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Dear Dr. Adler,

Being the beast 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 jungle of incoherent reflections that I had intended to shear 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.

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 those subjects. This notwithstanding that I feel you have not enjoyed the rigorous schooling of a scholastic. What 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 Maritainist, 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 men 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 picnic. The two hundred students who 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 "intellectus speculativus extensione fit practicus"; I want to make this extension worth while, the more so that I see more clearly everyday that the study of the elders gives deeper insight into all modern philosophy. I encourage my students to work on such authors as Fonseca, Vasquez, Suarez etc.

I notice in your letter that what I have said in the notes on logic and art is not sufficient to make my point clear. I am afraid we would have to discuss some rather fundamental questions before coming to the subject under discussion. But I will try to make a few suggestions that might put you on the path of the point I am trying to convey.

See note 13, p. 15 —To this I add that of course I distinguish art from prudence, but both are practical for the same reason: contingency. (*Ethics*, B. vi, ch. 1-3, St. Thomas, comm.)

Whether an art is "cooperativa naturæ" as medicine and bridge-building, or aesthetic, which is still a *mimèsis* of nature, does not alter its status as practical, and therefore distinct from the speculative. All art is productive, even medicine—not of health, but of the circumstances favouring the operation of nature. And no art can be anything but imitation of nature. Even God, whose art takes the purest form, cannot but imitate his own nature. The most perfect art of the creatures—the "laus" proffered and addressed to God by the intellects enjoying the beatific vision (*Ia*, q. 107, a. 3)—is a production and essentially practical. The Incarnation is a work of practical art—"et homo factus est".

Practical and productive are distinct only when the production remains within the speculative intellect as is possible only in logic and mathematics, both strictly human sciences. (The geometrising God of Plato and Jeans is a monstrosity, and I admire Eddington for rebuking this idea).

So that the main issue remains as I have stated it in the notes: no created science can be both speculative and practical. Divine art is always practical. Even the "futuribilia" are inseparable from the decrees which imply will. This is the point we should be able to agree upon before discussing the others.

Before expanding on the question of dialectical materialism—I would have developed more in detail what I have on it in the notes had I known you are particularly interested—I would like to know what you think about what I have already said.

I have a student here who is very much interested in President Hutchins' writings and the discussions they have elicited. He would have a bibliography of the main attacks on his Higher Learning. Perhaps you could have one of your students indicate the main articles.

I only wish you were here for the open discussions to be held during the summer session of Laval. Then we could do something. Father Bellperche will be here. There would be room for you in our apartment! We should be able to spend a few days together sometime, soon.

Au plaisir de vous lire.

1. I am always conscious of the utter impossibility of meeting modern philosophers on a common ground. They are essentially dogmatic. They are forever telling us. They are like poets who are not to be interrupted.

They cannot stay on first principles. On the other hand, they always start from a flock 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-ways. 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 "quoad nos". This Descartes has thrown overboard. The result is: philosophy itself becomes dialectics.

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 1 & 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 we 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 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 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. When 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 like art critics, not like men of science. They start from principles which they cannot ever expect us to call into question.

In science the object is first principles, it is the measure. On the contrary "principium artis est in faciente". "In scientiis practicis finis est quasi constructio ipsius subiecti".¹ In perennial philosophy, the object is the dictator. In modern philosophy, the philosopher is the dictator. Intellectual dictatorship is the very essence of modern philos-

¹ Dicit ergo primo quod scientia dicitur una, ex hoc quod est unius generis subiecti. Cuius ratio est, quia processus scientiae cuiuslibet est quasi quidam motus rationis. Cuiuslibet autem motus unitas ex termino principaliter consideratur, ut patet in V physicorum, et ideo oportet quod unitas scientiae consideretur ex fine sive ex termino scientiae. Est autem cuiuslibet scientiae finis sive terminus, genus circa quod est scientia: quia in speculativis scientiis nihil aliud quaeritur quam cognitio generis subiecti; in practicis autem scientiis intenditur quasi finis constructio ipsius subiecti. Sicut in geometria intenditur quasi finis cognitio magnitudinis, quae est subiectum geometriae; in scientia autem aedificativa intenditur quasi finis constructio domus, quae est huiusmodi artis subiectum. Unde relinquitur quod cuiuslibet scientiae unitas secundum unitatem subiecti est attendenda. Sed sicut unius generis subiecti unitas est communior quam alterius, ut puta entis sive substantiae quam corporis mobilis, ita etiam una scientia communior est quam alia. Post. Anal. I. lectio 51, n. 7.

ophy. How can we converse with dictators in philosophy? We cannot even indulge in dialectics. We have no common object. The philosopher makes the object, 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 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”. (*Disc.* part 6)²

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 starting point 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, ars non deficit nisi ut in paucioribus”. (*Ia*, q. 23, a. 7, ad 3; *Q. de Potentia*, q. 3, a. 6, ad 5; *In sentent.*, B. I, d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4, etc.)

Aristotle’s philosophy was a “divine” 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, 493e 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.e. a speculative science, not apologetics or proselytizing, I do not 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 become a humane affair? If per impossibile it could become such, we would still have to wait until the philosopher is born. We cannot *make* philosophers as modern philosophy would. Why argue with people who are not *sapientes*? The average American philosopher is merely platitude 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 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*.

The lines along which modern philosophy develops has nothing to do with this subject-matter. It starts from a desire to make, not to know: the unmade is synonym 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 mathematism in his attacks on Scotus’ univocism.

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 futility of any attempt. They have been reproached for this attitude. This interpretation

² “Instead of the speculative philosophy which is now taught in the schools [i.e., Scholastic philosophy] we can find a practical one, by which, knowing the nature and behavior of fire, water, air, stars, the heavens, and all the other bodies which surround us . . . we can employ these entities for all the purposes for which they are suited, and so make ourselves masters and possessors of nature.”

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 admit that revelation plays a great part in the dialectical prolegomena to philosophy in the christian world, but philosophy is not dialectics, nor history of philosophy.

In the above mentioned authors, the fundamental theses of modern philosophy (unknown to modern philosophers) are clearly stated. As I said, modern mathematism 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 cut away from God, it is drawn outside of being *to come back upon it*. Logically, being will become a subject to act upon. But this time we are putting the accent on freedom. To a Thomist this means that in creating free beings God literally alienates his power as absolute cause of all "esse". 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.

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 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 naturæ". *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 *Q. 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 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 [is] 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, 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.

If Molina were right, then the expression of freedom 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". 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 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.

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 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 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 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 inquisition tried to *do* things. That is about all that could be done. But philosophy has no concern with the doing, unless of course with Maritain we believe in a practical philosophy distinct from prudence and from art. (This confusion is responsible for his philosophie chretienne 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 "aliis tradere" is prior to "contemplari". Without an audience there would be no certainty and no reason for philosophy. Notwithstanding his much affected isolation and his cogito, monsieur Des-

cartes 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 présume 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 kid themselves, we cannot communicate with them. We are separated from them by that element of vulgarity so obvious in a Brunschvieg and a Dewey. Perhaps certain German idealists are at least in part an exception to this rule in so far at least as it concerns moral character. 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 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 affranchised 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 a distinct feature of 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 the most absolute form of voluntarism, though I wonder whether the philosophy of Nirvana is not even more logical and radical in its direct self-extinction, 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 affranchisement of self, but at the affranchisement 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 hylemorphism is fundamentally opposed to dialectical materialism. In Aristotle's philosophy of nature there are three principles: matter, form, and privation. In Plato's there 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 also desire itself as something both to be and not to be. On the contrary, matter is the *appetitus naturalis*, its object being the form, the determination, which is something divine. Prime matter is the potentiality of matter as a nature, an appetite of form; privation is matter as deprived of what it tends to. (*ibid.*, c. 9)

Dialectical materialism inverts this order and considers matter as a desire to be freed of the form, as a desire for privation. Or if you wish, it considers Aristotle's form as a privation for matter, not as its perfection. Hence, matter must be deprived of its form. From this we obtain Aristotle's matter as privation.

Hegel's triad is the inverse of Aristotle's. In the latter, the new compositum is not the result of a conflict: the contrariety of form and privation is not its cause. In Hegel, generation seems to be the consequence of corruption; whereas in Aristotle, corruption is an accidental consequence of generation; and the compositum is no synthesis of contraries. Privation is a principle, but not a cause; and in this it differs from matter and form which are natures, i.e. both principles and causes (*archè 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 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 process of "dépouillement". 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 dépouillement is necessary for the fulfillment 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 so soon as they are accomplished. Freedom meaning affranchissement, it must remain separated, and bent exclusively on deprivation.

This dialectical process of undetermining leads logically 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 industrialization 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 civilization 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 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 act.

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 Instit. 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. Now 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 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. Its 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 confused quantity with the "modi quantitativi": of the "sensibilia communia quæ 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 "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 s.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 eternity, so that the causality is the reason of their presence.

Note 47, p. 206, 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.* 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. This 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 metaphysician is *naturally* open to the supernatural order. (*Contra Gentes*, III, ch. 25 and 50)

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 open-mindedness: the negation of intellectus. It is obsessed by the demon of fabrication. It would do as the dark angels whose sin consisted in an effort to shape 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 recognized an object.

One cannot be both modern (always in the vulgar sense of the word) and open-minded, 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 presence of same object, but they do not heed it. Aristotle and Thomas are *there* to be recognized. I think that the first and main thing we have to do in their respect is to keep and develop them there as 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 s. 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 opposes 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 is implied in the Thomistic conception of the *primum cognitum*, as opposed 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. 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 Dewulf 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 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, Leibniz 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 nearing the bottom of disintegration. 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 extrinsicism. 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 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 IIæ*, q. 57, a. 5)

Logic directs the operations of the speculative intellect. Teaching is a “*processio ad extra*”: therefore practical, and consequently a distinct *habitus*. 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 rhetoric 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 Moillet, 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 “*meppris*” 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*.