

Making Theology Practical: Thomas Aquinas and The Nineteenth Century Religious Revival¹

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Pierre Colin, in one of the few scholarly and useful papers to be found in the massive eight volumes of the proceedings of the Eighth International Thomistic Congress, put on in 1980 by the Pontifical Roman Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas, to celebrate — a year late — the centenary of Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, tells us about the philosophical context of the restoration of Thomism in France at the end of the nineteenth century. Monsieur Colin informs us that "it is most exact to say that the end of the century knew two parallel movements: the renaissance of Thomism in ecclesiastical teaching, the institution of a French Kantianism in university instruction. The two movements have the same objective: to restore a true spiritualism." They are both preoccupied with the problems posed by experimental science and both are anti-materialist. Thus the revival of St. Thomas has a rapport with "the idealism" of the end of the nineteenth century.²

Professor John Rogerson, in his new book *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century, England and Germany*, tells us what were "the philosophical and theological conditions" at the end of the nineteenth century in England which enabled the English to accept the "critical method as practised in Old Testament scholarship."³ He shows us that Catholics, like Charles Gore and R. L. Ottley, Cambridge scholars, like B. F. Westcott, and Evangelicals also, took to Old Testament criticism in virtue of a new belief in the religious value

1. A portion of this paper was delivered to the Lightfoot Society of the University of Durham on 20 November 1984 under the title "Thomas Aquinas and the Nineteenth Century Religious Revival"; another small portion was delivered to the Eighth International Thomistic Congress held in Rome in 1980 to celebrate the centenary of Pope Leo XIII's "*Aeterni Patris*" and is published in the proceedings as "Pope Leo's Purposes and St. Thomas' Platonism", *Atti del VIII Congresso Tomistico Internazionale*, ed. A. Piolanti, 8 vol., viii, Studi Tomistici 17 (Pontificia Accademia di S. Tommaso, Citta'del Vaticano, 1982), pp.39-52.

2. Pierre Colin, "Contexte philosophique de la restauration du thomisme en France à la fin du XIXe siècle", *Atti dell'VIII Congresso Tomistico Internazionale*, ii, Studi Tomistici 11, (Citta'del Vaticano, 1981), pp. 57-64; the quotations are drawn from pp. 62-64.

3. John Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century, England and Germany* (London, 1984), p. 291.

and truth of progressive revelation. This was a progress by which the moral and intellectual education of the human race developed and proceeded. Professor Rogerson does not remind us that these men also believed implicitly, or explicitly, that the current agent of this progress was the culture of the contemporary European states. He does indicate, however, that these partisan Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals were picking up from where the more limited acceptance of the results of critical scholarship by the writers of *Essays and Reviews* in 1860 left off. Thus, the first major public appearance of Biblical criticism among the English was seen on the stage with the same backdrop as the later acceptance. This is a confidence in the need and usefulness of reading the Bible historically, that is, undisturbed by what are called philosophical and theological prejudices, and a confident belief in the ongoing moral and scientific advance of humanity.⁴ We may indicate the character of this reconciliation of culture and Christianity by recollecting the title of Frederick Temple's piece for *Essays and Reviews*, "The Education of the World" and the aim of B. F. Westcott's, *The Gospel of the Resurrection, thoughts on its relation to reason and history*, as stated in the Preface of 1866, to "show that the supposed incompatibility of a devout belief in the life of Christ with a broad view of the course of human progress and a frank trust in the laws of our own minds, is wholly imaginary."⁵ This optimistic reconciliation of the Scripture, interpreted historically without philosophical bias, and of modern science, philosophy and moral progress is associated in England with the Balliol neo-Kantian progressive idealism of men like Benjamin Jowett and T. H. Green.⁶

Professor Rogerson is not very helpful in identifying the precise character of the philosophical forms which he shows both create and make acceptable Old Testament criticism in nineteenth century Germany and England. Like the opponents of the critics, for example, Henry Liddon, he tends to over use 'Hegelianism' as a category. D. F. Strauss, Wilhelm Vatke, Julius Wellhausen, T. H. Green are all called Hegelian even though the first two explicitly, correctly, and critically distinguished their positions from Hegel's, though Wellhausen's position is nearer to Nietzsche's than to any other

4. For *Essays and Reviews* see especially Benjamin Jowett's piece as well as that of Temple; Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism*, Chapter 15; W. J. Hankey in *No Abiding City, Essays in the desecularization of Christianity*, ed. W. Oddie, (London, 1986), forthcoming and J. L. Altholz, "The Mind of Victorian Orthodoxy: Anglican Responses to *Essays and Reviews*, 1860-1864", *Church History* 51 (1982), 186-197.

5. B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection, thoughts on its relation to reason and history*, first edition 1866, eighth (London, 1902), pp.xxi-xxii.

6. Rogerson, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

philosophy and though the Christian followers of the Balliol idealists elevate the moral and down grade the speculative in a way that is Kantian in clear contradistinction from Hegel.⁷

J. R. Illingworth in his *Divine Transcendence* asserts that the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation are historical, and that:

Our knowledge of them is, in the well-known phrase, regulative rather than speculative. It rules our conduct, that is to say, rather than informs our intellect.⁸

With Bishops Westcott and Gore, he thinks that the absoluteness of Christianity, its capacity to hold men still and always, is demonstrated by its appeal to us as persons who feel and must act as well as reason. Bishop Gore holds that these doctrines are "primarily negative".⁹ In decreeing them, the Church "was not professing to act philosophically". Rather, "its aim was practical".¹⁰ The true doctrines stand for "permanent and practical religion".¹¹ For Fr. Illingworth, despite their circumscribed character, the fundamental doctrines are still valid because they "afford a fixed and authoritative standard for our practical life; which rescues it from the intellectual vagueness, the unreal sentimentalism, the moral hesitation which we continually see arising from indefinite and hypothetical conceptions of God."¹²

For these three Anglican divines, the Scriptural facts and credal formulas represent a religion which still provides the motive of the "moral advance of the individual and the race".¹³ The appeal of this Christianity, providing "a fixed and authoritative basis for our practical life", rests "upon an instinctive consciousness of our

7. H. P. Liddon, *The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: eight lectures preached before the University of Oxford in the year 1866*, 7th ed. (London, Oxford, Cambridge, 1875), pp. 501-502; Horton Harris, *David Friedrich Strauss and his Theology* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 76, 79ff., 136, 242, 270-71, also D. F. Strauss, *The Life of Jesus critically examined*, translated from the fourth German edition, 3 vol. (London, 1846), iii, sections 149-151; on Vatke cf. Rogerson, *op. cit.*, 69-71; on Julius Wellhausen, Rogerson, *op. cit.*, p. 266; with which compare R. Smend (esp. at p. 14) and D. A. Knight in *Julius Wellhausen and His "Prolegomena to the History of Israel"*, ed. D. A. Knight, Semela 25 (Chicago, 1982).

8. J. R. Illingworth, *Divine Transcendence and its reflection in Religious Authority* (London, 1911), p. 131. I am grateful to Fr. Douglas Duprée of Balliol College for pointing me to these features of Illingworth's thought.

9. Charles Gore, *Belief in Christ, Reconstruction of Belief 2* (London, 1922), p. 218. Fr. Gordon Neish, Christ Church Rectory, New Ross, N.S. directed me to these features of Bishop Gore's work.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 220-21.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

12. Illingworth, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

13. B. S. Westcott, "Christianity as the Absolute Religion", *Essays in the History of Religious Thought in the West*, (London, 1903), p. 353.

whole personality, in which feeling, will and action all play their part".¹⁴ But they are conscious of a gap between the intellectual world in which the doctrines of Christianity were formed and which provided their language, and the intellectual cast of mind of the turn of the century. Fr. Illingworth tells us not to reformulate the Patristic doctrines because "the creeds are the basis of the unity of divided Christendom".¹⁵ But the difference between what intellect determines in the nineteenth century and what it understood in the ancient world requires that the Scriptural facts, together with their doctrinal interpretations, be enshrined as historical. What is philosophic in their formulation is down played and the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity are asserted to be found in Saints Paul and John, so as to protect the formulae from speculation in our time, which would be incapable of arriving at such high theoretical conceptions of God and his activity.¹⁶ We justify the Trinity and Incarnation practically, and we protect the doctrines historically, so as to get them out of the hands of the reason of our own day. For this reason is not an Hegelian speculative intellectuality which supposes itself, as did the ancient and Mediaeval theologies, to be capable of thinking the Trinity, but rather it is the bare intuition of moral freedom and personal transcendence. For Gore and Illingworth lines can be drawn from modern practical personality and its reasonings which suggest an unperceived point of convergence in a Christian doctrine of God, but the actuality of our religion cannot be speculatively known. For Bishops Westcott and Gore, a Christianity actualized morally, practically and affectively and only known to be still real in these ways was to be discovered in the new social order which Christian Socialism would bring into being. So Christianity would remain, to use Illingworth's words, "a fact of experience . . . a plain palpable fact".¹⁷

For all three, the key to the protection of credal Christianity was an historical study of Scripture which is to be philosophically unbiased. Their acceptance of modern critical scholarship was based on their confidence that it could be freed from the *a priori* philosophical assumptions that had formerly been brought to it

14. Illingworth, *op. cit.*, pp. 131 and 65; cf. *idem*, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Apologetically Considered* (London, 1907), p. 252: "the doctrines in question supposed to be incredible, have been for nigh twenty centuries and still are at the present day, through the living agency of the Christian society, the foremost force in the spiritual world".

15. Illingworth, *Divine Transcendence*, pp. 122-23.

16. Illingworth, *Divine Transcendence*, pp. 116-125; Gore, *Belief*, pp. 166ff; Westcott, "Christianity as Absolute", pp. 346 and 360. On the relation of Gore to Kant and Hegel see R. Edström, *The Theology of Charles Gore* (Lund, 1944), pp. 138ff and *passim*.

17. *Divine Transcendence*, p. 185.

and the Scriptures approached again with "an open mind".¹⁸ Both Gore and Illingworth accept the "critical reconstruction of the history of Israel"¹⁹, which Illingworth tells us, without any trace of irony, "emphasizes the progressive character of the religion and morality of Israel, in a way that brings it into closer harmony with all other national development".²⁰ Despite this, history and philosophy are to be kept separate so as to hold philosophy and doctrine apart.

These divisions characterize the Tractarians as well as their Liberal Catholic followers. None of them wanted an Anglican systematic theology. Professor Robert Crouse reminds us that Dr. Pusey quoted Schleiermacher with approval when the latter declared that "the endeavour to introduce philosophical systems into theology is generally at variance with a correct interpretation of Scripture".²¹ Dr. Pusey tried to revive the study of the Fathers without attending to the philosophical framework of their theological and moral decisions and called rather for "devout perusal" and spiritual understanding. Dr. Pusey and Canon Liddon both were adept at discovering the antecedent philosophical assumptions which determined the results of the new critical scholarship of their time. And Charles Gore was against the "elaborate systems of doctrines" which he found among the Roman Catholics. He opposed any theology which, like the Thomistic enterprise, used philosophy so as to make "dogmatic decisions become premises to argue from". And though Gore proposes to replace the Patristic, Mediaeval and Reformed Christologies with a kenotic one, he tells us that this "raises questions to which we can find no full answer." And yet Bishop Gore advises that "if we are wise, we shall not attempt to answer the questions".²²

These Anglicans are satisfied then, if they can give Christianity a moral and practical justification, and if they can contemplate its actuality in the moral and intellectual progress of the human race. They accomplished this by reducing the authority and range of theoretical reason, denigrating the work of systematic theology, and by keeping philosophy out of historical and doctrinal study.

18. Gore, *Belief*, p. 43.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 151-192.

20. Illingworth, *Divine Transcendence*, pp. 156-157.

21. From Schleiermacher's *Kurze Darstellung der theologischen Studiums*, quoted in Pusey's *Theology of Germany*; cf. H. D. Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, 3 vol (London, 1893), i, 84. See R. D. Crouse, "'Devout Perusal': The Tractarian Revival of Patristic Studies", *Studia Patristica* for the 1983 conference, ed. E. A. Livingstone, in press; *idem*, "'Deepened by the Study of the Fathers': The Oxford Movement, Dr. Pusey and Patristic Scholarship", *Dionysius* 7 (1983), 137-147.

22. Gore, *Belief*, pp. 223 and 226.

Philosophy became apologetic. If the practical purposes of the Anglican revival were carried out by removing philosophy, Pope Leo XIII's practical purposes were secured by importing one already 600 years old. The results for theology were not essentially different. Philosophy, history and theology were deeply separated. Thomas' system was wrenched from its Neoplatonic context and read through less synthetic contemporary philosophical standpoints.

The centenary of Leo's momentous Encyclical "Aeterni Patris" has just passed. Its authoritative exhortation sending the Roman Church back to a philosophy and theology already six hundred years old may seem to reflect only a fortress mentality.²³ But this is an incomplete view. "Aeterni Patris" is the courageous war plan of an embattled church. The Pope believed,

the fruitful root of the evils which are now overwhelming us, and of the evils we greatly fear . . . consists in this — evil teaching about things human and divine has come forth from the schools of philosophers.²⁴

If practical and political evils flow from evil philosophy, the corrective is philosophy "rightly and wisely used".²⁵

The problem with the "new kind of philosophy . . . because of . . . which men have not gathered these desirable and wholesome fruits which the Church and civil society itself could have wished" is that it has gone too far.

The aggressive innovators of the sixteenth century have not hesitated to philosophize without any regard whatever to the Faith, asking, and conceding in return, the right to invent anything they can think of, and anything that they please.²⁶

23. The Encyclical is published in Sancti Thomas Aquinatis, *Opera Omnia* (Leonine), i (Romae, 1882), pp. iii-xiv. References are to the English translation in St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (2nd rev. ed.; London, 1920), i, pp. ix-xxxii. For an enthusiastic contemporary appreciation, there is Giuseppe Card. Siri, "Il momento storico nel quale nacque l'Enciclica 'Aeterni Patris' " *Atti del VIII Congresso Tomistico*, ed. A. Piolanti, 8 vol., i, Studi Tomistici 10. For a more critical view, see my "Pope Leo's Purposes and St. Thomas' Platonism". J. Hennesey, "Leo XIII's Thomistic Revival: A Political and Philosophic Event", *The Journal of Religion*, 58 Supplement (1978), SS185-197 stresses Leo's "Fortress mentality". G. A. McCool, "Twentieth Century Scholasticism", *ibid.*, SS198-221; G. A. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1977); F. van Steenberghe, *Introduction à l'étude de la philosophie médiévale*, Philosophes Médiévaux, 18 (Louvain/Paris, 1974) pp. 54ff.; R. F. Harvanek, "History and 'Aeterni Patris' ", *Notes et Documents Institut International J. Maritain*, V, 16 (July-September, 1979), 1-12 are all useful.

24. "Aeterni Patris", p. x.

25. *Ibid.*, p. xi.

26. *Ibid.*, p. xxvii.

The corrective for all these evils of so many kinds is to be found in putting philosophy and theology back into their right relation. This Thomas Aquinas does preeminently:

Carefully distinguishing reason from Faith . . . and yet joining them together in a harmony of friendship; he . . . guarded the rights of each.²⁷

The true role of philosophy, besides "guard[ing] . . . all truths that come to us by Divine tradition, and . . . resist[ing] those who dare attack them",²⁸ providing the means for scientifically organizing "the parts of heavenly doctrine"²⁹, is remarkably limited.

In the first place, then, this great and glorious fruit is gathered from human reason — namely, that it demonstrates the existence of God . . . In the next place, reason shows that God, in a way belonging only to Himself, excels by the sum of all perfections . . . Hence reason proves that God is not only true, but the very Truth itself, which cannot deceive or be deceived. Further it is a clear consequence from this that the human reason obtains for the word of God full belief and authority . . . Reason clearly shows us the truth about the Church instituted by Christ.³⁰

A certain irony will be immediately apparent. The separation between philosophy and theology implicit in this account of their relation and of philosophy's role is very like that in the works of "the aggressive innovators of the sixteenth century" — though the assertion of ecclesiastical authority is more directly Leo's intention. It is the Church, not nature, in which belief is justified because God is not a deceiver. As Josef Pieper has remarked in another context, "the customary interpretation of St. Thomas has been considerably determined by Rationalist thought".³¹ Indeed, Joseph Owens maintains that, because the problem which dominated the Thomistic revival was the Cartesian separation of mind from material reality, and because the problem of finding a bridge was "so pervasive, . . . Neo-Thomism now looks more like a variety

27. *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

28. *Ibid.*, p. xv.

29. *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. xiii and xiv.

31. J. Pieper, *The Silence of St. Thomas*, translation of *Ueber Thomas Von Aquin Philosophia Negativa* (London, 1957), p. 54. O. Blanchette, "Philosophy and Theology in Aquinas, On Being a Disciple in our Day", *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo settimo centenario*, 9 vol., ii (Napoli, 1976), 427-431, finds E. Gilson importing a modern rationalist sense of independent philosophy and theology into his understanding of Thomas.

of Cartesianism than like a genuine development of Aquinas' metaphysical thought".³²

The Victorian Anglican orthodoxy which opposed *Essays and Reviews* by a return to Butler and Paley had a similar modern rationalist logic. Where Pope Leo placed the Church, or Descartes' nature, the old-fashioned Anglican apologists put the Bible. Joseph Athholz comments:

The opponents of *Essays and Reviews* were neither obscurantists nor fideists; they were conscious of a reliance on reason . . . But they carried this rational argument only up to a point, demonstrating that the message of the Bible was credible and valid. Once this was proven, they argued, reason had done its work; it had brought people to the portals of scripture, whose message was simply to be accepted without any further exercise of human reason. The orthodox apologetic defended the approaches of the Bible but did not enter within it . . . The contents were simply to be accepted as data, to be believed, not judged . . . [it] treated the Bible as essentially a collection of data, a factually verified record of facts.³³

This suggests that the similarity of revived Thomism to the modern thought forms it opposed is not merely ironic or accidental. Moreover, Pope Leo was clearer than at least the first generation of Anglican neo-orthodoxy about the philosophical requisites of the anti-secularist battle, so the Pope sought a bridge between the Church and the contemporary revolutionary world on which to wage his warfare against the forms of modern secularity. Thomism must actually engage its thought.

Pope Leo needed a philosophy and theology which would serve two contrary purposes.³⁴ It should, on the one hand, enable the Church to speak to an intellectual world in which science and philosophy had become independent and even opposed to ecclesiastical theology. On the other, it should bring philosophy, and the political and social life thought to be based thereon, back within the control of and into subordination to ecclesiastical theology and authority. The scholasticism which was to provide for these aims must allow philosophy to be separated from theology, but subordinated to it. It was recognized that of the various scholastic systems only Thomas' would serve. The earlier and the more conservative mediaeval systems fused philosophy and theology too

32. J. Owens, "Value and Person in Aquinas", *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo settimo centenario*, 9 vol., vii (Napoli, 1978), p. 57.

33. J. Athholz, *art. cit.*, 194-195.

34. F. van Steenberghen, *Introduction*, p. 56.

immediately; the later ones asserted the incompatibility of the two, or the autonomy of reason, or both.

If these purposes influenced the interpretation given to the relation of philosophy and theology in Aquinas, they — as well as such circumstances as the Jesuit involvement in the revival³⁵ — determined that the Aristotelian aspects of Thomas' thought must be emphasized and its Platonic elements played down. The Aristotelian sciences seemed to be relatively independent of each other. This immediately provided the first object. Further, Thomas appeared to have been able to make the conclusions of Aristotelian reason cohere with his theology. So, when the ground of theology in a revelation to faith was stressed and the dependence of theology on philosophy diminished, the sciences were easily subordinated to ecclesiastical theology. In contrast, the systematic and synthetic unity of Neoplatonism, if taken together with the incompatibility of Platonic anti-empirical idealism with the nineteenth century view of modern science, would seem to prevent dialogue with natural science, the separation of science and philosophy, and the disjunction of natural and revealed theology.

What is important for our investigation of Thomas is that those who laboured to produce an historically accurate presentation of Aquinas' thought, while remaining faithful to Leo's intentions, were themselves divided about what Thomas taught in ways which reflected contemporary philosophical concerns, as well as the division inherent in Pope Leo's purposes. On the one hand, there

35. See P. Dezza, "La preparazione dell'Enciclica 'Aeterni Patris' il contributo della Compagnia di Gesù", *Atti del VIII Congresso Tomistico*, i (Vatican, 1981). For the commitment of the Jesuits to the Aristotelian interpretation of Thomas, see R. F. Harvanek, *art. cit.*, p. 5. For the Jesuit Cardinal Ehrle's role in establishing this interpretation in Leo's revival, see van Steenberghen, *Introduction*, p. 57 and "L'avenir au thomisme", *Rev. phil. de Louvain*, 54(1956), 203. J. Maritain, "Philosophie de la nature et sciences expérimentales", *Acta Pont. Acad. Rom. S. Thom. Aquin. nova series* 1 (Taurini/Romae, 1934), p. 77 begins "La conception platonicienne de la métaphysique . . . impliquait qu'il n'y avait pas et ne pouvait pas y avoir de philosophie de la nature . . . Au contraire la conception qu'Aristote . . ."

arose the difference³⁶ between the transcendental³⁷ and realist³⁸ Thomists. The former attempted to bridge the gap between the contemporary world and Thomas by finding something positive in the critical spirit of the modern time and understanding Thomas' epistemology and ontology in a way not altogether exclusive of it. The realists, on the contrary, were in touch with the aspect of the anti-modern contemporary spirit which partly moved both Pope Leo and Martin Heidegger.³⁹ They found in Thomas an immediate unity with being which made the critical questions of modern philosophers incomprehensible except through perversity. The realist and historically serious Thomism separated itself very sharply into a school centered in Louvain and a school dominated by Professor Gilson. The opposition between the realist and transcendental Thomists reflects the contrariety within the Pope's purposes, their conservative and progressive aspects, but the division between the realists themselves shows this very vividly.

36. See Endnote 1.

37. The great master is J. Maréchal, *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, the five *cahiers* of which were published between 1922 and 1946 in Belgium and France; cf. D. Bradley, "Transcendental Critique and Realist Metaphysics", *The Thomist*, 39, 4 (1975), 631-667. K. Rahner, *Geist in Welt, zur Metaphysik der endlichen Erkenntnis bei Thomas von Aquin*, foreword by J. B. Metz (2nd ed.; München, 1957) is translated as *Spirit in the World* by W. Dych (London, 1968). All references are to the translation. Fr. Rahner is the greatest of Maréchal's heirs. E. Coreth, *Metaphysics*, ed. and trans. J. Donceel (New York, 1968) is clearly a reflection on Rahner's developments, but with a greater confidence in ontology and metaphysics. B. Lonergan, *Verbum, Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. D. B. Burrell (Notre Dame, 1969), is an interpretation of Thomas' teaching on the "mental word". It is a series of articles actually written before his own philosophic construction, *Insight* (New York, 1957). Fr. Lonergan differentiates himself in a number of ways from Rahner and Coreth. See Mascall, *Openness*, pp. 84 and 89, Donceel's preface to Coreth's *Metaphysics*, especially p. 12, and Lonergan's "Metaphysics as Horizon" (a review of Coreth) reproduced at the end of *Metaphysics*. In general, Lonergan sees Coreth as more on the realist and ontological side of the post-Kantian alternatives, whereas Mascall puts Lonergan himself on the idealist side. "Lonergan's own ultimate is not being but intelligence" (*Openness*, p. 89). All this is considered more fully further below. The division between transcendental and realist is only relative. Both are in the spirit of what Macquarrie calls the new realism, i.e., the twentieth century's reaction against idealism, its turn toward the objective.

38. See Endnote 2.

39. Gilson's realism and that of many other Thomists is usefully compared to Heidegger's position in *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York/Evanston, 1962), where, despite his opposition to the name (207, p. 51), he adopts a stance very similar to realism and shares the same attitude towards Descartes: 25, p. 46; 40, p. 64; 93, p. 126.

As indicated, both purposes require an emphasis on the Aristotelian character of Thomas' thought and both Louvain and Gilson's followers agreed on this. But the opening to modern science and the subordination of philosophy to ecclesiastical theology are opposed to each other. Louvain, following the magnanimous Cardinal Mercier, chose the first.⁴⁰ Father Maréchal, the founder of the transcendental school, came from Louvain and in his spirit Monseigneur Noël even attempted the hopeless task of finding a "critical realism" which would bridge the gap separating Father Maréchal and the realists.⁴¹ Professor Gilson succeeded in discrediting what was to him so evidently a contradictory conception,⁴² but when, in the interests of maintaining the opening to modern autonomous reason, Louvain continued to endeavour to identify in Thomas a philosophy independent of theology, the insult was able to be returned in their criticism of the central discovery of Gilson's historical research, the idea of a "Christian philosophy", as itself a contradiction.⁴³ For ultimately Gilson had opted for the second of Leo's purposes. He pronounced impossible

40. F. van Steenberghe, *Introduction*, pp. 212ff.; other accounts in van Riet, *L'épistémologie thomiste*; L. de Raeymaeker, *Le cardinal Mercier et l'institut supérieur de philosophie de Louvain* (Louvain, 1952); A. Simon, *Position philosophique du cardinal Mercier* (Brussels, 1962).

41. See L. Noël, *Notes d'épistémologie* (Louvain, 1925); *idem*, "La présence de l'intelligible à la conscience selon s. Thomas et Cajetan", *Philosophia Perennis* (Regensburg, 1930), i, pp. 159-166; *idem*, "Les progrès de l'épistémologie thomiste", *Rev. neos. de phil.*, 34 (1932); *idem*, "L'épistémologie thomiste", *Acta Secundi Congressus Thomistici Internationalis* (Taurini/Romae, 1937).

42. See E. Gilson, "Le réalisme methodique", *Philosophia Perennis* ii, pp. 744-755; *idem*, *Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaissance* (Paris, 1939); the second is a reply to the criticisms of the first. F. van Steenberghe, who follows in Noël's tradition, remains attached to "critical realism" but "safe from Professor Gilson's censures", or so he reports in *Epistemology*, trans. L. Moonan from the fourth French edition (Louvain/New York, 1970), pp. 9 and 245.

43. E. Gilson, *The Elements of Christian Philosophy* (Garden City, 1960); *idem*, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1955); *idem*, *The Christian Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas* (London, 1961); *idem*, *Being and Some Philosophers* (2nd ed.; Toronto, 1952). In the last, on p. 30, Gilson writes, "no Christian philosophy can posit anything above being." J. Owens, "Aquinas as Aristotelian Commentator", *St. Thomas Aquinas, 1274-1974, Commemorative Studies*, ed. A. Maurer, 2 vol., i (Toronto, 1974), p. 237, writes, "May not the Thomistic commentaries on Aristotle be regarded as Christian philosophy?" F. van Steenberghe attacks the notion in many places, for example: *The Philosophical Movement*, pp. 14ff. and pp. 108ff., *Introduction*, especially pp. 283-332. Cf. M. Nedoncelle, *Is There a Christian Philosophy?*, trans. I. Trethowan, Faith and fact books, 10 (London, 1960) and G. Grisey, "The 'Four Meanings' of 'Christian Philosophy'", *The Journal of Religion*, 41-42 (1961-62), 103-118 who discuss the issues. For a recent attack on Gilson's position, see O. Blanchette, *art. cit.*

any contemporary attempt to imitate Thomas in reconciling science and theology and placed all his faith in the metaphysic of Exodus 3:14, which revelation made true no matter what modern science said. Paul Vignaux has surely identified this position correctly as a quasi-Barthianism.⁴⁴ But what in the end is interesting is that Louvain and Gilson are wrong not only in that on which they are opposed, but also in that on which they agree.

Professor van Steenberghen is right when he asserts that Thomas understood Exodus 3:14 through his philosophical formation and not the inverse, but Professor Gilson was also correct in denying that philosophy is really distinct from theology in Aquinas. And yet the relation between philosophy and theology in Thomas cannot be understood either through a contemporary theological positivism, nor yet through Aristotle's unsystematic ordering of the sciences, even if, as has been recently shown, Thomas himself used Aristotle's image of philosophy with her servants to represent theology's relation to her subordinates.⁴⁵ What intervenes between Aristotle and St. Thomas, colouring his vision of the Philosopher, is the Neoplatonic unification of all knowledge in theology.⁴⁶ It is only on this account that the *Summae* can cover the immense ground they do.

The first part of our consideration of contemporary Thomism has been successful if a connection has begun to emerge between the purposes of the Leonine revival and the current understandings of the relation between philosophy and theology in Thomas' thought, together with this Thomism's almost exclusive emphasis on his Aristotelianism. We turn now to its representation of his ontology.

44. Présentation, *Dieu et l'Être, Exégèses d'Exode 3, 14 et de Coran 20, 11-24*, edited by the Centre d'Études des Religions du Livre, Etudes Augustiniennes (Paris, 1978), p. 11, n. 16. Strikingly Barthian pieces by Professor Gilson are "Trois leçons sur le thomisme et sa situation présente" *Seminarium*, New Series, v, 4 (1965), 682-737 reprinted as *Les tribulations de Sophie* (Paris, 1967) and "De la notion d'être divine dans la philosophie de saint Thomas d'Aquin", *Doctor Communis, Acta VI Congressus Thomistici Internationalis* (Roma, 1965), i, pp. 113-129.

45. R. D. Crouse, "Philosophia Ancilla Theologiae, some texts from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in the Interpretation of Albertus Magnus", *Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Filosofia Medieval*, 2 vol. (Madrid, 1970), i, pp. 657-661; *idem*, "St. Thomas, St. Albert, Aristotle: *Philosophia Ancilla Theologiae*", *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo settimo centenario*, 9 vol. i (Napoli, 1975), pp. 181-85.

46. M. L. Minio-Paluello, "La tradition aristotélicienne dans l'histoire des idées", *Actes du Congrès de Lyon, Association Guillaume Budé* (Paris, 1960), pp. 166-185; P. Hadot, "Les divisions des parties de la philosophie dans l'Antiquité", *Museum Helveticum*, 36 (1979), 201-223.

The difference between the realist and transcendental Thomists is clear enough: the realists find an intellectual intuition of *esse* in Thomas which the transcendental Thomists deny is present in his thought. Jacques Maritain,⁴⁷ who had certain "critical" leanings, and who differed with Gilson over Christian philosophy, speaks nonetheless of a "genuine intuition . . . a very simple seeing . . . the intuition of being as being".⁴⁸ Just so, Gilson holds "*l'appréhension de l'être par l'intellect consiste à voir directement le concept d'être dans n'importe quelle donnée sensible.*"⁴⁹ Gilson is quite content to be called a dogmatic realist. Lonergan, one of the transcendental school, describes

47. Maritain and Gilson write in very different ways. The first is primarily a poetic philosopher; the second writes what is called history. They, nonetheless, see themselves as agreeing on the doctrine of Being in Aquinas. Gilson writes the leading "hommage": "Une sagesse rédemptrice" for the tribute volume of the *Revue thomiste: Jacques Maritain, son oeuvre philosophique*, Bibliothèque de la Revue thomiste (Paris, 1949), pp. 3-5. And Maritain frequently quotes Gilson with approval. See Jacques Maritain, *Challenges and Renewals, Selected Readings*, ed. H. W. Evans and Leo R. Ward (London, 1966), p. 112, and *The Peasant of the Garonne* (London, 1968), pp. 107, 133-39. He is in full accord with Gilson's rapprochement with Heidegger; cf. *The Peasant*, pp. 107-08. Maritain, with Heidegger, refers us to Parmenides: "observe what an unforgettable event in the history of philosophy was Parmenides' discovery" (*Challenges and Renewals*, p. 129).

Their earlier differences over the critical character of realism and over Christian philosophy were minor. "It is important to avoid here a double-sided danger; one, which consists in accepting, in whatever way and however little, the idealist setting of the critical problem; and here I am in the fullest agreement with M. Gilson; and the other which consists in the refusal of any possibility whatsoever of posing as philosophically soluble the whole critical problem. It is here that I part company with M. Gilson." J. Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, translation of the 2nd French edition (London, 1936), p. 87. He is opposed to "abandoning into the hands of the idealists the whole use and possession of the word 'critical' and all it signifies" (*ibid.*, p. 89). He thus finds himself doctrinally in accord with Noël (p. 98). He accepted with Gilson the notion of Christian philosophy; cf. his *De la philosophie chrétienne* (Paris, 1933), pp. 8-9, 13, 16, 56-7. But he saw no need to divide Thomas from Aristotle in so doing; cf. "Marginal Notes on Aristotle", *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, translation of *La philosophie bergsonienne* (New York, 1955), pp. 349-377; also *An Introduction to Philosophy* (London, 1932), p. 101. J. Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* represents just the opposite tendency in pure Gilsonians.

48. J. Maritain, *Challenges and Renewals*, p. 121. See also *idem*, *Sept leçons sur l'être et les premiers principes de la raison speculative* (2nd ed.; Paris, n.d.), pp. 51ff. and *Existence and the Existent: An essay on Christian existentialism*, English version of *Court traité de l'existence et de l'existent* (New York, 1957), pp. 28ff. and *The Peasant*, p. 139, n.9.

49. E. Gilson, *Réalisme thomiste*, p. 215.

Gilson's dogmatic, as opposed to naive and critical,⁵⁰ realism as follows:

His assertion is that over and above sensitive perceptions and intellectual abstractions there exists an intellectual vision of the concept of being in any sensible *datum* . . . However, if Professor Gilson agrees with Kant in holding that objectivity is a matter of perception, if he differs from Kant in holding that *de facto* we have perceptions of reality, one must not think that he attempts to refute Kant by appealing to a fact that Kant overlooked. Professor Gilson's realism is dogmatic; the course he advocates is . . . the blunt affirmation of the dogmatic realism whose validity was denied by Kant's critique.⁵¹

Rahner and Coreth, in seeking to do greater justice to Kant's position, certainly deny the "intellectual intuition of being" replacing it by the *Vorgriff* of the "horizon of being".⁵² Still, even at this point of their greatest and most explicit difference, the two schools unite in associating this contact with being with the act of affirmative judgment.⁵³ What is arrived at by either means is not different;

50. For these contrasts, see B. Lonergan, *The Way to Nicaea*, translation of part one of *De Deo Trino* (London, 1976), p. 90.

51. B. Lonergan, "Metaphysics as Horizon", pp. 207-209.

52. Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, pp. 25-29, especially n.8, p. 25; Metz, Introduction, *Spirit in the World*, pp. xliii-xlv. Metz writes (n.39, p. xliii): "Rahner is very insistent in his rejection of a metaphysical intuition. This rejection is his major correction of the Thomistic or neo-scholastic interpretations". Coreth uses the term "intellectual intuition"; for example, *Metaphysics*, pp. 34-35. "We are also aware of knowing this object (intellectual intuition). In other words, every instance of sense experience contains elements which transcend that experience". However, he does not use it in the realist but in a "transcendental" sense. No immediate thematic knowledge can be used to found metaphysics. "We do not really start from an immediate evidence, but this evidence itself cannot be demonstrated, except by showing that whatsoever rejects it, affirms it in his very act of rejection. In this sense, we have what Hegel called *vermittelte Unmittelbarkeit*, a mediated immediacy", p. 35. Rather than founding metaphysics in the objective content of an intellectual intuition, Rahner and Coreth found it in the unthematic or implicit "*Vorgriff*" by which men are conscious of the "horizon of being". See Donceel's Preface to Coreth, *Metaphysics*, pp. llff. and Mascall, *Openness*, pp. 68ff.

53. Cf. Lonergan on Gilson above. "This method [of Maréchal, Lotz, Marc] resembles ours, insofar as these authors try to establish metaphysics by demonstrating that the absolute affirmation of being is a condition of every judgement." Coreth, *Metaphysics*, pp. 46-47. Rahner: "*Esse* as the In-Itself (*Ansich*) of the Reality Apprehended in the Judgement. We should not expect a long discussion of this question in Thomas. To him his view seems self-evident . . ." (*Spirit in the World*, p. 163).

it is what both call *esse*.⁵⁴ "The doctrine of *esse* has characterized Thomism — even constituted it in its uniqueness from the earliest days."⁵⁵

For Thomism *esse* is ultimately mysterious. *Esse* is just what it is and everything is in virtue of *esse* and yet, it appears that God is to be set off from everything in virtue of his *esse*. "It is the first object grasped by the intellect"⁵⁶ and "here metaphysics comes to an end, for we cannot comprehend this Act of existing, whose very essence is to be."⁵⁷ It is the pre-apprehension present in every judgment and "the ultimate desire of spirit".⁵⁸ Every difference — if there are any differences, this is the problem — lies within it, even the difference between knower and known, both are being. "Being is therefore the ultimate reality, both intensively and extensively".⁵⁹

The limit to what philosophy can make known in theology is set by the absoluteness of this mysterious *esse*. There is in fact a Neoplatonic context and content to Thomas' concept of being which enables the union of philosophy and theology in his single system. But it is precisely the mysterious emptiness or fullness of being which prevents this unification in contemporary Thomism. Since philosophy terminates in *esse*, faith has nothing with which to explicate God's revelation to it. By means of this ontology, modern Thomism does the work Leo set it. Limiting philosophy, it hands man over to faith's authority. In fact, the contemporary philosophical reasoning operative here comes from Heidegger.

There is now a great mass of Thomist literature endeavouring to show that Thomas alone escaped Heidegger's criticism that western philosophy had forgotten being, that it was not fatally

54. At this point, "Esse in Thomas", Rahner cites Marc, de Finance, Gilson, *et. al.* (*Spirit in the World*, p. 163).

55. M. Jordan, "The Grammar of *Esse*" *The Thomist*, 44 (1980), 2.

56. Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century*, p. 285, quoting Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 214.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 287, citing Gilson, *God and Philosophy*.

58. This is the language of Coreth and Rahner; the quotation is from Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, p. 407; cf. Coreth, *Metaphysics*, p. 35 and pp. 62-63.

59. The quotation is from Coreth, *Metaphysics*, p. 67. See also *ibid.*, p. 70: "In every act of inquiring or knowing, some being is given which coincides immediately with knowing, which knows itself as being." Also Donceel in his Preface quoting Coreth, " 'Metaphysics, as about being' equates with absolutely every being, including the 'subjective pole'. The incarnate inquirer 'is a being, and nothing but a being' " (p. 12). Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, "Being is the one ground which lets knowing and being-known spring out of itself as its own characteristics . . . Knowing is the subjectivity of being itself. Being is the original unifying unity of being and knowing in their unification of being known" (p. 69).

an onto-theology, and so it was the remaining authentic fundamental philosophy.⁶⁰ Maritain puts it as well as any:

St. Thomas did not stop short at *ens* — the “being” (“*das Seiende*”, “*l’étant*”) — but went straight to *esse* (“*Sein*”, “*l’être*”) to the act of existing. (A pity . . . that Heidegger couldn’t see that.)⁶¹

But K. Rahner is clearest about what accepting the Heideggerian critique of the western tradition would mean. Rahner’s reasoning is Heideggerian in so far as he thinks that a metaphysics which becomes “thematic”, ie., acquires content, as theological science cannot respect the ontological difference. Being would then become a thing, an existent, the thingliest of things:

If *esse* is made objective in reflection in order to be known (*gewusst*) itself (not merely implicitly and simultaneously known *mitgewusst* in the pre-apprehension), then that can only be done insofar as it is concretized again by a form. This is either a definite, and then it limits *esse* to the fullness of a definite degree of being, or it represents every form, it is the form of *ens commune* (anyquiddity) and then its *esse* is indeed not limited to any degree of ontological actuality, but for that reason completely reduced to the empty void of *ens commune*. Hence, insofar as this *esse* simultaneously apprehended in the pre-apprehension is able to be limited, it shows itself to be non-absolute . . . *Esse* in itself has no form distinct from itself which completely preserves the fullness of *esse* and which could be affirmed of it in a concretizing and affirming synthesis without limiting it.⁶²

60. See n. 47 above and E. Gilson, “Trois leçons” and Appendix ii, *L’être et l’essence* (2nd ed. revue et augmentée; Paris, 1962); C. Fabro, *Participation et causalité*, p. 636; *idem*, “Le retour au fondement de l’être,” *S. Thomas d’Aquin Aujourd’hui*, *Recherches de philosophie*, 6 (Paris, 1963, pp. 177-193); *idem*, “Il nuovo problema dell’essere e la fondazione della metafisica”, *Commemorative Studies*, ii, pp. 423-457; the articles by G. Giannini and C. Moreau in *Sapientia Aquinatis, Communicationes IV Congressus Thomistici Internationalis* (Rome, 1955) and those by T. A. Fay and C. Fabro in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso d’Aquino nel suo settimo centenario*, iv, pp. 480-484, 119-128; also E. Coreth, *Metaphysics*, p. 16.

61. *The Peasant*, pp. 133-134.

62. *Spirit in the World*, pp. 180-181.

Essence in these thinkers is always treated as a limitation.⁶³ I do not see how this is reconcilable with Thomas' doctrine of the identity of essence and existence. For him, God is self-subsistent form.⁶⁴ But our task here is to see the contemporary philosophical logic behind the Neothomist interpretation. It is the need to preserve the ontological difference which prevents metaphysics becoming theology — or at least *theologia philosophica*.

Heidegger's "conversation with historical tradition" seeks in it "something that has not been thought, and from which what has been thought receives its essential space."⁶⁵ "Metaphysics is onto-theology."⁶⁶ "When metaphysics thinks of beings with respect to ground that is common to all beings as such, then it is logic as onto-logic."⁶⁷ Metaphysics is founded in a particular kind of thinking.

63. Rahner, *Spirit*: "The ultimate reason for this limitation is to be sought in the fact that essence is to be conceived as potency (which implies limitation in itself) with respect to *esse*, whose finiteness, as the limitation by essence of what is infinite in itself, makes possible the comparison between the scope of various essential natures" (p. 151). "Thomas knows essences only as the limiting potency of *esse*" (p. 160). Coreth, *Metaphysics*: "Whereas the act of being is the principle of all positivity in every existent, its essence is the principle of negativity, of limitation" (p. 83). Mascall, *Existence and Analogy*: "In finite beings, essence is distinct from existence, being related to it as the potential to the actual. In God everything is actual, so everything is existence" (p. 42).

64. S. Thomae de Aquino, *Summa Theologiae*, editio Piana (Ottawa, 1953), I, 3, 2 ad 3; hereafter abbreviated as ST. The *Summa contra Gentiles* is abbreviated as ScG. For Thomas, Platonic separated self-subsistent forms are appropriate for speech about God.

Nec solum huiusmodi abstractione Platonici considerabant circa ultimas species rerum naturalium, sed etiam circa maxime communia, quae sunt bonum, unum, et ens. Ponebant, enim, unum primum quod est ipsa essentia bonitatis et unitatis et esse, quod dicimus Deum . . . Unde illud primum nominabant ipsum bonum vel per se bonum vel principale bonum . . . eo modo quod de homine separato expositum est. Haec igitur Platoniorum ratio fidei non consonat nec veritati, quantum ad hoc quod continet de speciebus naturalibus separatis, sed quantum ad id quod dicebant de primo rerum Principio, verissima est eorum opinio et fidei christianae consona.

S. Thomae Aquinatis, *In librum Beati Dionysii de Divinis Nominibus Expositio*, ed. C. Pera (Taurini/Romae, 1950), *prooemium*, p. 2. The Platonism of Thomas is discussed in W. J. Hankey, "Aquinas' First Principle: Being or Unity?" *Dionysius* 4 (1980), 133-172. God's being as self-subsistent form will be further treated in Chapter 3 of W. J. Hankey, *God Himself, The Structure of the first forty-five questions of the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford, 1986).

65. Martin Heidegger, "The Onto-theological Constitution of Metaphysics", *Identity and Difference*, translation of *Identität und Differenz*, trans. J. Stambaugh (Pfullingen, 1957; New York, 1969) p. 48.

66. Heidegger, "Onto-theological", p. 54.

67. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

Thinking means: letting-lie-before-us and so taking-to-heart also: beings in being. Thinking so structured pervades the foundation of metaphysics, the duality of beings and Being . . . The style of all Western-European philosophy . . . is determined by this duality "beings—in being". Philosophy's procedure in the sphere of this duality is decisively shaped by the interpretation Plato gave to the duality.⁶⁸

He says that between beings and Being there prevails the χωρισμός . . . beings and Being are in different places . . . To make the question of the χωρισμός, the *difference* in placement of beings and Being at all possible, the *distinction* — the duality of the two — must be given beforehand, in such a way that this duality itself does not receive specific attention.⁶⁹

Indeed, "the origin of the difference can no longer be thought of within the scope of metaphysics."⁷⁰ "Since metaphysics thinks of beings as such as a whole, it represents beings in respect of what differs in the difference and without heeding the difference as difference."⁷¹ But it is also just what it forgets that enables it to be simultaneously ontology and theology. "Because the thinking of metaphysics remains involved in the difference which is as such unthought, metaphysics is both ontology and theology in a unified way."⁷² Our task is to recognize that Being which is neither the presence of beings — Being of being — nor identical with thought but rather keeps and guards thought within itself as what belongs to it. "For us, the matter of thinking is the Same, and thus is Being — but Being with respect to its difference from beings."⁷³ This involves also the difference between thinking and being: "Parmenides is far from holding the view that Being and thinking are of a kind, so that we could indifferently substitute thinking for being, and being for thinking."⁷⁴ Rather, "different things, thinking and Being, are here thought of as the Same . . . thinking and Being belong together in the Same and by virtue of this Same."⁷⁵ Thus the project of thinking the difference between Being and beings and thought and Being are identical: "We speak of the difference

68. M. Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, translation of *Was Heisst Denken?*, trans. F. O. Wieck and J. G. Gray (Tuebingen, 1954; New York: Harper Torchbook, 1972), p. 224.

69. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

70. Heidegger, "Onto-theological", p. 71.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

74. Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, p. 240.

75. Heidegger, "Identity and Difference" in *Identity and Difference*, p. 27.

between Being and beings. The step back goes from what is unthought, from the differences as such, into what gives us thought."⁷⁶ Heidegger knows the basis of metaphysical thinking but also what it has forgotten.

The presupposition of metaphysics, the Being of beings, produces objectifying thought and practice:

If the Being of beings, in the sense of the being here of what is present, did not already prevail, beings could not have appeared as objects, as what is objective in objects — and only by such objectivity do they become available to the ideas and propositions in the positing and disposing of nature by which we constantly take inventory of the energies we can wrest from nature.⁷⁷

Metaphysics as onto-theology is just such an objectifying, making thematic, representing. Consequently, those who pay attention to the forgotten difference, and indeed to the ground of metaphysical thinking itself, will not do theology in this way:

Someone who has experienced theology in his own roots, both the theology of the Christian faith and that of philosophy would today rather remain silent about God when he is speaking in the realm of thinking. For the onto-theological character of metaphysics has become questionable for thinking . . . from the experience of a thinking which has discerned in onto-theology the still unthought unity of the essential nature of metaphysics.⁷⁸

Rahner's limitation of metaphysics so that it is not in fact onto-theology seems to take this problematic to heart. For him, the immediate implicit pre-apprehension of being involves no gap (*χωρισμός*), and *esse* is not informed by any essence to objectify and represent it in the direction of metaphysical theology. It is just the "empty concept of being" which drives man back to the world in which God reveals himself.⁷⁹

E. Coreth is partly in the realist and partly in the transcendentalist camp. On the one hand, he, with Gilson, is "quite convinced of the priority of metaphysics over everything in general and over cognitional theory most particularly."⁸⁰ On the other, "Coreth's immediate realism not only can be but also is mediated."⁸¹ Nonetheless, he frames his metaphysics explicitly to run round Heidegger's critique. He tries to avoid the *χωρισμός*.

76. Heidegger, "Onto-theological", p. 50.

77. Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?*, p. 234.

78. Heidegger, "Onto-theological", p. 55.

79. See below, nn. 108 and 136.

80. Lonergan, "Metaphysics as Horizon", p. 210.

81. *Ibid.*

We cannot 'arrive' at God: the distance is infinite. We start from him and we end up in him. He is present implicitly in the premises and explicitly in the conclusion. We reach God right away or not at all . . . Only the Infinite . . . only God really is. All other objects are this or that.⁸²

Human knowledge can penetrate into the realm of metaphysics because it always occurs within that realm. Human thinking can reach being because it is already with being.⁸³

But, he represents the subject of classic (not Thomist) metaphysics in such a way that it is particularly prey to Heidegger's criticism: "beings as beings", "*on ē on*", "*ens qua ens*", "*Seiendes als Seiendes*".⁸⁴ And he admits Heidegger's criticism of the general tradition, "Since the time of Aristotle, classic metaphysics has considered as its objects 'beings as beings' ".⁸⁵ Aquinas is an exception and in virtue of his doctrine of *esse*:

No thinker of the past has been more aware of the onto-logical difference than Aquinas; nobody has more clearly distinguished between beings (*ens*) and being (*esse*), or interpreted beings more consistently in the light of being.⁸⁶

Though metaphysics is, in its origins, onto-theology, it is however still possible, if Thomas be followed in his adherence to *esse*. Coreth thinks that it can be developed thematically without specifying *esse* by means of a limiting essence. In consequence, he carries it beyond the point permitted by Rahner. We will look at his attempt further below. But in order to judge the issue clearly we must now consider the relation of *esse* and essence in the thought of these contemporary Thomists.

It is evident already wherein the necessity for essential determination lies. Just because everything is *esse*, some determination is needed to distinguish within it. In our context, it is especially necessary to distinguish the finite from the Absolute or Infinite. The problem is also clear. Essence is regarded as limiting potency and thus it makes finite and objective. God specified by essence would be only a being masking as Being, and all the Heideggerian criticism of the onto-theological metaphysics would fall upon such a God. The universal solution is to maintain, with Thomas, the pure formality of *esse* itself.

82. Donceel, Preface to Coreth, *Metaphysics*, p. 11.

83. Coreth, *Metaphysics*, p. 35.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Further determinations are not added to *esse* in the sense that it would be perfected by them, brought from empty indeterminateness to a full determined content. Such determinations are either simultaneously given with *esse* as such (simple perfections), "since nothing is outside it except non-being", or they are only confining limits of the fullness which *esse* would have in itself, for "that which is most formal of all is *esse* itself", *esse* is determining, fulfilling, not determinable or fulfillable.⁸⁷

So *esse* is "formal", not indeed in the sense that it is itself a form, a quiddity . . . which Thomas explicitly denies. For *esse* is precisely that which brings the quiddity (form) to reality. But *esse* is formal in the sense of that which is affirmed of something, that it is thus what determines this something, although in another way than is the case with the form in respect to its subject, since it is not one determination among many but the one ground of all real determinations. Further *esse* is the "most formal and most simple": "nothing is more formal or more simple than *esse*" . . . pure *esse*, if it exists as such, can receive no further determinations at all . . . everything possible is already included in it as in its one ground.⁸⁸

There are two possible interpretations of this 'pure formality'. Either, the principle of the finite, in which essence and *esse* are divided, is the identity of *esse* and *essentia*. So *esse* would be (as Thomas says it is) "*per se forma*", "*per essentiam suam forma*"⁸⁹, self-individuated and self-subsistent form.⁹⁰ This is not to say he is "a form". The alternative interpretation is that even in God, indeed especially in God, *esse* is the ground of all else and God would be *esse* as opposed to *essentia*. It is the second course which Thomists have generally followed. Rahner, as we have seen, regards essence as always a limiting determining potency. E. Mascal engages in an anti-essentialist polemic, after the manner of Gilson. However, by its very oneness, Fr. Mascal's position passes into its opposite.

What is given us in the finite world is not a realm of essences, some of which exist, but a realm of existent acts, each of which in view of its determinate character gives rise to a particular essence. To ask what a being is, therefore, is simply to ask how it exists, for its essence is nothing but the mode of its existence.⁹¹

How do you state the "determinate character" of the "existent act"

87. Rahner, *Spirit*, pp. 160-161.

88. *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

89. *ST I*, 3, 2.

90. *ST I*, 3, 3.

91. Mascal, *Existence and Analogy*, p. 48.

except by giving the essence? If essence be "nothing but the mode of its existence", and, if *esse* is the fullness from which determinations come, so that, as all agree, they do not come from outside, ultimately *esse* and essence must be one, the essence as infinite as the *esse*, indeed "nothing but the mode of its existence". To understand the *esse*, its mode must be grasped.

An authentic Thomism will, therefore, regard itself as equally essentialist as existential. Accepting with Thomas that we do not have immediate vision, proper knowledge, of what God is, it will nonetheless strive to make the hidden known as much as is possible *in via*. With Grabmann it will recognize that the identity of essence and existence in God provides a *Brücke* to the knowledge of his essence.⁹² Authentic Thomism will be open to the consequences for the knowledge of what God is which follow from the discovery that "*ens* is intrinsically ordinable",⁹³ that the Neoplatonic context gives being an intelligible structure. It will acknowledge that Thomas turned from an understanding of *esse* "*qui annihilerait l'essence conçue comme une pure possibilité d'exister, et de façon plus générale par rapport à toute conception qui nierait l'essentialité divine*".⁹⁴ And so Thomism will not content itself with tautologies like: "The fundamental truth about God is that he exists self-existently; it is because of this that he is self-existent being."⁹⁵ "To my way of thinking, to be real is to actually exist or more simply to be actual. Hence, what makes something real is what makes it be actual."⁹⁶ Nor will it be content with mere paradox and mystery:

. . . since truth ultimately rests upon *esse*, there is no science without some cognition of *esse*, and yet there is no discursive cognition of *esse*, either in science or dialectics. All that we can say about existence is *est, est, non, non*. Discourse may be needed in order to establish *esse*, but there can be no discourse about it.⁹⁷

Because . . . the metaphysics of St. Thomas . . . had the intuition of being and saw in *esse* her chief object, . . . the theology of St. Thomas was able to contemplate in the transluminous

92. M. Grabmann, *Thomas von Aquin* (München, 1912), p. 88.

93. M. Jordan, *art. cit.*, 15.

94. E. zum Brunn, "La 'métaphysique de l'Exode' selon Thomas d'Aquin", *Dieu et l'Être*, p. 252.

95. Mascal, *Existence and Analogy*, p. 48.

96. Leo Sweeney, "Metaphysics and God, Plotinus and Aquinas", *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter*, Misc. Mediaevalia ii, p. 236.

97. E. Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, p. 230.

obscurity of the mysteries of Faith the Uncreated Cause of Being as Being itself subsisting by itself.⁹⁸

Above all it will not be self-consciously polemical in order to assert its existentialism, as when, against the very words of Thomas, Dr. Mascall denies that because in itself God's existence is self-evident, a passage from essence to existence exists:

No doubt the antithesis is too sharp; we are perforce speaking *more humano*. Nevertheless, the point at issue is a vital one; upon it depends the whole distinction between an essentialist and existentialist theism.⁹⁹

If too sharp antitheses are to be avoided, oppositions directly contradicting the words of Thomas, what must be acknowledged is that to comprehend St. Thomas' speculative theology we cannot approach him with these contemporary categories and antitheses already fixed.

Coreth, because of his desire to go beyond the *ipsum esse* as a *terminus*, which would leave what was beyond to some other theologian than the metaphysical or philosophical, faces the problem of what essence is adequate to *esse* most squarely and most nearly passes to a solution. Although, for Coreth, essence is the principle of limitation,

it is nothing but an inner principle of the existent whose essence it is. It is absorbed into the existent, as a constitutive ground, it exists only in and through the existent.¹⁰⁰

Indeed, it is the basis of the Heideggerian "difference between beings and being, between the ontic realm and the ontological realm".¹⁰¹

(Heidegger does not think this difference suffices but that need not concern us at present.)¹⁰²

The difference between beings and being supposes another difference which explains why the existent is not absolutely being itself and does not exhaust being . . . Essence itself differs from being and communicates this difference to the existent whose essence it is. Hence essence is the condition of the possibility of the ontological difference.¹⁰³

98. Maritain, *The Peasant*, p. 143.

99. Mascall, *Existence and Analogy*, p. 43.

100. Coreth, *Metaphysics*, p. 85.

101. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

102. Cf. M. Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy*, translation of part of volume ii of *Nietzsche*, trans. J. Stambaugh (Pfullingen, 1961; New York, 1973), especially essay one.

103. Coreth, *Metaphysics*, p. 87.

Since this difference cannot come from outside being, being and essence must derive from a "common origin",¹⁰⁴ which is being and this "absolute being, as the fullness of all possibilities".¹⁰⁵ So far the argument is inescapable. At this point, however, it moves in a way which leads to Rahner's result. In the end metaphysics has hold of empty *commune ens*. Coreth fails to recognize that the problem is not only to distinguish finite being from being but how Absolute Being distinguishes itself from being. This second distinction is the fundamental philosophical problem for these thinkers. Their language contains a dangerous ambiguity. Sometimes it seems the being which is immediately present to us is God in the fullest sense. This is certainly not the intended result, but, as a critic of Rahner puts it, "the concept of *esse* oscillates between nothing and infinity."¹⁰⁶ Coreth, seeking the source of finite being, asks:

If the finite essence as possibility of being derives from being as actuality of being, all finite essences as finite possibilities of being must derive from absolute being as the unlimited actuality of being which precedes and gives rise to the finite duality of being and essence. But how can the empty potentiality of limited essences derive from the pure unlimited actuality of being?¹⁰⁷

He answers profoundly that this is possible only if "absolute being . . . as absolute identity contain at the same time difference or non-identity".¹⁰⁸ This requires "a relative opposition".

We have already said that there exists such a relative difference in absolute being, in so far as it is absolute knowledge of self-knowledge, absolute identity of being and knowing. For in the act of knowledge the knower sets up the known against itself.¹⁰⁹

If this were carried through theologically, the consequence would in fact be the Thomistic argument. God essentially knows himself; being and knowing are the same, and do not merely, as in a Heideggerian Parmenidian premetaphysics, come together in the same. Thus, absolute difference would be posited in the divine as the distinction of the Persons.

104. *Ibid.*

105. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

106. D. Bradley, "Rahner's Spirit in the World: Aquinas or Hegel?", *The Thomist*, 41, 2 (1977), 184.

107. Coreth, *Metaphysics*, pp. 88-89.

108. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

109. *Ibid.*

Thomas from the very beginning of his theological writing is clear that the reason of the procession of creatures can be found only in the prior procession of Persons.¹¹⁰ Coreth falls back from this genuinely theological metaphysics. He explains only the origin of finite essences, although for Thomas even creation cannot be explained in this way. The difference is only one in which:

the finite possibility of being sets itself up against the absolute actuality of being . . . Absolute being must in its absolute knowledge oppose to itself the finite as the object of its knowledge.¹¹¹

In Thomas, the “*reditio ad essentiam suam*”,¹¹² the “*per se forma subsistens*”¹¹³ is, in fact, the self-knowledge of God. God knows the finite in the knowledge of his own essence.¹¹⁴ The divine knowing is modified by the personal relations.¹¹⁵ God knows creatures in knowing his own divine Word.¹¹⁶ In Coreth, knowledge is just one of the perfections which attach to the divine fullness of being. Thus, Coreth’s derivation of the properties of God lapses at crucial points from Thomas’ own.

Coreth begins, not with the simplicity of God, but rather at the other end, with his infinity:

Being as being is infinite, all perfections of being are fully realized in it . . . It contains no limiting essence, hence it is the infinite fullness of all the possibilities of being.¹¹⁷

This is confusing. Corporality is, among others, a perfection of being. So Thomas’ own first step must be to ask, “*utrum Deus sit corpus?*”¹¹⁸ But, since we do not yet know in Coreth’s *Metaphysics* the mode of this infinity, we do not know whether this is simply all beings. “It contains no limiting essence”; it may be only, as Rahner

110. F. Ruello, “Saint Thomas of Pierre Lombard”, *San Tommaso, Fonti e riflessi del suo pensiero*, ed. A. Piolanti, Studi Tomistici 1 (Roma, n.d.), pp. 176-196, 208-209; Sancti Thomae de Aquino, *Expositio super librum Boethii de Trinitate*, ed. B. Decker, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 4 (Leiden, 1959), *prologus*; ST I, 45, 6; I, 33, 3 ad 1; I, 34, 3.

111. Coreth, *Metaphysics*, p. 89.

112. ST I, 14, 2 ad 1: “*ipse est maxime rediens ad essentiam suam et cognoscens seipsum*”.

113. “*Sed illa forma quae non est receptibilis in materia, sed est per se subsistens, . . . et huiusmodi forma est Deus*”. ST I, 3, 2 ad 3.

114. ST I, 14, 5.

115. ST I, 34, 2 ad 4; ST I, 37, 1 ad 4; ST I, 39, 7 ad 2.

116. ST I, 34, 3 and ST I, 41, 3 ad 4.

117. Coreth, *Metaphysics*, p. 184.

118. ST I, 3, 1.

brings out, all essences in the *ens commune*.¹¹⁹ On the contrary, Thomas' own procedure in uniting essence and *esse* in the divine simplicity has the effect of bringing out the characteristic modality of the divine *esse*.

Having begun with the infinity of being, Coreth moves from positive to negative when subsequently introducing simplicity and the characteristics following on it: immutability, supratemporality, supraspatiality. This is the opposite direction from that of Thomas. In the *Summa Theologiae*, the notion of God becomes more concretely inclusive. In Coreth's *Metaphysics*, on the contrary, this negation places a wedge between the infinite being and the consequent perfections. Coreth does indeed pass to activity, life and knowing and willing, but not in Thomas' order. For Thomas, activity was necessarily present from the beginning; nothing could be said or determined about God without it. Being, at least the being of God, is not before it, because *actus* is just that by which God's being marks itself from being in general or beings. Activity is not the specific form of his being, nor life the specific form of his activity, nor spiritual knowing and willing activity the specific form of his life — this would be the worst sort of Platonism for Thomas. Rather, as in Aristotle, the higher activity contains the lower, and the lower is understood through the higher and not contrariwise.¹²⁰ Activity, life, knowing, willing are not perfections which belong to being, as in Coreth. For Thomas, God's identity of *esse* and *essentia* is his actuality. His pure formality and self-relation is his knowing in virtue of which he is the truth, and, Thomas concludes:

That being whose own nature is its self-understanding, and to which what it is belongs naturally not determined by something outside, this reaches the highest level of life. However such a being is God. Thus in God is life in the highest sense. Hence the Philosopher in Book XII of the *Metaphysics* having shown that God is understanding, concludes that he has life most perfect and eternal, because his intellect is most perfect and always actual.¹²¹

119. See nn. 87 and 88 above and Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, pp. 180-181.

120. See *In de Div. Nom.*, V, 1, 634ff. and Sancti Thomae de Aquino, *Super Librum de Causis Expositio*, ed. H. D. Saffrey, Textus Philosophici Friburgenses 4/5 (Fribourg/Louvain, 1954), Prop. 18; see also Prop. 3 and 12.

121. "Illud igitur cuius sua natura est ipsum eius intelligere, et cui id quod naturaliter habet, non determinatur ab alio, hoc est quod obtinet summum gradum vitae. Tale autem est Deus. Unde in Deo maxime est vita. Unde Philosophus in XII Metaphysica, ostenso quod Deus sit intelligens, concludit quod habeat vitam perfectissimam et semper in actu." ST I, 18, 3.

Coreth subsequently uses the same order as Thomas when he moves on to God as “infinite freedom” and “absolute person”.¹²²

Coreth seems to be genuinely caught in a dilemma. In order to be true to that metaphysical tradition to which Thomas belongs, he feels obliged to produce an onto-theology; yet, he does not want to fall prey to Heidegger’s criticism. He endeavours to escape by at least an ambiguity about the relation of “Absolute Being” to its perfections. While he says that “in Absolute Being, being and essence and all perfections are absolutely identical”, he does not show how this is so.¹²³ Has not Karl Rahner, whom Coreth follows so closely at other points, been more astute in estimating the possibility for metaphysics if one accepts Heidegger’s criteria?¹²⁴ Coreth’s middle ground, allowing Heidegger’s standards, but attempting to find a metaphysical way around them, seems doomed to failure.

122. Coreth, *Metaphysics*, p. 187.

123. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

124. We have already considered several points of common ground between Rahner and Coreth: the contact with being in judgment, the doctrine of *esse*, the limiting potency of *essentia*, their common endeavour to deal with certain problems for metaphysics posed by Heidegger (and one can add, by Kant), the attempt to avoid the χωρισμός, the recognition that classical metaphysics is subject to Heidegger’s critique, the attempt to escape it through what they think to be Thomas’ doctrine of *esse*. There is also the crucial difference over the onto-theological possibility of metaphysics. It is worth noting, in addition, is that the very method of Coreth’s argument rises out of the development of ideas present already in Rahner. Crucially, “The point of departure: the Metaphysical Question” (Rahner, *Spirit*, p. 57), which Coreth turns into the question about metaphysics. There is also between them a common teaching that every question involves the known as well as the unknown. “Every question is evoked by an antecedent summons from what is questioned, which as conscious (although not reflexively known, or although not even knowable reflexively) and as known (although not explicitly known, or although not even knowable explicitly) is present in the question itself” (*ibid.*, p. 68). Being is, for both, the unity of the subject and the object of knowing (*ibid.*, p. 69). They both have a quasi-Cartesian recognition of the finitude of the questioner shown in the fact that he doubts or questions: “the being that must ask is non-being, is deficient in its innermost ground of being” (*ibid.*, p. 72). There is also a denial of the χωρισμός in Rahner: “It is not a question of ‘bridging’ a gap, but of understanding how the gap is possible at all” (*ibid.*, p. 75). They both teach the pre-apprehension of being as opposed to its intellectual intuition. Finally, they commonly criticise Kant because in him the form and content of knowing and questioning remain divided. Their common endeavour to overcome this division is perhaps what is crucial to their method.

Is not Heidegger's critique destructive of Christian metaphysics root and branch? One might endeavour to solve the problem of "limiting essence" by demonstrating that the divine knowing is not a particular essence, but the absolute intuitive unity of universal and particular. The particular in its utter individuality is known in the absolute universality of the divine essence itself. This is surely Thomas' own position.¹²⁵ He knew perfectly well that the divine was not a particular being, an existent. One would not thereby satisfy Heidegger. For the difference to which Heidegger ultimately wishes man to attend is not that which is the origin of thinking but that which leaves Being unthought. Thomistic theology which draws into *sacra doctrina* the Aristotelian onto-theology cannot allow this difference to be ultimate. For it, in the end, knowing and willing are the relations and properties of the divine essence or being, and in common with the tradition generally, he holds that the persons possess the unity of essence: "*in Deo non sit aliud essentia quam persona secundum rem*".¹²⁶ There is in Thomas' ultimate being nothing unthought. Being and thought do not meet in the same. The divine thinking is the divine being. A theology which wishes to respect the Heideggerian difference must keep its distance from metaphysics. Metaphysics will become for it a transcendental or preliminary knowledge and theology will become an openness to the contingent historical, which is what revelation must be by this account. This is Rahner's more correctly Heideggerian theology. We must now consider its relation to Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*.

The true effect of Rahner's Heideggerian reinterpretation of Thomas is to do for him what Marx and Feuerbach did for Hegel: to take his theology, which was standing on its head, and to place it squarely on its feet in the world. There is indeed for Thomas a difference between *philosophia prima*, or *theologia philosophica* or *metaphysica*; "*illa theologia quae pars philosophia ponitur*", on the one hand, and *sacra doctrina* or *sacra scriptura*; "*theologia quae ad sacram doctrinam pertinet*", on the other.¹²⁷ The former begins in the world of sensible effects, common being, and rises to consider the first and highest cause of this most extensive subject matter, namely God as separate substance. The latter commences, on the contrary, where philosophy has arrived. No doubt, given its beginning, philosophy's knowledge of the first principle is not adequate: for "*necesse est uti effectu loco definitionis*", and God infinitely exceeds his effects.¹²⁸ But Thomas

125. *ST I*, 14, articles 5ff.

126. *ST I*, 39, 1; cf. also *I*, 42, 1.

127. *ST I*, 1, 1; for the names of theology and their relation cf. G. F. van Ackeren, *Sacra Doctrina, The Subject of the First Question of the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Romae, 1952).

128. *ST I*, 2, 2, ad 2; also *I*, 1, 7 ad 1.

is clear that the two directions of knowledge do meet; indeed, the way up is the way down.¹²⁹ Without the philosophical sciences, theology is not able to understand what God is saying to it in faith's revelation.¹³⁰ Moreover, sacred doctrine is the meeting of these two and could not proceed if one direction were regarded as empty and to be left behind for the sake of the other. "*Omnia autem pertractantur in sacra doctrina sub ratione Dei;*" "*non solum in se est sed etiam secundum quod est principium rerum et finis earum.*"¹³¹

For Rahner, on the other hand, just because metaphysics' result is empty, it must be left behind. The existence of the separate substances is known but the metaphysical object is defined only "from the empty concept of being".

For although *esse* is in itself the full ground of every existent, nevertheless, this fullness is given to us only in the absolute, empty infinity of our pre-apprehension or, what is the same thing, in common being with the transcendental modes intrinsic to it. And so it remains true: the highest knowledge of God is the 'darkness of ignorance'.¹³²

Rahner rightly judges that spirit cannot be content with this "and seeks to fill up the formal emptiness of the being given in the pre-apprehension through the object of every individual act."¹³³

Everything 'metaphysical' seems to exist only to make possible this objective sense intuition; we seem to know God, the 'object' of metaphysics, only as the necessary horizon of the experience of the world which is possible only in this way.¹³⁴

The function of this introduction to theology, the motto of which is the "*conversio ad phantasma*", is to make "God the distant Unknown". "God can speak, because He is the Unknown."¹³⁵

Thomas' metaphysics of knowledge is Christian when it summons man back into the here and now of his finite world, because

129. ScG IV, 1: "*Quia vero naturalis ratio per creaturas in Dei cognitionem ascendit, fidei vero cognitio a Deo in nos e converso divina revelatione descendit; est autem eadem via ascensus et discensus.*" Cf. W. J. Hankey, "Theology as System and as Science: Proclus and Thomas Aquinas", *Dionysius* 6 (1982), 83-93.

130. ST I, 1, 5 ad 2.

131. ST I, 1, 7 and ST I, 2, prol.

132. Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, p. 401.

133. *Ibid.*, p. 283.

134. *Ibid.*, p. 407.

135. *Ibid.*, p. 408.

the Eternal has also entered into his world so that man might find Him, and in Him might find himself anew.¹³⁶

This may in Rahner's view make this theology (in both its aspects) Christian, and indeed Thomist, but it is the very opposite of Thomas' own.

We turn finally to another transcendental Thomist, Bernard Lonergan. As for Rahner, the "*conversio ad phantasma*" is decisive for Lonergan's understanding of the metaphysical basis of theology. Rahner's *Spirit in the World* begins with an analysis of the question in the *Summa Theologiae* in which Thomas explicates this notion; Lonergan's *Insight* has set "τὰ μὲν οὖν εἶδη τὸ νοητικὸν ἐν τοῖς φαντάσμασι νοεῖ", from Aristotle's *De Anima* III, 7 on its title page. But Lonergan's position differs somewhat from that of Rahner; to comprehend it, we will need to expand the categories of our analysis.

The aim of this analysis of contemporary Thomism has been to show that features of the current interpretation of St. Thomas originate in the antitheoretical philosophical perspectives of the present world from which, consciously or unconsciously, these thinkers tend to view him. This is true regardless of whether these Thomists think of themselves primarily as historians, or rather, first of all as creative philosophers and theologians. Such interpenetration of the present and the past is very general and perhaps unavoidable. Nonetheless, it is more fully operative here just because Thomas' philosophy and theology was revived in the Roman Church for the sake of securing certain practical and political ends. Those who did the scholarly and speculative work of this great enterprise partook of its practical spirit. Moreover, the authority given to Thomas' thought by Canon Law itself compelled Roman Catholic theologians and philosophers who sought official approval to find in it their own perspectives and interests, thus further blending past and present and subordinating thought to

136. *Ibid.*, J. B. Metz, a student of Rahner's, brings out the practical (as well as further theological) consequences of this Marxist turn. See his foreword to *Spirit in the World*, pp. xliii, xlv, liii, and his *Christliche Anthropozentrik, Ueber die Denkform des Thomas von Aquin* (München, 1962) and *Zur Theologie der Welt* (Mainz und München, 1968).

practice.¹³⁷ Our endeavour has been to demonstrate that, consciously or unconsciously, it has been a Heideggerian understanding of the relation of thought and being which has coloured the interpretation of Thomas' ontology, and how the relation of philosophy and theology in his thought (and indirectly the relation of Platonic and Aristotelian elements) is understood by both contemporary realist and transcendental Thomists. Yet, the completeness of the blending of current positions and historical interpretations, and the diversity of these present perspectives, compels a widening of our categories. The relation of these perspectives can usefully be expressed by introducing a consideration of how Heidegger stands to Kant and Hegel. This is evident if we recollect that the realist and transcendental Thomists differ through their attitude to the critical philosophy originating in Descartes and culminating in Kant, and if we add that the realist or ontological turn common to both Thomisms and to Heidegger had already a form in the absolute idealism of Hegel. As against Kant, Hegel supposed that the modern subjectivity could be given an objectivity and ground in being. This understood, the Thomisms of Gilson, Rahner and Lonergan can be located relative to each other.

Before introducing the positive relation to the modern critical spirit contained in these positions, the unity with Heidegger in rejecting them needs restatement in a new form. Concerned previously with Heidegger's analysis of onto-theology, no reference was made to what characterizes classical Modern philosophy. In fact, Gilson's antimodern dogmatic realism is like Heidegger's own pre-epistemological stance, despite Heidegger's opposition to the term.

This existential-ontological assertion seems to accord with the thesis of realism that the external world is Really present-at-hand . . . But it differs in principle from every kind of realism; for realism holds that the reality of the 'world' not only needs to be proved but also is capable of proof.¹³⁸

But, Gilson would also hold that the perversity of the critical spirit

137. Theological examples are supplied by Gilson, "Trois Leçons", pp. 685ff. The labour of M. D. Chenu, in *Toward Understanding St. Thomas*, revised translation of *Introduction à l'étude de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Université de Montréal, Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales, 9 (Montréal/Paris, 1950; Chicago, 1964), pp. 305ff. and "Création et histoire", *Commemorative Studies*, ii, pp. 391-399, to find in Thomas the spirit of *heils-geschichte* theology is another instance. Philosophically, the enthusiasm for existentialism invented texts in Thomas to make him relevant: cf. D. J. McCarthy, "Une doctrine en quête d'un auteur", *Rev.phil. de Louvain*, 66 (1968), 630-660.

138. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 207, p. 251.

shows itself in seeking a proof of the world's reality. For him objective being is given intuitively.

Professor D. J. M. Bradley has shown that Maréchal, the founder of transcendental Thomism, accepting certain features of the Kantian critical spirit but moving in a realist direction relative to Kant, is forced toward Hegel. He "raises the Hegelian question but withdraws from the Hegelian answer".¹³⁹ When Rahner's position is criticised within this framework, the two poles in the movement beyond Kant are seen to be Hegel and Heidegger.

In *Spirit in the World*, the Kantian quest for an apodeictic metaphysics is revitalized by being brought into the ken of Heidegger's Question of Being with, what can only be called Hegelian seriousness.¹⁴⁰

Dr. Bradley finds that Rahner is not to be reduced to Heidegger. Whereas for Heidegger, "Being for *Dasein* remains inextricably finite",¹⁴¹

Rahner departs significantly from the stance of *Being and Time*: the metaphysical question reveals the essence of man as the being 'who as such is already with Being in its Totality'.¹⁴²

Yet, "Rahner accepts (like Heidegger) the worldly facticity of *Dasein*." And this accounts for his failure either to "reassert definitely or to overcome critically the realist position".¹⁴³ This ambivalence prevents his going over finally to the Hegelian philosophy.

Hegel argues that Being is transcendently derived as the condition of possibility for philosophical discourse; therefore, Being is always mediated and never simply recognized or affirmed as sheer unmediated "presence". But Rahner seems, at once to assert both that Being is always mediated (posited) and yet merely recognized or affirmed.¹⁴⁴

Thus he is poised uneasily between Hegel and Heidegger.

139. "Transcendental Critique", 662.

140. "Rahner's *Spirit*", 172. Also, "the philosophy of religion developed in *Hearers of the Word* has been described as a 'Thomistic dialogue' with Heidegger. The metaphor can be extended to include against the background of Kant, a quartet of speakers: Rahner, Heidegger, St. Thomas and Hegel." D. Bradley, "Religious Faith and the Mediation of Being: The Hegelian Dilemma in Rahner's *Hearers of the Word*", *The Modern Schoolman* 55 (1978), 128.

141. "Rahner's *Spirit*", n. 29, 173.

142. *Ibid.*, 173.

143. *Ibid.*, n. 38, 175-176.

144. "Religious Faith", 145.

Dr. Bradley states the "confrontation" between the realist and Hegelian metaphysics as follows:

The apparent incompatibility between a realist metaphysics that rests upon the judicative *affirmation* of Being, which as Being (*esse*) cannot be conceptually mediated, and a transcendental genesis of Being that *posits* Being as the condition for philosophical discourse which, as self-grounding rationality, is committed to the full mediation of the concept of Being.¹⁴⁵

When the issue is put thus, not in terms of Kant's subjectivity separated from the inner truth of being, but, in terms of the rational mediation of being, as opposed to an immediate positing of it beyond conceptualization, then Gilson's realism appears nearer Heidegger, and Lonergan and Rahner seem compelled to move toward Hegel, just because of their more affirmative attitude to Kant. From Gilson's perspective Rahner then seems an essentialist (Bradley stands with Gilson):

Rahner often notes, it is true that essence is only "the potency for *esse*" but at crucial points, he identified *esse* with the totality of the extra-mental object . . . [He] has recourse to a concept of Being as that supreme essence which grounds all other essences . . . the concept of *esse* is none other than the concept of universal Being which subsumes the concept of every particular Being.¹⁴⁶

In Neoscholastic terms, Bradley designates Rahner's position as "Suarezian". Gilson held that of the great classical interpreters Bañez alone understood Thomas' doctrine of being correctly.¹⁴⁷ Lonergan's epistemological and ontological positions are close to Rahner's.

Lonergan "never took to his [Gilson's] view of an intuition of being."¹⁴⁸ With Coreth, against Gilson, Lonergan is above all eager to bring out the distinctive character of intellect. "The intention of being in questioning bears no resemblance to sensitive or empirical

145. *Ibid.*

146. "Rahner's Spirit", 182-183.

147. Gilson's complaint is that authentic Thomism has been so little taught that no one knows its real power. Suarez had a version for the Jesuits (on its faults cf. *L'être et l'essence*, chap. v). Cajetan is more Aristotelian than Thomas (cf. *History of Christian Phil.*, p. 800); his rendering is what the Dominicans transmit. This is Gilson's account in "Trois Leçons", p. 685ff. He recommends Bañez in *History*, p. 707 and *L'être et l'essence*, p. 356. For a useful survey of part of the history of Thomas' doctrine of being, see L. Kennedy, "Thomism at the University of Salamanca in the Sixteenth Century: the doctrine of existence", *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo settimo centenario*, i, pp. 254-258.

148. F. E. Crowe, *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan* (London, 1967), p. xxx.

knowledge . . ."149 "The analysis of questioning forces one to conceive human intelligence not on the analogy of sense but properly in terms of intelligence itself."150 If there is no intellectual intuition of being, which would be like sense's perception, then Thomas must be seen as going some way with modern philosophy toward epistemology.

For Lonergan, Thomas is a realist, but not dogmatic.

Aquinas himself did not offer an account of the procedure he would follow; so it is only by piecing together scattered materials that one can arrive at an epistemological position that may be termed Thomistic but hardly Thomist.¹⁵¹

Yet, the need for a "comparison between the knowing and its standard" which "frightens the naive realist" is met by Aquinas. He admitted the necessity of a standard in judgement: "*nomen mentis a mensurando est sumptum*."¹⁵² Aquinas maintains that our knowledge of truth is derived from our self-knowledge. And while "it is to be observed that the Aristotelian concept of wisdom or first philosophy . . . does contain an epistemological element", it does not "raise the critical problem".¹⁵³ On the other hand, because Thomas is also heir to Augustine's reflection on self, the psychological and introspective element is essential to his philosophy, he goes beyond Aristotle. As a result, Thomas does not share the "prejudice of modern Schoolmen" against "criteriology". "His predecessors were neither Descartes nor Kant but Aristotle and Augustine."¹⁵⁴ So finally, Thomist

realism is immediate, not because it is naive and unreasoned and blindly affirmed, but because we know the real before we know . . . a difference within the real as the difference between subject and object.¹⁵⁵

Lonergan places Thomas somewhat on the way to modern critical thought. This is also how Heidegger sees him; for Heidegger has not the same view of scholasticism as Heideggerian Thomists.¹⁵⁶ Again, Lonergan and Heidegger are commonly critical of the notion "that the way to grasp the real is by a kind of knowing which

149. Lonergan, "Metaphysics as Horizon", p. 214.

150. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

151. Lonergan, *Verbum*, pp. 84-85.

152. *Ibid.*, p. 60; Fr. Lonergan is quoting *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 1.

153. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

154. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

155. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

156. M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 25 p. 46; 40 p. 64; 93 p. 126.

is characterized by beholding", which Lonergan speaks of as Platonist.¹⁵⁷

For the Platonist, knowing is primarily a confrontation, it supposes the duality of knower and known . . . For the Aristotelian, on the other hand, confrontation is secondary. Primarily and essentially knowing is perfection, act, identity.¹⁵⁸

By this means, Lonergan came to a union of epistemology (or psychology) and ontology which is that critical or essentialist realism discovered in Rahner by Gilson's followers and, on account of which, they rejected his position as authentically Thomist.

There is an identification of the self-relation of being and intellect in Rahner and Lonergan, which is a result of the union of epistemology and ontology. Rahner maintains:

The beingness (*Seiendheit*), the intensity of being (*Seinsmächtigkeit*) of the being of an existent is determined for Thomas by the *reditio super seipsum*, the intensity of being is determined by the degree of possibility to be able to be present to itself.¹⁵⁹

Presence to self is knowing. Lonergan has it that "Being . . . is the objective of the pure desire to know" (placing being within knowing).¹⁶⁰ But, "transcendence . . . means a development in man's being";¹⁶¹ "cognitional activity is the becoming known of being." There is "a parallelism between the dynamism of mind and the dynamism of proportional being."¹⁶²

The concept of being is natural to intellect; for intelligibility is natural to intellect, for it is its act; and conceptualization is natural to intellect, for it is its activity; but the concept of being, on the above showing, is the conceptualization of intelligibility as such, and so it too is natural to intellect. Again it follows that the concept of being is indeterminate . . . that . . . [it] cannot be unknown to any intellect; for its sole condition is that intellect be in any act of understanding . . . [and] that being is the object of intellect.¹⁶³

Only on condition that human intellect is *potens omnia facere et fieri* is the concept of all concepts really commensurate with reality — really the concept of *ens*. On the other hand, if intellect is *potens omnia facere et fieri*, then since we know by what we are,

157. *Ibid.*, 202 p. 246.

158. *Verbum*, pp. 133-134.

159. Rahner, *Spirit in the World*, p. 69.

160. Lonergan, *Insight*, p. 348.

161. *Ibid.*, p. 636.

162. *Ibid.*, p. 445.

163. Lonergan, *Verbum*, pp. 44-45.

per se and naturally we do know *ens*, further, since we know we know by knowing what we are, it is by reflection on the nature of intellect that we know our capacity for truth and for knowledge of reality.¹⁶⁴

Perhaps Gilson is right that any concession to the modern critical spirit, which would endeavour to reconcile it with Thomist realism, in fact is on the way to making being into intellect's self-positing. In any case, Lonergan's position is generally the same post-Kantian epistemological realism situated ambivalently between Heidegger and Hegel which Dr. Bradley found in Rahner.

If Lonergan's Thomism can be understood within the same contemporary framework which comprehends other Thomists, he also shares their unhistorical view of Thomas' relation to Platonism. He regards Thomas as Aristotelian as opposed to Platonist. He is then left with no philosophical means for describing the difference between Aquinas and Aristotle. Near the beginning of *Verbum*, he notes:

Aquinas was troubled with a problem that had not concerned Aristotle namely how to reconcile the simplicity of God with the infinity of ideas known by God.¹⁶⁵

This is precisely a characteristic problem for Neoplatonic, as opposed to Hellenic, theologians. Lonergan, however, sees the treatment of the divine simplicity as Aristotelian:

From the *Sentences*, he appreciated the advantage of knowing as identity in reconciling divine simplicity with divine knowledge . . . there is to be discerned here an increasing Aristotelianism.¹⁶⁶

Fr. Lonergan sees only the identity of all the attributes of God; Thomas' ordering of them from simplicity toward division is hidden to him. Reason knows only God's unity:

The natural light of reason will never get beyond . . . identity in demonstrating the nature of self-knowledge in the infinite simplicity of God.¹⁶⁷

One is left with the contradiction that Thomas' emphasis on the divine simplicity is both Aristotelian and beyond Aristotle.

Similarly, Lonergan's anti-Platonism causes him to miss the reason behind Aquinas' more than Aristotelian interest in the introspective psychology of knowing and his unAristotelian faculty psychology.

164. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

165. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

166. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

167. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

He credits both to Augustine.¹⁶⁸ In fact Augustine is here only a vehicle for Neoplatonism. Because for Neoplatonists the unity on which thought depends is beyond it, the direct Aristotelian confidence that the categories of thought are also those of being disappears and epistemological concern develops. Faculty psychology equally depends on the Neoplatonic division between unity and the many. The substance of the soul and its more divided operations are not on the same level. These historical *lacunae* may seem trivial. Yet, because of them, there is a blindness to the full character of Thomas' thought; ie., "Dionysian language was at hand and he did not use it."¹⁶⁹ Most importantly, the philosophical tension in Thomas' thought is missed. We return to a Leonine perspective in which the division between philosophy and theology is all important — a perspective which has appeared in every Thomist we have considered. It is just this position with its anti-Platonism and overbalanced concern with ontology which is incapable of showing the unity of the *Summa Theologiae*, the unity of Scriptural and philosophic theology.

Bernard Lonergan's blindness to the Platonism of Aquinas reminds us of general features of the post-Leonine Thomism which contrast with the Anglican theology of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from which we began this essay. That Anglican theology which turned from a speculative to a practical justification of Christianity was frequently Platonist and even idealist, as a mention of Balliol and the influence of Benjamin Jowett and T. H. Green will indicate. Yet we have seen that leading features of Neothomism are its blindness to the Platonic element in Thomas' thought, despite the claim of some Thomists to be historians, and a nearly universal view of Hegel as diabolical. This difference between the Anglicans and the Romans excites curiosity, though Professor Jackson's evidence for the ideological character of history of philosophy in our period, which is found elsewhere in this volume, will prevent our being unduly puzzled. In fact, if the practical interest is recognized as dominant and determinative, the judgments of Platonism become intelligible.

The Anglicans loved Plato because, when the highest principle is directly known as the Good, we seem to pass from knowledge to decision and practice without a strong awareness of their difference. The Anglicans are concerned to show that Christianity is and can remain the effective moving force of their national life. Church and state are held together by a progressive Christian socialism even when it cannot be known whether the doctrines

168. *Ibid.*, p. 188 and n. 143 above.

169. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

of the Christian religion have a positive content for thought as thought. Pope Leo's practical aim was as nearly the direct opposite as can be imagined. For him, Modern rationalism had enabled the state to capture the Church. His initial choice of an Aristotelian Thomism was motivated by the need to so divide philosophy and Christian theology as to reestablish the independence and sovereign ascendancy of the Church. The Roman Church sought to divide what Anglicans still hoped to hold together. When anti-speculative Thomism discovered existentialism as its appropriate philosophical form, the turn from Platonism was understood as necessary to the rejection of essentialism.

Existentialist Thomism no longer dominates the mind of the Roman Church; Fathers Lonergan and Rahner and Professor Gilson are all departed. Yet the creative heirs of the Thomist revival still endeavour the restoration of Scriptural religion while emptying Christian doctrine of speculative content. Professor George Lindbeck of Yale attempts just this in his *The Nature of Doctrine, Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*.¹⁷⁰ He offers a "cultural-linguistic" alternative to what he represents as the preliberal cognitivist and the liberal experiential-expressive ways of understanding doctrine. For this third position, doctrines neither convey a speculative content which may be regarded as true or false,¹⁷¹ nor are they more or less adequate symbols of a posited experience conceived to be prior to doctrine. Because for Professor Lindbeck Scripture and doctrine constitute the language and grammar within which religious experience, thought, and action occur, he regards his position as conservative relative to a liberal account which supposes itself to possess the key explaining and interpreting the reality of religious forms. Bernard Lonergan and Karl Rahner become liberal expressivist theologians in Lindbeck's scheme, just as "Anglo-Catholics such as the authors of *Lux Mundi*" are regarded as sharing the liberal "commitment to the primacy of experience".¹⁷²

But this cultural-linguistic conservatism is by no means a true return to preliberal cognitivist accounts of Scripture and doctrine. This is precisely because Lindbeck tacitly accepts that the content of religion cannot be a truth conveyed about the eternal intellectual substance. So doctrine is treated as "regulative"¹⁷³ and it is only when religion commits itself to particularized acts, or praxis, in the contemporary reality that there is something analogous to true and false statements:

170. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1984.

171. *The Nature of Doctrine*, p. 69.

172. *Ibid.*, p. 113 and p. 38 (on Lonergan and Rahner).

173. *Ibid.*, pp. 80ff.

In short intelligibility comes from skill, not theory, and credibility comes from good performance, not adherence to independently formulated criteria.¹⁷⁴

George Lindbeck does not regard his cultural-linguistic account of doctrine to be that of St. Thomas but he clearly sees himself within the development of contemporary Thomism and he identifies his final result, wherein truth and falsity belong to praxis not theory, as equivalent to Thomas' conception of religion become connatural.¹⁷⁵ Thus Thomism once again attempts victory over Modern liberalism.

Thomism which remains faithful to Pope Leo's practical purposes, his war with modernity, and which uses philosophy as a weapon, takes us back to the anti-speculative framework of the nineteenth century religious revival generally. All the forms we have encountered erect dividing walls between philosophy, history and theology and prevent the construction or comprehension of genuinely speculative theological systems. This consequence unites us with our nineteenth century antecedents, but gone for us now are the moral and practical confidence which moved all of them and the optimistic assessment of human history which inspired many of them. Much in the nineteenth century theological reconstructions depended on these and so some of their edifices, like the re-ordering of the Biblical account of Israel's religious history, have lost both their religious significance and the logic on which they can in fact be erected. This is why so much Biblical scholarship now seems irrelevant unless it can be tied to liberation praxis and outside of that context falls into scepticism. But, what remains with us is the opposition to anything like the old metaphysical theology. So we live among the old credal symbols, the Patristic and Medieval systems and religious forms which nineteenth century piety and romantic scholarship restored for us. It is as if we inhabited massive neo-gothic ruins fabricated in the last century. We cling to them and hang our laundry upon them, as did the Medieval inhabitants of ruined Classical Rome, but they are incomprehensible to us. The turn from speculative theology to practice is also still with us. But we now act so distrusting ourselves that we pretend to be both powerless and revolutionaries and to be able to exercise divine authority without hierarchy.¹⁷⁶ We have no longer the confidence

174. *Ibid.*, p. 131; see also pp. 91, 107 and 134.

175. *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 79, 134-5.

176. For example see J. Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, trans. M. Kohl, (London, 1981), chapter vi and Rowan Williams, "Women and the Ministry: A Case for Theological Seriousness", *Feminine in the Church*, ed. M. Furlong, (London, 1984), pp. 11-27. How "serious" is such logic?

that our civilization is the agent of progressive revelation and moral progress, so we act lest the forthright contemplation of our fate become unbearable to us. Providentially, the dawn is already breaking in the incipient discovery that we have falsified our own history by trying to bend it to our practical purposes. When we surrender these, we shall recover our past once again new.

Yet the renewal of the present by a rediscovery of what we have forgotten and neglected in our past is only one of the possibilities before us. Critical scholarship and historical consciousness, which also appear to be opposed to a recovery of the power and truth present in the past, can actually assist us to restore the integrity of Christian theology. They do this by making us conscious of the difference between the older theology and what our practicality has made of it. This is essential. But we may choose not to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. We may carry forward the subjective side of the nineteenth century revival to its dead end. Then we shall make theology into praxis, thought into ideology, and historical reflection into scepticism.¹⁷⁷ We shall be left with nothing but self-consciously arbitrary self-assertion and will call it Christian theology, indeed we shall imagine ourselves to be the first authentic Christian theologians. Ultimately we shall then be all alone. If however we turn to subordinate our minds and wills to the intellectual substance of the old forms, if we do what their nineteenth century restorers feared to do or thought they could escape, then we shall find a task for ourselves which will unite us with a numberless company.

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177. Cf. J. Moltmann, *Religion, Revolution and the Future*, trans. M. D. Meeks (New York, 1969), pp. 64ff.

Endnote 1

On this division see E. Mascal, *The Openness of Being*, Gifford Lectures, 1970-71 (London, 1971) and J. Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought: The Frontiers of Philosophy and Theology, 1900-1970* (rev. ed.; London, 1971). Macquarrie makes some useful remarks relating the two Thomisms to other features of twentieth century philosophy, particularly to "realist metaphysics", "kerygmatic theology" and existentialism (pp. 254-56, 279, 288, 392). Other divisions are possible, but they mainly reduce to a distinction between those who treat Thomas historically and those who have primarily a speculative or practical interest. Klaus Kremer, *Die Neuplatonische Seinsphilosophie und ihre Wirkung auf Thomas von Aquin*, Studien zur Problemgeschichte der Antiken und Mittelalterlichen Philosophie, 1 (Leiden, 1966), p. xxiii, has drawn a line among scholars of mediaeval philosophy between those who, like Baeumker, Denifle, Ehrle, Grabmann, Graf von Hertling, Pelster, Geyer, Koch, practise "*literar-historische Forschungen*" and those who, like Gilson, Geiger, Fabro, Hirschberger, Meyer, "*das philosophische Gedankengut mittelalterlicher-Werke für uns zum Sprechen zu bringen*". The latter suffer from "*eine Illusion . . . der philosophische Gedanke in seinem 'An sich' wäre uns unmittelbar zugänglich*". F. van Steenberghen, "L'avenir au thomisme", 203 (quoted with approval by Kremer, p. 470) speaks of those for whom "*Aristoteles genuit Thomam, Thomas genuit Cajetanum, Cajetanus genuit Joannem a Sancto Thoma . . .*" and who thus place St. Thomas "*dans une tradition fort étroite, dans laquelle Aristote fait figure de précurseur*". This tradition is the "*philosophia perennis . . . la philosophie éternelle, la vraie philosophie*". This last group is actually set against those who place him in no historical context at all! Both these groups are contrasted to historians like himself and Gilson. See also his *The Philosophical Movement in the Thirteenth Century* (n.p.: Nelson, 1955) and most exhaustively *Introduction*. But the divisions of Kremer and van Steenberghen fail to satisfy because of the interpenetration of historical return and contemporary practical purpose which characterizes this revival. Thus, Ehrle's literary historical researches produce results necessary to these purposes (cf. n. 35 above) and Gilson is the most distinguished of the historians of mediaeval philosophy.

Of course, there are Thomists whose thought does not fall within these categories, but they are very exceptional. One is Austin Farrer, *Finite and Infinite* (Westminster, 1943). He distinguishes himself from "the Thomists . . . [who] by their rigid Aristotelianism and their insistence on the possibility of inescapable demonstration make themselves vile in modern eyes", and endeavours to "re-state the Analogy of Being in a credible form" (*ibid.*, p. vi). He engages in an extraordinarily free dialogue with Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Hume, Berkeley — to give only examples — and he very evidently takes them seriously. His whole aim is to enable an "apprehension of substantial being" (p. 98), but he is certainly neither a one-sided existentialist nor an essentialist. "Essence without existence is not, and therefore cannot be presupposed as the measure of it; and finite existence without essence is not, and cannot therefore receive the imposition of a measure" (p. 266). Significantly, the aspect in which he most shares the spirit of contemporary Thomism is in his limitation of rational theology:

The knowledge of God to which rational theology leads us . . . is the knowledge of existent perfection conceived through the analogy of spirit, and the knowledge that this Being is the creator of all finite existence. But that is all . . . no sound reason for a belief in Providence is deducible

from these premises . . . As with providence, so it is with grace . . . For this knowledge . . . we must turn to the field of particular 'contingent' events . . . Rational theology deals with God and Freedom, but not with Immortality, Providence or Grace, except in considering their mere possibility when the idea of them has come from another quarter (pp. 299-300).

St. Thomas himself would certainly include providence and immortality within the philosophical knowledge of God, although it will be important to notice that, unlike Farrer, van Steenberghe, Rahner or the rest, he never produced a work of philosophical — in the sense of natural — theology and, unlike Farrer, began rather than ended his theology with the proof for God's existence.

Endnote 2

The realists are a host beyond enumeration. Most prominent are E. Gilson, on his realism, see especially the works listed in n. 42; for bibliography, and biography see M. McGrath, *Etienne Gilson, A Bibliography*, The Etienne Gilson Series 3 (Toronto, 1982) and L. K. Shook, *Etienne Gilson*, The Etienne Gilson Series 6 (Toronto, 1984), and J. Maritain (cf. nn. 47 and 48). Mons. L. Noël (see n. 41), L. de Raeynaeker, "La profonde originalité de la métaphysique de saint Thomas d'Aquin", *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter*, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, ii, ed. P. Wilpert (Berlin, 1963) pp. 14-29; G. van Riet, *L'épistémologie thomiste*, *Bibl. phil. de Louvain*, 3 (Louvain, 1946) and F. van Steenberghe are all realists of the Louvain school. Notable followers of Gilson include A. C. Pegis, for bibliography, see J. Reginald O'Donnell (ed.), *Essays in Honour of Anton Charles Pegis* (Toronto, 1974), pp. 9-16; J. Owens, whose *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto, 1951) was crucial as part of the endeavour to establish the supposed difference between Aristotle's teaching and that of Christian metaphysics, for complete bibliography see J. R. Catan (ed.), *Aristotle, the Collected Papers of Joseph Owens* (Albany, 1981), pp. 229-239; A. Maurer, who, in the last pages of *St. Thomas and Historicity* (Milwaukee, 1979), was still trying to maintain that the true solution to the problem of modern thought is "a radical counter-Copernican revolution" (p. 40). E. Mascall, *Existence and Analogy* (London, 1949), *He Who Is*, (London, 1943), and *The Openness of Being*, is explicitly a Gilsonian realist. "For the principle of the primacy of existence over essence and for the view that, while essence is grasped in the concept, existence (*esse*) is affirmed in a judgement, I was heavily indebted to M. Etienne Gilson" (*He Who Is*, p. xii). J. Pieper is similarly dependent. In his *Introduction to Thomas Aquinas*, translation of *Einführung zu Thomas von Aquin* (London, 1962) he acknowledges the basis of his account in Chenu, Gilson, van Steenberghe (p. ix) and notes that Gilson and Chenu "go beyond mere scholarliness to ask and answer the question of the truth of things: (p. 9). This truth is brought out as follows: " 'The most marvellous of all the things a being can do is to be.' In these words, Gilson most clearly and convincingly elucidates that insight of St. Thomas which I am discussing here" (p. 136). He subsequently reproduces Gilson's account of the history of the doctrine of being (pp. 136-139). Here and in *The Silence of St. Thomas*, he associates himself with Gilson's existentialist account of Thomism. "It can be . . . demonstrated that this common concern of all the Existentialists finds in St. Thomas' teaching both a positive correspondence and a specific corrective" (*The Silence*, p. 91). "Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain, and other

French scholars have expressly termed St. Thomas' metaphysics an existential philosophy" (*Introduction to Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 138-139).