity, for that would not exclude dependence, but because he is their

cause; God's causality however is measured by His eternality, so that the causality is the reason of their prevalence.

Note 47, p. 208, of What Man... has especially attracted my attention. I am working on a small treatise of philosophy of science, and I shall certainly use it. Of all modern authors on this subject I find none with whom I so readily agree as with you. I would however add one point to what you say in that note: I would lay more stress on the importance of formal causality in physico-mathematical theories. The meaning of this use of formal causality is clearly shown by Aristotle, Post. Anal., I, c. 13, 78b32, and s. Thomas lect. 25. The form is of course not the forma naturalis, but the species of mathematics. The form of a physical theory is demonstrative, hence there must be some kind of causality; if however we consider its matter, the theory is dialectical. (I am here taking matter and form in their logical sense) The form of a theory implies strictly formal causality. I take the term "dialectical" in the sense defined by s. Thomas, Metaph., ~~Metaphysicum~~ IV, lect. 4, nn. 572-577; also comm. on Post. Anal., I, c. 11, lect. 20, n. 5. Relational logic too, in so far as it starts from hypothesis, is purely dialectical, its form however, is scientific, as the form of all dialectical demonstrations. But you know more about all this than I do, and I am merely suggesting.

As to the non-mathematical experimental sciences: they differ from philosophy of nature in that they are essentially dialectical, whereas philosophy is science pure and simple. The fundamental reason is, I think, indeterminism: the absence of rigour in the object: hence impossibility of a universal proper. For the purpose of science, we then make universals, and proceed "as if", and wait to see what happens: the coincidence between the conclusions of the theory and the data of experience can never be complete. If it were, we would have known beforehand, and it would have been necessary to verify. When we start from a clearly defined "quid est", we remain in contact with experience throughout, and it has no meaning to "come back" to experience.

Would you hold with me that all scientific experience is operational: that therein lies the difference between the experience upon which rests philosophy, and that of experimental science? That experience becomes scientific when we must compensate by means of art? If we once have recourse to art, and the art implied being a real operation, we must retain it in the definition of the property defined. (On the contrary the operations implied in judgment and reasoning, "fabricantur" says John of s. Thomas, are in the second intention: we do not imply them in the definitions).

I have tried to make this point clear by showing that a physical property, for instance, is an "instrumental sign" (as opposed to formal) of what Eddington calls "world-conditions". But I will send you the manuscript of treatise before handing it to the printer. That is about two or three weeks from now.

There is a tremendous amount of material in Aristotle's Topics for the philosophy of science, and particularly for mathematical logic.

10. There is indeed some analogy between the general problem of the middle ages — philosophy-theology —, and that of our day — philosophy-science. But I consider it a very weak one. The ratio deitatis of catholic theology, and the ratio entis of natural thought are both complete in their own right, and



is not the case of philosophy and science which communicate in the same light of reason. The various degrees of natural knowledge are not radically distinct like natural and supernatural. The difference is like that between war and revolution. The formality studied by experimental science is already a contraction, and if we must start therefrom, we can never get beyond this contraction. This means impossibility of communication.

The Summa contra Gentes was written for persons who accept either metaphysics or revelation. If they accept metaphysics, they know that God is known only "sub ratione entis", and thereby acknowledge a hidden supernatural order which might reveal itself. There is here no fundamental conflict. If they accept revelation without being fideists, they must accept metaphysics. Hence there is a certain coextension between philosophy and theology. The mind of the metaphysicist is naturally open to the supernatural order. (Contra Gentes, III, ch. 25 and 30)

This is not the case in philosophy and science: the relation relative to the ratio entis, is one of the part to the whole. If a scientist is not already somehow a philosopher, he shall never be able to join it. There was common ground between philosophy and theology, because they are at the same time radically distinct and at the same time, somehow coextensive. If we assimilate this distinction to that of philosophy and science, we are really throwing out either philosophy or science. The philosopher and the theologian can converse together. If philosophy and science were distinct in the same manner, communication would be absolutely impossible. What I am confusingly trying to lead up to is this: one cannot be both a metaphysician and positively exclude the supernatural.

In the end we always come back to the same point: art and science. I mean that the real problem today is, as you have yourself shown, much more analogous to that of Plato-Aristotle. It is a question of deciding which has the primacy: art or science.

11. The modern mind is a negation of openmindedness: the negation of intellectus. It is obsessed by the demon of fabrication. It would do as the dark ~~again~~ angels whose sin consisted in an effort to shapen and lift themselves to the beatific vision. They wanted an object only in so far as they could build it through their own power. Their sin was against science. They chose the primacy of art.

The modern philosopher cannot accept the existence of other traditions as something he might consider. They can be no more to him than paper and ink. He starts from a surrender to the subject.

In our view, the modern philosopher should plow through Greece and the middle ages in order to know what he is talking about, in order to become truly a modern philosopher. But in his view, he does not have to know what he is talking: he merely has to talk. For this purpose, the "other" is superfluous. He cannot even see the "other" as such. If he did, he would not be modern: he would have recognised an object.

One cannot be both modern (always in the vulgar sense of the word) and openminded, i.e. objective. Objectivity is an innate quality of the intellect. It cannot be acquired. It is that perfection of the intellect which recognizes an object. The object itself does not make the objectivity of the mind. You personally are open to thomism, I should say that if you always were, it is not because thomism has opened your mind. Millions are in contact of the same object, but they do not hear it. Aristotle and Aquinas

are there to be recognized. I think that the thing and what they we have to do in their respect is to keep and develop them. There is something that can always be recognized by those who look for the object. This is where modern scholastics have failed. When they are not considering traditions themselves as the formal object (instead of using them for an object), they have turned to the moderns with the zeal of an apologist; they too are above all makers. I am convinced that the men who have actually rendered the greatest service have always remained hidden to the modern world, to their time: they are the Cajetans, Banez, John's of St. Thomas. As speculative minds they could not have done more without contaminating themselves. Is it not true that Christ never gave a sermon to the high priests and the sects?

Christ opposed his Church to the "world". Philosophy too has its "world".

12. I would readily agree with you that the history of philosophy grows in spiral form. But I do not think that this holds for philosophy itself as science, unless as in Hegel philosophy were the history of philosophy. On the contrary experimental science evolves essentially in spiral form, by way of successive substitutions, as in all dialectics. The history of philosophy describes a spiral in so far as it is dialectical.

I will add to this a few points on the philosophy of history. I distinguish it as I do with philosophy of nature: science and wisdom. As science, philosophy of history is philosophy of nature. History is essential to nature because of time: it is essential to nature "sub statu motus existens", that is in so far as our universe is subject to evolution and profound novelty. If there must be evolution along relatively unpredictable lines, this growth must assume a spiral form. Here we join Maritain with his distinction between univocism, and analogy in the conception of history. We might add equivocism (i.e. complete heterogeneity of the various stages) if Maritain has not done so; this being, I understand, Bergson's position. Now all this we may show a priori. We can show, starting from any given mobile being, that the universe must evolve toward mind: i.e. a term essentially immobile, otherwise movement itself would be a contradiction. Spiritual immobility alone is an immobility which has "ratio termini". Now if the universe was intrinsically predetermined as to the various lines along which this evolution must take place, that would mean that matter is intrinsically disposed to the human form: then history would not exist. There would be no reason why the term of evolution should not exist from the start.

Within humanity the same process continues. For the human mind too is comparable to prime matter. In so far as knowledge evolves historically, it must do so in spiral form. (This ~~marking~~ is implied in the Thomistic conception of the primum cognitum, as apposed to Scotus' species specialissima, and the Jesuit tradition concerning intellectual knowledge of singularity). All this is due to contingency. But the science of philosophy being truly science, cannot be dialectical.

The philosophy of history as wisdom is again philosophy of nature as wisdom.

History proper is a dialectical science. (I am taking science in a broad sense). For history is not governed by pure chance.

or by pure heterogeneity, which would exclude all natural finality.

Philosophy of hist. as wisdom, is a reflection upon the content of the science of history. Here we see historical developments known through constant contact with experience, in a higher light. It is in this manner that I explain the history of philosophy as a conflict between the practical intellect and the speculative.

This conflict will reveal itself along lines analogous to those of generation and corruption. Now in corruption something is definitely cast off. In this respect the evolution of philosophy will entail an ever deepening ~~disintegration~~ disintegration. Philosophy, in its historical development, has contraries: the primacy of art being the privation. But as in nature, the contrary is not a cause: the evolution of philosophy is not due to the conflict, as with Hegel. Nature does not argue with privations: they are simply cast off as she progresses. The conflict is something that is, it does not operate; privation is a non-esse.

Let us consider an example. There may be in scholasticism what Duns Scotus calls a "patrimoine commun". But whatever it is, it is a very superficial one; it is more apparent than real. The difference between Scotism and Molinism on the one hand, and Thomism on the other, is absolute. The opposition is truly fundamental, it concerns the notion of being. There is no point upon which they agree. When they do agree, there is an illusion somewhere; it is verbal or purely accidental. (The opposition is so fundamental even today in such remote fields as philosophy of science: there is no point upon which we can agree, as you may see in all articles written by S.J.'s of S.J. tradition) A scholastic belongs to one school or another. He must reject all the others since their difference concerns first principles in a very explicit manner from the moment they reflect upon them in actu signato. This division of schools is fundamental and definite, all the more so that there is a patrimoine commun; otherwise the privation could not be great.

Like the galaxies, philosophies are drifting farther and farther apart. This is essential to the purification of ~~the~~ philosophy. The opposition must grow deeper. That existing between dialectical materialism (the outcome of left-wing scholasticism) and thomism today is so consummate that I am inclined to think we are approaching the end.

Consider these facts: Greek philosophy started from naive materialism (Thales...), pass through a stage of mathematism (Pythag.-Plato), and finally reached metaphysics with Aristotle. These phases are of course statistical rather than clear-cut. Thanks to Christianity exerting a profound extrinsic influence on metaphysics, philosophy reached metaphysical maturity in s. Thomas. From that very moment we shift back into mathematism with Scotus, Suarez, Descartes, Leibnitz etc. Kant is again definitely a scientist (I take "scientist" in its french meaning). The only solution to Hegel is Marx. We have rejoined materialism, but this time no naive materialism: but a perfectly conscious and mature materialism which defines the absolute just as we define prime matter.

Will this process start all over again? I am inclined to



think that it cannot. We are hearing the bottom of the discussion. And I say this because I am an optimist.

I think thomism triumphs when it lives in our world today. But I am also convinced that its life must be hidden, because it is immanence in a world that has eyes only for pure extrinsecism. Thomism is not "foris". There is a mass of thomists today. But in this, because it is a mass, there is "malum ut in pluribus"; thomism has reached therein one of its most profound forms of deformation.

By this I do not mean that we should hide it. I mean that ipso facto it becomes hidden as we approach it more profoundly. The purer our thomism is, and the better we speak of it, the less it is heard. I derive the greatest pleasure from reading you: it is to me recognition. But at the same time, thinking of the mass of your readers, I realize how futile you must sound in their ears: what you then say becomes impossible. In this mass I include your scholastic readers. I have read appreciations of your work in scholastic periodicals. I think that many of the criticisms on purely technical points are correct. But I still have to read a compte rendu that seizes the spirit of your writings. The best of what you offer is completely overlooked. And if you are right, it could not be otherwise. But I also feel that you do not realize this: that you entertain certain vain hopes. Having studied in strictly scholastic milieux during a period of fifteen years, and now working therein, I think that I have had a certain experience to support this opinion.

I insist that I am not pessimistic. I think it is enough that here and there is one who really devotes himself to the object.

I continually use the term "thomism". Though I do not identify thomism and philosophy or theology, as a thomist I consider it the closest approximation to philosophy: it is the only school in the path of philosophy. It will keep casting off ~~waste~~ waste matter as it approaches philosophy. Non-thomist philosophy is not what is being assimilated, but what is being cast off in the process of assimilation of the object. I believe no more in plurality of forms in the science of philosophy than in natural substance. Nor can thomism change its substantial form as it grows.

The quality most authors disliked in Maritain, his intransigence, is what I liked most in him. Now he seems to be getting confused, and making allowances on fundamental points. This began the day he gave way to action and proselytic zeal. His new attitude finds root in his conception of *la morale adéquatement prise*.

13. There are only five habitus of the intellect: three purely speculative, and two purely practical. There is no habitus that is both speculative and practical, no science both speculative and practical, except divine science and of course theology subalternated to divine science. The logic is a speculative science and a speculative art, distinction between essence and existence is the ultimate reason of this impossibility.

Practical arts always concern existence, i.e. "esse concretum". If our speculative science were also practical it would be truly creative. Logic is both a speculative art and a speculative science: it cannot be a speculative science and a practical art. (See J. of S. Thomas, Logic, II P., q. 1, a. 2 & 4; Cajetan, Ia IIae, q. 57, a. 5)

THESE LAST 25 YEARS, WE ARE HEARING THE WORD OF THOMAS  
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I insist that I am not pessimistic. I think it is enough that here and there is one who really devotes himself to the object.

I continually use the term "thomism". Though I do not identify thomism and philosophy or theology, as a thomist I consider it the closest approximation to philosophy: it is the only school in the path of philosophy. It will keep casting off ~~xxx~~ waste matter as it approaches philosophy. Non-thomist philosophy is not what is being assimilated, but what is being cast off in the process of assimilation of the object. I believe no more in plurality of forms in the science of philosophy than in natural substance. Nor can thomism change its substantial form as it grows.

The quality most authors disliked in Maritain, his intransigence, is what I liked most in him. Now he seems to be getting confused, and making allowances on fundamental points. This began the day he gave way to action and proselytic zeal. His new attitude finds root in his conception of ~~l'existence~~ "la morale adéquatement prise".

13. There are only five habitus of the intellect: three purely speculative, and two purely practical. There is no habitus that is both speculative and practical, no science both speculative and practical, except divine science and of course theology subalternated to divine science. The logic is a speculative science and a speculative art, distinction between essence and existence is the ultimate reason of this impossibility.

Practical arts always concern existence, i.e. "esse concretum". If our speculative science were also practical it would be truly creative. Logic is both a speculative art and a speculative science: it cannot be a speculative science and a practical art. (See J. of S. Thomas, Logic, II P., q.1, a.2 & 4; Cajetan, Ia IIae, q.57, a.5)

logic directs the operations of the speculative intellect. Teaching is a "processus ad extra": therefore practical, and consequently a distinct habitus. Teaching The art of teaching can have nothing to do with logic. The art of teaching is in the practical intellect, as illumination in pure spirits. This illumination, though it bears on speculative matters, though it is a communication of speculative ideas, is nevertheless a practical art distinct from speculation. If not, angelic illumination would be creation.

"Logica docens" and "logica utens" are one and the same habitus which is entirely speculative. (J. of S. Th., *ibid.*, a.3) I fail to understand what you mean by logic as an art of teaching, unless you assume the possibility of a science created that is both speculative and practical. If so, I am willing to exchange views on this point. The implications are quite fundamental, and will only come back on this point if you think it necessary.

As J. of S. Thomas explains (*ibid.* a.5, toward the end), grammar and rhetorics are not sciences, but practical arts. See also, Part I, q.1, a.1: *respondetur secundo*. This again is fundamental, for it implies that whole problem of "ad placitum" of names. But I would certainly admit that there is a philosophy of grammar, but it is not grammar. The stuff of such a philosophy is to be found in the works of that very great linguist Antoine Meillet, who died a couple of years ago.

This whole problem is so intricate that I wonder if we shall be able to settle it by correspondence. There is very little chance that I shall ever attend another meeting of the ACPA. If I did, it would be to meet you, and that I could do better on any other occasion. I have a profound "memoria" for that whole outfit, which does not mean that I would not recognize its accidental merits. (By accidental I mean *causa infinita et indeterminata*!) The New Scholasticism stinks with *asineitas*.



...practical intelligence. It is a communication of special-  
...practical art distinct from  
...illumination would be creation.  
...necessity are one and the same.  
...entirely speculative. (J.O. S.K., *ibid.*, p. 5)  
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I mean cause, effect, or indeterminacy.) The New Scholasti-  
cism strikes with animation.

20 East Cedar Street  
Chicago, Ill.

Jan. 5, 1937.

Dear Professor De Koninck:

Thank you for sending me a reprint of your paper on the problem of indeterminism. I have been reading the articles by you on the same subject which have been appearing in the Revue Thomiste. I have found your analysis profoundly provocative. I shall need to study it more closely before I write you my reasoned judgment on some of the ~~xxx~~ crucial questions you have raised.

With every good wish for the New Year,

Sincerely yours,

W. V. Quine

Dear Dr. Adler:

Thank you for the reprint of your paper on Tradition and Communication. You have said much that concerns many. It was a lesson for me, for I am not as optimistic as you are about communication.

I am always conscious of the utter impossibility of meeting modern philosophers on a common ground. They are too dogmatic and cannot stay on first principles. They always depart from a flock of evidences which I completely fail to grasp. They start halfway. There can be no common ground between modern philosophy as such and philosophy as we understand it. The fundamental reason, I am sure, that their conception of philosophy is not in the least philosophical: modern philosophers from Descartes on, conceive philosophy, not as a science, but as an art. The absolute opposition between Aristotle, *Metaph. I, c. 1 & 2*, and Descartes, *Discours, parts 1 & 2*, has always struck me that way. All the properties assigned to philosophy by Descartes are really properties of art, not of science. And therein lies the disguised dogmatism of modern philosophy. In fact an artist has individual evidences, quite legitimate in his field. I insist on this point in my introductory course to philosophy. For this reason there can be no communication in the scientific sense. For this same reason, if for no other, Descartes would truly be the father of all modern philosophy, his grandparents being Scotus and the Jesuit schools of Coimbra, Vasquez, Suarez, Molina. The only modern philosophy which really interests me, because so unfailingly logical, is dialectical materialism, a purely artistic conception of reality, a complete denial of speculation and nature. It is interesting as consequence the only logical one, of ideas dating back as far as the authors mentioned.

The task you hold before a catholic philosopher or theologian, or even more specifically before a Thomist, is a very difficult one, if only from a mere quantitative point of view. I don't know when I'll get through reading Aristotle, St. Thomas, Capreolus, Cajetan, Dominic of Blanders, Banez, John of St. Thomas, the Salmaticenses, the Conimbricenses, Fonseca, Vasquez, Suarez, Molina etc. This takes a tremendous amount of time, and I would rather accuse modern scholastics of trying to communicate with modern philosophers before they are sufficiently acquainted with their own field.



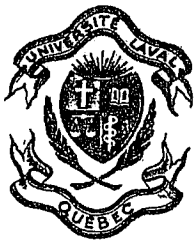
I am convinced that there is altogether too much talking in our time, and not enough silent and patient work. Much is to be said, no doubt, but what is to be said? If a modern philosopher put to work your suggestions, I wonder how much time it would take him to become a modern philosopher. He shall be at least grey-haired and bald before he can know approximately what he is talking about. He unfailingly chooses the easier alternative: he denies the past.

As far as study is concerned, I have never gotten this side of John of St Thomas, and it will take me many more years to get closer to my time. In the meantime I have no difficulty with modern scientific theories, and I can justify modern methodology. I see that when Maritain has quarrel with Einstein, it is because he himself confuses quantity with the "modi quantitativi" of the "sensibilia communia"; if he rejects indeterminism, it is because he has fallen in line with the Jesuit tradition, etc. When he speaks of integral humanism, he is adhering to the Molinist theory of freedom. When he speaks of Christian philosophy, he confuses science and prudence. I can see that if I accept Scotus' univocism, I become a mathematicist with Descartes, Malebranche, Leibniz, and modern mathematicians who generalize their method for all scientific knowledge and identify logic with mathematics throughout. If I accept Vasquez' doctrine of truth (*veritas transcendentalis consistit in sola denominatione extrinseca*) I become a modern idealist. If I accept Molina's doctrine of free will, I become a dialectical materialist, and so on. - Now, if I wish to communicate, not with modern philosophy, for that is what I am doing, but with modern philosophers who are individuals, who shave and wear pants, I shall be able to do so only in so far as they agree to do some reading, that is after some ten years. From then on reciprocal communication will become possible.

There is indeed some analogy between the general problem of the middle ages - that of reconciling philosophy and theology - and the great problem of our day - the relation between science and philosophy, - but it is a very weak one. The ratio deitatis and the ratio entis are both complete in their own right. This not true of philosophy and science: they are both natural sciences: parts of one whole. Ultimately their ratio is the same. The difference is like that between war and revolution. The ratio entis comprises the supernatural implicitly. The formality studied by experimental sciences is already a contraction, and we must start therefrom, we can never get beyond this contraction, there is no common ground.

In the evolution of culture there seems to a certain amount of disintegration from which the world can never recuperate, at least not along lines which we can reasonably predetermine. That is we really search for unity. There may be in scholasticism what De Wulf calls a "patrimoine commun". But whatever it is, it is a very superficial one, it is more apparent than real. In philosophy there is certainly much more difference between Scotism, Thomism, and Molinism, than between any of these systems and any modern philosophy.

The opposition is truly fundamental, it concerns the notion of being, of concept. There is no point upon which they really agree, even when they do agree, there is an illusion somewhere, it is merely accidental. The opposition is so fundamental that there can be no agreement today upon a point of philosophy of science. A scholastic belongs to one school or another. He must deny all the others, since their difference concerns first principles in a very explicit manner from the moment they reflect upon them in actu signato. The breach of philosophies today is merely the outcome of some original disintegration. Now what can a modern philosopher do to restore this? Must he go way back and restart and start all over again? Of course. But who is going to do it? Is it possible? It would be a great help if we could have confidence in some great author or another. I confide in John of St. Thomas. This is a great help, but how can I prove to others that he is worthy of confidence?

25 Fr 38

Dear Father:

Thank you for the reprint of your paper on Tradition and communication which I had already gone through in the Proceedings. You have said much that concerns many, and I hope it will bear the fruit it deserves to. It was a lesson for me, for I am not as optimistic as you are.

I am always conscious of the utter impossibility of meeting modern philosophers on a common ground. They are too dogmatic and cannot stay on first principles. They always depart from a flock of evidences which I fail to grasp, they begin philosophy halfway. I am afraid there can be no common ground between modern philosophy as such, and Thomism, or any Aristotelianism. It seems to be essential to modern philosophy to exclude the very possibility of a "terrain commun". The fundamental reason is, I am sure, that modern philosophers from Descartes on, conceive philosophy, not as a science, but as an art.

The absolute opposition between Aristotle (Metaph.  
II c. 1 & 2) and Descartes (Discours, parts 1 & 2)  
has always struck me that way. All the  
properties assigned to philosophy by Descartes  
are really properties of art, not of science. I insist  
on this point in my introductory course to  
philosophy. I'll have a copy made and sent to  
you, for I am anxious to know what you will  
think about it. For this reason, if for no other,  
Descartes would be truly the father of all modern  
philosophy, his grandparents being Scotus and  
Vasquez.

If I have not written you sooner it is  
because I wanted to make a few remarks  
on what you say on pp. 105-6. You seem to  
imply that logic as a science is speculation,  
and practical as an art, and that this  
latter formality concerns teaching. If this  
what you actually mean, I think you are  
departing from the Thomistic tradition, which has  
held, from the very beginning that logic is both  
a speculative science and a speculative art.  
Teaching, on the other hand, is a practical art,  
even when its matter is purely speculative. Logic  
has never been considered as an art of teaching,  
(neither logica docens nor logica utens which  
constitute one and same habitus), if by teaching  
we mean communication ad alia. If logic





were both speculative and practical, were would be a speculative habitus at the same time practical. Science can be speculative and practical only in God whose science is the cause of things. All created science is either practical or speculative (distinct habitus), but never both. The distinction between essence and existence is the ultimate reason for this impossibility. Practical arts always concern existence, "esse concretum". If our speculative science were also practical, it would be creative. Our practical science is either art or prudence. - all this is very clearly and very thoroughly explained and justified by John of St Thomas, *logic*, Part II, q. 1. - Toward the end of article 5<sup>th</sup> he also adds: "Grammatica autem et Rethorica non videntur esse scientiae nec tractant de quidditatibus objectuum et connexionibus necessariis, sed de modo loquendi et elegantia, nec procedunt definiendo et resolvendo aliquid in sua principia." Logic has its own formal manner of considering terms: "id ex quo simplex conficitur propositio". - Part I, q. 1, art. 1, he says "respondetur (secundo) terminum esse quidem resolvibilem in alia priora, ex quibus constat, sed tamen de illis agere non pertinet ad logicum, sed praesupponi illa. De voce enim secundum se agitur et de signo naturali agit physicus, de syllabis

See II 90/42<sup>m</sup>

grammaticus, de signis vero ad placitum  
pertinet ad rem publicam eorum institutio,  
et de illis agit politica, ut spectant ad  
communicationem hominum publicam."

The article you refer to (I II § 57, a. 3, ad 3)  
precisely makes this distinction between speculative  
arts and practical arts, logic and mathematics  
being speculative arts. Their opera remain  
within the speculative intellect. (~~See Logica's Opera~~)

Arts liberales ex:

1° scientifica

2° poetica

Other texts II II 47, a. 2, ad 3; de Trin. § 5, a. 1, ad 3.  
Obj.

Ar Contingentia et intellect. spec.  
two import. Obj. in I II § 57 a. 5



28 IV 38

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Philosophies are drifting farther and farther away from one another, like the galaxies. One of them is perhaps the planet that bears life.

There is no profound desire to know for the sake of knowing among phil. today: they, before all, want to do something: to make or act.

When as a Thomist I consider Thomism as the only true rational philosophy, I am assailed by Mr. Blubbergly as arrogant. He either says that I must be more broad - what does he mean by that? Who is Mr. Blubbergly. If he is many, why should the many have ~~any~~ more right? In last instance, perhaps I am Blubbergly.

Today universities must appeal to the masses in order to have the right to teach this or that matter. All this affects the very structure of the University.



I am convinced that there is altogether too much talking in our time, and not enough silent and patient work. Much is to be said, no doubt, but what is to be said? If a modern philosopher put to work your suggestions, I wonder how much time it would take him to become a modern philosopher. He shall be at least grey-haired and bald before he can know approximately what he is talking about. He unfailingly chooses the easier alternative: he denies the past.

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finality.

Philos. of hist. as wisdom is a reflection on the data and theories of the science of history. Here we see historical developments in a higher light. It is in this manner that I explain the history of philosophy in the light of the notions of art and science.

Another example: I think that the evolution of philosophy entails a certain amount of definite disintegration (the analogue of corruption in generation). Now in corruption something is definitely cast off.

Dear Dr. Adler:

Thank you for the reprint of your paper on Tradition and Communication. I have waited for this moment to write you a long letter. You have said much that concerns many. Your paper was a lesson to me, for I am not as optimistic about the possibilities of communication between philosophers today as you are. Any optimism I have is founded on men like yourself and President Hutchins. I would be at a loss to name others. And I wonder how much the "others" are necessary.

I am always conscious of the utter impossibility of meeting modern philosophers on a common ground. They are essentially dogmatic in the derogatory sense of the word. They cannot stay on first principles. They always depart start from a flock of evidences which I completely fail to grasp. They start halfway. Their only ambition is to talk, to impart their views. They have never listened, and they do not intend to. There can be no common ground between modern philosophy and philosophy as we understand it. The fundamental reason is, I am sure, that their conception of philosophy is not in the least philosophical: modern philosophers from Descartes on conceive philosophy not as a science but as an art. The absolute opposition between Aristotle, *Metaph. I, c. 1 & 2*, and Descartes, parts 1 & 2 of his *Discours de la methode*, has always struck me that way. All the properties assigned to philosophy by Descartes are really properties of art. His tone and procedure are such that we cannot expect to communicate with him. Neither does he in fact expect scientific communication. He presents his philosophy as a "tableau", a "fable". He merely asks us if we like it. His examples are all drawn from the arts. From them he concludes that we must do in philosophy what is done in the arts. And therein lies the disguised dogmatism of all modern philosophies. What has been called "l'émancipation de l'individu" is in philosophy the equivalent of the emancipation of art as a substitute for science. When today we oppose science to philosophy, we are really distinguishing pure science (philosophy which is rejected as science) and the sciences which are also essentially arts, i.e. mathematics and experimental science. And what is sought for in the latter is not the scientific aspect, but rather the artistic, the fabricative, the making and the shaping. If this is modern philosophy, there can be no communication between science, but only communication of products which have their principle not in the object, but in the maker. When modern philosophers go beyond science, they become pure artists. They have individual evidences, but no legitimate ones in certain domains of art, which by definition need no

justification. One does not argue about Bach. Our philosophers have adopted the attitude of the artist. When they do argue, they do so like art critics, not like men of science. They start from principles which they cannot even expect us to call into question. The attacks on Hutchins! Higher Learning are ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ really typical of this attitude. They are dictatorial in the true sense of the word. The trouble with America is that it is a land of dictators in the plural. Hutchins has been attacked because he has called into question the very essence of dictatorship in learning. - Going back to Descartes, we may consider him as the true father of all modern philosophies, in that he made philosophy practical science, that is an art or a prudence: "au lieu de cette philosophie spéculative qu'on enseigne dans les écoles, on en peut trouver une pratique par laquelle... nous pourrions... nous rendre comme maîtres et possesseurs de la nature". (part 6). Starting from this principle, the only logical system of philosophy today is dialectical materialism, a purely artistic conception of reality, a complete denial of speculation and nature. - In so far as modern philosophy has enclosed itself in the field of art, it has deliberately cut away the very possibility of communication, that is between modern philosophers and thomism, for instance. It is a philosophy that negates itself as philosophy.

If this is true, how can we expect to cooperate, to exchange views? We cannot lead them back to more fundamental principles. The mind that calls itself modern seems to be naturally incapable of going back to first principles and staying on them for a while. It lacks the natural quality of the philosopher: the ability to grasp immediately the transcendental import of first principles, of the "est" and "non est". It has the confidence of the animal. In fact, it does not need philosophy. The needs of this modern mind are so easily satisfied; the nature of the things it wants is essentially platitudinous. I can feel no sympathy for its ambition. As a philosopher, I don't even care. *Malum ut in pluribus in specie humana*, I expect no more. I do not wonder. It is all very natural.

Why must philosophy be a humane affair? a science for the many? If, per impossibile, it could become such, we would still have to wait until the philosopher is born. Why argue with people who are not sapientes? Remember I am speaking of philosophy. What St Thomas says, Ia, q. 22, a. 7, ad 3, is not a purely theological idea. It is a natural condition, as he explains in Comm. in I Sent., d. 39, c. 2, a. 2, ad 4. Here again Descartes broke away from philosophy. As St Thomas had said art fails "*ut in paucioribus*". If Descartes wanted a philosophy "*que ceux même qui n'ont point étudié peuvent comprendre*" he had to transform it into art, thus making it a product for the many.

As one who merely desires to know, I am content, rightly or wrongly, to understand that modern philosophers cannot help but think otherwise than they do; I know equally well that I cannot converse with them. Who argues with a tree? Can we argue with John Dewey? If I could, would it help me at all as one who desires to know for the sake of knowing?



Philosophers have no elections to win; they do not have to take seriously any one who happens to open his mouth to speak, as politicians must do. They are concerned primarily and formally with speculative truth, and they can communicate only with men who search for truth for its own sake. (This is another fundamental difference between Plato with his philosopher-ruler of the state, and Aristotle who distinguished the universe of science and that of prudence.) The lines along which modern matter develops have nothing to do with this subject matter; if they are building works of art, the philosopher cannot converse with them as philosopher. Hegel can be enjoyed only as an artist. Thomists have reproached Cajetan and John of St Thomas for ignoring the spirit of their time. This, I am sure, is a very superficial interpretation of their attitude. They were perfectly aware of the impossibility of approach. Cajetan could not argue with Luther. John of St Thomas refuted the essence of modern philosophy in his attacks upon Suarez, Vasquez and Molina, who are more modern than any of the modern philosophers. Here at least the theses of modern philosophy are clearly formulated. Modern mathematism begins with Scotus' univocism. The immediate foundation of modern idealism lies in Vasquez' doctrine of truth: "veritas transcendentalis consistit in sola denominatione extrinseca". Molina gave the fullest expression to humanism with his theory of free will: its most logical implication is communism. Modern philosophies are merely painful, indeterminate and superficial and unconscious popular deductions from these initial positions. We could not discuss with the latter unless they consented to go back to these sources. That would mean to start all over again the arguments on analogy, being, predetermination, speculative and practical habitus, etc. But they cannot do this; it is contrary to the very nature of what they assume as first principles.

There is however a lesson in all this. It shows what happens when we get the speculative and the practical intellect mixed up. This very confusion is already due to art. Therein lies the source of dialectical materialism. When the practical intellect becomes supreme, all that remains for us to do is to work, and all that remains for us to work upon is matter, pure potentiality, prime matter, not as a nature, but as privation, (Plato had failed to make this distinction), and privation becomes the absolute. David of Dinant's prime matter, deprived of all natural form, or perhaps deprived because of natural form to be replaced by artificial artificial forms, is an essential condition of what we mean by freedom today. Freedom itself we conceive as a negative indetermination.

The modern mind is naturally at ease in the indefinite, that bottomlessness the Greeks abhorred. This is to me its most irritating ingredient. That contentment in irresolution that resignation before death, that insensibility toward nothingness, that willingness to sink back into prime matter proclaiming at the same and as a first principle "le plus grand bien de l'Humanité". It is completely satisfied with a humanitarian ideal, an ideal which feeds on death and "corruption". It does not care where humanity leads to.

is content to make the world must both die and go on indefinitely. At the same time it does not see where humanity leads to. It is a modern civilisation can exist only in so far as it leads to an everlasting nowhere. It is conditioned by the negation of finality. It comes into being as a pact with death.

So long as it cannot be terrified by the very idea of the absence of finality, of absolute finality, it shall not be disposed to philosophize. It has no fear of the "nihil". It is like the stupid unconscious man who braves death without "fortitudo, quae est principaliter circa timores periculorum mortis". All this characterises an innate platitude against which nothing can be done. That is the point: we would have to do things. But philosophy as a science has no concern with doing, unless with Maritain we believe in a practical philosophy distinct from prudence, and from art. (This confusion is responsible for his "philosophie chrétienne" and his unfortunate mingling with politics. He postulates some sixth habitus of the intellect at the same time speculative and practical.)

The thinking of modern philosophers starting from Descartes is more like a transitive action than immanence. They must have an audience. Without it there would be no certainty and no reason for philosophy. Notwithstanding his much affected isolation and his cogito, monsieur Descartes never for a moment thought for himself. He really abhorred solitude: "Je crois qu'il serait très nuisible d'occuper souvent son entendement à les méditer (les principes métaphysiques)". This fear of transcendence pervades all his writings. In his Méditations there is not the faintest trace of meditation. He always characterises his philosophy as philosophy "comme utile à l'humanité", "pour l'honnête homme"; it is based on "la chose du monde la mieux partagée"; "Pour moi, je n'ai jamais présumé que mon esprit fût en rien plus parfait que ceux du commun". And when he writes "mon dessein n'est pas d'enseigner ici la méthode que chacun doit suivre pour bien conduire sa raison", he is acting like a politician. All his thought is governed by teaching an initial preoccupation to teach. So long as we cannot cut modern philosophers away from their audience through which they kid themselves, we cannot communicate with them. We are separated by that element of vulgarity so obvious in a Brunschvicg and a Dewey. Perhaps the German idealists are the only exception to this rule in so far as it concerns moral character. The French never had a philosophy for the mind as such. Bergson is not French in character and preoccupation.

I am at a loss to find in modern philosophy any positive contribution to philosophy. If it is merely negative, there can be no mutual communication. To us it can be no more than a spectacle. We can observe it, but we cannot speak to it.

If a modern philosopher put to work your suggestions, if he at least accepted the existence of other traditions, at least as paper and ink, I wonder how much time it would take him to become a modern philosopher. Imagine him plowing through the middle ages. He shall be at least grey-haired and bald before he can know approximately what he is talking about. This he will never do, if he does, he is not modern.

One cannot be both modern and openminded in the true sense of the word, i.e. objective. This objectivity is an innate quality of the intellect. It cannot be acquired. If you are open to scholasticism, it is not because scholasticism has opened it. Aristotle and Thomas are there to be recognised. All we have to do is to keep and develop them there. And this is where modern scholastics have failed, and where Cajetan, Banez, and John of St Thomas have succeeded. As speculative minds they could not have done more without contaminating themselves morally. Is it not true that Christ never gave a sermon to the high priests?

The contribution of modern thought is to be found exclusively in mathematics and experimental science. It has given us principles for philosophy of science, but not even a philosophy of science. How could it? Modern philosophy itself has contributed nothing to philosophy of science. On the other hand, as a thomist, I have no difficulty with modern scientific method and theories. I can justify the method to the last word. If Maritain has quarrel with Einstein, it is because he himself confuses quantity with the "modi quantitativi" of the "sensibilia communia" and with metrical structure. If he rejects indeterminism in nature, it is because he has fallen in line with the jesuit tradition. (In his *Réflexions sur la nécessité et la contingence*, Angelicum, Jan. 1937, he is really defending the molinist theory of supercomprehensio, according to which it is enough for God to know all the ingredients of the world to know the future in the presence of eternity.) Anything modern philosophy, as such, has said about philosophy of science can be no more than an obstacle to philosophy of science.

There is indeed some analogy between the general problem of the middle ages, philosophy-theology, and that of our day, philosophy-science. But it is a very weak one. The ratio deitatis of catholic theology, and the ratio entis of natural thought, are both complete in their own right. This is not true of philosophy and science communicating in the same light of reason. The various degrees of natural knowledge are not radically distinct like natural and the supernatural. The difference is like that between war and revelation. The formality studied by experimental science is already a contraction, and if we must start therefrom, we can never get beyond this contraction. The *Summa contra Gentiles* was written for persons who accept either metaphysics or revelation. If they accept metaphysics, they accept a hidden supernatural order which might freely communicate itself. If they accept revelation without being fideists, they must accept metaphysics. There is a certain coextension between philosophy and theology. This is not the case in philosophy and science: the relation is that of the part to the whole. There was common ground between philosophy and theology, because they are at the same time radically distinct and somehow coextensive. If we assimilate this distinction to that of philosophy and science, on the contrary, we are really throwing out either philosophy or science. The philosopher and the theologian can converse together. If philosophy and science were distinct in the

# The University of Chicago

The Law School

May 20, 1938

CHICAGO

Mr. Charles deKoninck  
28 St. John Street  
Quebec City, Quebec

Dear Mr. deKoninck:

Thank you very much for your kind note of recent date. I shall be interested to receive your observations at greater length which you promise to send sometime. I am aware of the discussion by John of St. Thomas concerning the status of logic as a science and as an art. I think I agree with at least the following points he makes: (1) that as a science, logic is speculative and not practical in that meaning of practical as applied to science which refers to the order of moral ends; (2) that as a speculative science, it is distinguished from all the other speculative sciences by having a formal object exclusively in the second intention; (3) that as an art, logic is not only liberal in the sense opposed to servile, but speculative in the sense opposed to fine. So far, it seems to me John of St. Thomas goes and I go with him, but it seems necessary to go further and to consider what is the most fundamental distinction among the arts, namely, the distinction between those which are practical such as medicine, navigation, and those which are productive such as shoe making and sculpture. (Note: The word "practical" is here being used in a totally different sense and has no moral connotations. The distinction here between practical and productive is whether the art cooperates with nature to produce effects which nature would produce itself without art or whether the art operates on natural substances to produce individual entities that would not come about in the course of natural change.) In view of this distinction it seemed necessary to say that logic can be viewed both as productive and as practical. As productive its works are such logical products as propositions, syllogisms and sciences. As practical it is the art of teaching and being taught. I say all this to clarify the point which I made somewhat too briefly in the paper on Tradition and Communication.

You speak of the parallels I draw between Aristotle's natural philosophy and dialectical materialism. You must be referring to my discussion of that point in What Man Has Made of Man and not in Tradition and Communication. I should very much like to hear what you have to say on that whole point because in general I have the feeling that you and I agree on many points in natural philosophy. I have read your paper on contingency and not only agree with your essential thesis about real contingency in natural phenomena, but also I find in your discussion some support for my own insight that there are only five real species of composite substances, that all the other subordinate distinctions which are too often loosely called species are only accidental units which have a certain genetic consistency and only that. This of course bears critically upon the problem of evolution and the whole point of contingency in nature. I hope we can find time to discuss these matters together, because by and large the points you are



# The University of Chicago

The Law School

Mr. deKoninck

- 2 -

May 20, 1938

CHICAGO

trying to make in the philosophy of nature and those I have been interested in are generally not apprehended by our most respected colleagues.

I wonder whether you received a copy of a little lecture of mine entitled St. Thomas and the Gentiles? I would be interested indeed to get your critical reactions to the main thesis of that.

With pleasant memories of our last meeting, I am

Sincerely yours,

*Mortimer J. Adler*

mja:jk

# The University of Chicago

The Law School

CHICAGO  
February 25, 1941

Dr. Charles DeKoninck  
25 Ave. Ste. Genevieve  
Province of Quebec  
Canada

Dear Dr. DeKoninck:

I think the editors of the Thomist have already written you concerning my article (to appear in the April issue) and their desire to have you carry the argument forward by writing an article on the same general theme.

*science. 1*  
I think I have solved the problem of species — in other words, I think there is no problem left now because the position which affirms four or five specific natures in the corporeal order can be completely proved to be true; whereas the contrary position can be shown to be absolutely untenable within the framework of the Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy of nature. In addition to making these proofs perfectly evident, the article does two other things: (1) it clarifies the use of the word "species" in ontological and in logical discourse and in doing so clarifies, I hope, the whole problem of the relation of ontology and logic; (2) it proposes a clear formulation of the relation between natural philosophy and natural ~~science~~. On both of these points our scholastic contemporaries seem to be very sorely confused, as all the discussion of my book so plainly indicated.

Jean McCall wrote me that you were planning to do an article for the Thomist dealing mainly with the problem of <sup>the</sup> logical and the ontological consideration of species. I hope you will execute this resolve, because much work is needed to make our contemporaries really see the true solution here. In this connection it is my hope that you will find my article in the April Thomist a good springboard for the article you are planning to write. You can well imagine that I shall wait impatiently for the day when you have completed the reading of this forthcoming article of mine; I have a feeling that you will agree with it in substance, but I am very anxious to get your reactions in detail.

If you ever get the opportunity to write me, will you let me know about plans for the summer session at Laval. I am still considering the possibility of coming up to Quebec to give a short series of lectures, in order to enjoy the opportunity of long conversations with

Dr. Charles DeKoninck

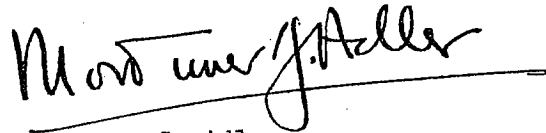
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February 25, 1941

you. My plans for the summer are still indefinite, but I think I shall take my family to the Atlantic seashore somewhere in New England. I do not think it would be difficult for me, once I have them settled, to get to Quebec for a couple of weeks.

With kindest regards.

Cordially yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Mortimer J. Adler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Mortimer J. Adler

P. S. I must say one thing more now. The book on species contained one serious error. None of its critics really discovered it, though one or two, notably Pegis of Fordham, almost had their finger on it. When I discovered the error and corrected it, I found the solution to the problem. If I had not made the error in the first place, I would never have supposed that what is called in the book, the second theory of species, could be tenable at all.

October 6, 1941.

Miss Janet Kalven,  
5200 Blackstone Avenue,  
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Janet,

I met Mr. Hutchins just after he handed me Boezelkuff's stockings. He was all that you and Mortimer had said. He asked me so many questions and of such a nature that I thought it necessary to make it understood that I was not looking for a job. He said he knew, and that he would probably be the one looking for a job. He wants me to send him some bibliography, although I had told him that I am not much of a writer. Do you think I should also send him a list of lectures I have already given to Mortimer?

You and the two gentlemen Hewood and Patrick, if I got their names right, were certainly good to me. And I realized it all the more on my return to Chicago last Friday. I had gone to Saint Paul and returned by plane, a Western Airline's Taxi took me way down town into the heart of confusion and left me there on the curb (is this what you call a mixed metaphor?) Somehow I managed to walk my way to the Windermere where I left my baggage and then rushed to Hutchin's office, which wasn't there. The hotel clerk had sent me to some Registration Office. Anyhow I got to Hutchin's office ten minutes before time. Then I got back to the hotel to get some information about the trains. I was wrongly informed both as to the station my train left from and as to the hours. My lack of confidence in the



man who gave me the information finally got me to the right station where I still had four hours to wait. It was a miserable noisy Chicago dump and I buried myself in a movie for the time where I saw two remarkably lousy pictures. I slept from Chicago to Toronto. Then I had a most miserable time in Montreal, because the train conductors had given me bad information both as to station and hours of departure. Instead of getting home on Saturday evening I got here yesterday morning at three o'clock. But it was so good to be back home that nothing mattered. It was only in Toronto that I realized that I had not paid for the stockings. I snapped out of it when I looked into my portefeuille. If I had paid for them I would not have had enough money to get back home. My forgetfulness had a good side to it. Smotje is very pleased with the stockings, they are the right size, and the shade is better than she had called for.

After all this confusion I appreciate the more Quebec's relative calm. I told the children about the aquarium, about the plane. You should have seen their reaction. Thanking you again for your kindness. Smotje and the children send you their best wishes.

# The University of Chicago

The Law School

CHICAGO November 18, 1941

Professor Charles DeKoninck  
25 Avenue Ste. Genevieve  
Quebec  
P.Q., Canada

Dear Charles:

I am sorry that I have not had a chance to write you all these long months, but I assure you that though what I have been occupied with is less worth while, still it has been time consuming indeed. I have either been in New York doing work there, on the road lecturing, or chained to my typewriter meeting deadlines. I wish I had your lightheartedness about deadlines, or is there some other moral defect in you which permits you to whistle as they go by? As a matter of fact, you are holding up that ~~Brendan~~ volume, which injures me personally, since I worked terribly hard to meet a September 15 deadline. If you haven't got the article done by this time, I hope this letter gives you a kick in the pants.

Hutchins, as you may have guessed yourself, was delighted to have met you, and he really is anxious to arrange a visiting lectureship here at the University of Chicago. He even thinks he can propose you for an appointment to the Philosophy Department, but I personally think he is nuts. Knowing my colleagues, I don't think he could possibly manage that from the point of view of his limited monarchy, but I do think that he can wangle a lecture series which will be very worth while indeed. (To this end he asked you to send him your academic biography and your list of publications. You have not yet done that. I don't think the biography you sent me is adequate so far as bibliography is concerned. I think you should make a complete list of your various writings with full references. Will you please sit down at your typewriter and send this off to him right away?) I also suggest that when you do this you send him an outline of a course of lectures just by title of the various parts of the series. I think the best thing to do would be to lecture about the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of science.

I have had some difficulty with your list of lectures. I have gone over them with Leigh and his judgment on them is what I felt it would be, namely, that as outlined they are much

*Parkin - Bot  
called and  
said it had  
just arrived!*

November 18, 1941

too technical for him to be able to use in promoting you as a lecturer. If you are still interested in being a popular lecturer either to popular audiences or even to college audiences, which are not much better than popular audiences, will you try to write just six lecture outlines on the same level as the two lectures entitled "If Death is the End" and "Have We Lost Faith in the Human Intellect?" Even the second of these as you have outlined it is too high-brow. Don't misunderstand me. There is no reason why the lectures themselves when you give them shouldn't be as high-brow as you want to make them. I have a resolute policy in public lecturing to speak as far above the audience's head as possible, and I have found that is a right and successful policy. The point here is not what the lecture is, but how it is described in a lecture bureau folder. At the risk of scandalizing you or of becoming an object of your anything but innocent merriment I am sending you a lecture folder that Leigh got out for me two or three years ago. This will give you an idea of what the lecture business is like.

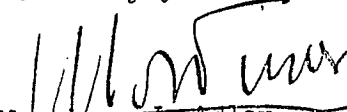
I sincerely believe that it would do you a lot of good to undertake popular lecturing — quite apart from the fun of traveling and the additional income. My reason for saying this is I think a philosopher should suffer the pains and have the experience of trying to make important ideas plain to ordinary people. Otherwise he gets all tied up in his own jargon and he is quite content with technical ~~verboosity~~ *virtuosity* instead of common intelligibility. I don't expect you to get this material to me at once, but any time before Christmas will do.

I am sending you under separate cover a copy of Diagramatics, which I think you will enjoy. I would like your reaction to it. It was written many years ago, but I am still fond of it.

I am also sending you a copy of my last book and the reprint of a recent article. I don't expect you to read these in the immediate future.

I am still nursing my regrets over the fact that I missed you while you were here, if for no other reason than that I have sworn a sacred vow to get you drunk on Bourbon and toddies. Janet has no special competence in this line, but there is a do or die wager between us that I can do it. Do write me when you get a chance, or should I say make the chance and write me? Please give my fond greetings to Zoe, and my best to you.

Sincerely yours,

  
Mortimer J. Adler

# The University of Chicago

The Law School

CHICAGO April 8, 1942

Dear Charles:

I am writing to find out how soon your bulletin for the summer session goes to press. I am almost certain that I shall be able to come to Laval this summer, as we had arranged, but certain contingencies in connection with the war may interfere with all my plans. Hence, two questions: (1) How late can I let you know definitely whether or not I shall be able to come, and (2) How badly will you be inconvenienced and embarrassed if I am compelled to change my plans at the last moment, even after I have definitely said that I thought I could come? I ask you the second question because there is no <sup>what</sup> controlling contingencies this year. Hence, if it would be a great inconvenience to you to have me wash out at the last moment, perhaps I ought to say now that I cannot come, even though the major likelihood at the present moment is that I will be able to come.

Since you are an expert in practical thinking, please exercise your prudence about this matter. Because I would like to have an answer from you about this in any event, perhaps you had better exercise some other virtues too.

I hope your health has improved considerably since our meeting in December, and that you are not too depressed by the world situation.

Please give my kind regards to Zoe, and tell her I hope that conditions will permit me to come back to Quebec this summer.

The book on Analogy, some 330 pages, is finished, but precisely when it will be published, I don't know. I am at present working on Part IV of "The Theory of Democracy." You will find yourself referred to, though not named, in the concluding sections of Part III, which appears in the April issue of the Thomist.

When you do write, you might take an extra paragraph to tell me what you have been working at; and also you might tell



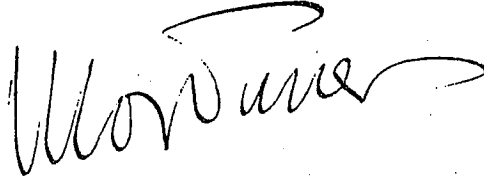
Professor Charles De Koninck

-2-

April 8, 1942

me in what field you would like me to develop my lectures for this summer. Perhaps, in the light of last summer's experience, you have some more radical suggestions to make about the whole procedure.

As ever yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mortimer J. Adler". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large, sweeping initial "M".

Mortimer J. Adler

Professor Charles De Koninck  
Laval University  
Quebec City  
Quebec, Canada

April 11, 1942.

Dr. Mortimer J. Adler,  
The Law School  
University of Chicago  
Chicago, Illinois.

Dear Mortimer,

The bulletin is already printed. I haven't seen it yet but you'll receive a copy some time next week. You're in it. You're going to speak on some problem concerning logic during the last part of the session. So it looks as if you were coming. Who could blame me if the war interferes with our plans? I have been working on nothing in particular outside the preparation of my lectures and the direction of these, which range from Nietzsche's "Will to Power" to Russell's "Class of Classes". As you must know by now, I gave up the Brennan essay, for the simple reason that I did not know enough to write it. More sleep has improved my health considerably. *considerably*

I will write you again next week about your lectures, and make a few suggestions.

Remember me to Janet.

As ever,

The University of Chicago

The Law School

CHICAGO May 19, 1942

Dear Charles:

I have waited as long as it seemed reasonably possible to wait before writing you a final decision on the summer. I very much regret to say that it now looks quite impossible for me to come to Quebec this summer. I shall not trouble you with a detailed report of all the complications that stand in the way, but you will understand that they must be both considerable and insuperable to force me to relinquish a pleasure I had looked forward to ever since last August.

I hope this will not prove an inconvenience to you, and more than that I hope you will invite me another time when the war makes all these pleasant and peaceful pursuits once again possible.

I am sending you under separate cover a little piece that may amuse you.

Janet joins me in sending to you, Zoe, and les enfants our warm regards.

As ever yours,

W. H. Murray

# The University of Chicago

The Law School

CHICAGO November 25, 1942

Dear Charles —

You put to me a practical question without giving me enough of the facts that I need to know in order to answer the question. You do speak of the first two weeks of December. With respect to that time I can answer: (1) that I will be out of Chicago most of the time, and (2) that it would be much too soon to arrange a lecture for you here at Chicago. Even so, I would have to know specific dates and days of the week, in order to know definitely what my own program would be at the time, and what the chances are of arranging a lecture here at the University.

If you can postpone the expedition until January or February, please write me as soon as you can the precise dates when, in view of all your other engagements, you might be able to be in Chicago. Then I shall be able to write you, first whether I will be in Chicago and free at that time, and second, what the chances are of getting a lecture at the University. On the second point, I must tell you at once that the chances are likely to be slim for two reasons: first, that the University is completely disorganized by the war and our whole program of getting men into training for the army, and second, that the matter will have to go through McKeon's hands, unless Hutchins can manage to arrange it quite independently of the faculty, which will not be easy. In any case, I shall do my best on the matter as soon as I know the precise dates. I certainly would hate to have you be in or around Chicago without having a chance of seeing you.

"The Theory of Democracy" ought to be finished sometime in 1944. It has at least five or six more installments to come. When you say that you disagree with my theory of the common good, I hope that you are doing so on the basis of having read more than Part II. All of Part III is absolutely relevant, and even some of Part IV must be read before you are in a position to disagree. I also hope that you have read carefully footnote 263, on page 337 of the issue for April, 1941, because I wrote that footnote as a direct rebuttal of what I thought to be the fallacious objection you presented to me last Christmas in Philadelphia. Unless you have a better objection than that, I can't imagine what your argument comes to.

As a matter of fact, I cannot even believe that you disagree, any more than I was able to believe that you disagreed

Mr. Charles De Koninck

-2-

November 25, 1942

with my theory of species. I was told that you did, before we met in Quebec, but I kept insisting that you couldn't possibly, and after our discussions there ~~you said~~ that the disagreement was entirely verbal and not real. I have the same conviction about this matter. My hunch is that the problem is largely verbal, and that you are either sticking too literally to the words of Aristotle and St. Thomas, or that you are failing to understand my position, because you are misreading my words as if I were using them in precisely the same sense as St. Thomas uses the same words. *I've found*

Of one thing, however, I am quite sure. If you really believe that St. Thomas (and Aristotle) are either correct or adequate in their account of the order of temporal and natural goods, and hence the common good in this order, then, of course, we do disagree, because I think they are both quite wrong on many fundamental points, though right on some. I am sure, in any case, that you will try to present an argument quite independent of the authority of Aristotle or St. Thomas. That is the only sort of argument I would really be interested in, though I should be happy to consider the less important matter of how to interpret their words, which are often thoroughly ambiguous and capable of many diverse interpretations.

My warmest regards to Zoe, and my best to you.

As ever yours,

*Montmar*



# The University of Chicago

The Law School

*Adler*  
*clm.*

CHICAGO January 26, 1943

Dear Charles —

Thank you for sending me the reprints. As a matter of fact, someone else had sent me the same copy, but I had to return it, and that is why I wanted some copies of my own. I have already taken the time to read the thing through hastily, but, as you know, I shall want to have a precise translation made before I am prepared to tell you what I think. If, however, you will permit me to make some tentative remarks in advance of more careful study, I think I can say that your criticisms don't touch my work at all. I will show you this in detail later. The reason why they don't touch my work at all is because you haven't sufficiently attended to the distinctions and definitions I have made. You have failed to observe the three meanings of the words "common good," you have failed to observe how sharply I have distinguished between the private individual good and the common individual good, and you have failed to keep the discussion of the common good as an object of justice, distinct from the discussion of the common good as an object of love. In short, I tentatively suggest that you may be attacking some wrong notions, but you aren't attacking my position. On the other hand, I am attacking yours, because you are still holding to a traditional statement of a doctrine which can be true, but which isn't true as St. Thomas states it. This I will prove to you in detail. I was acquainted with most of the texts you cited, but I must confess that these texts simply indicate difficulties and inadequacies in the traditional statement, rather than clear and sound doctrine.

All this, let me say once more, <sup>is</sup> in advance of a long and carefully written letter giving my arguments in detail. If, in the meantime, you get a chance to reread Parts II and III of "The Theory of Democracy," and find therein all the distinctions which you seem to have missed, you will save me a good deal of trouble by letting me know that I don't have to write the long letter to show you why your criticism doesn't touch my theory.

One further word. One reason for your misunderstandings, I think, is that you somehow insist upon supposing that the language of St. Thomas is unambiguous or adequate. On the contrary, St. Thomas uses most of his basic words ambiguously — and I don't mean analogically — I mean equivocally.

It is true that Janet has joined a religious order — the Ladies of the Grail. It seems to have been the thing she wanted to do most, and she is now extremely happy.