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On the Primacy of the Common Good  
Against the Personalists  
and  
The Principle of the New Order

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Charles De Koninck, who died in 1964, was for many years the Dean of the Faculté de Philosophie at l'Université Laval in Quebec. He was as well a professeur auxiliaire of the Faculté de Theologie of the same university and a visiting professor at Notre Dame. The Aquinas Review here reproduces the work in its entirety, originally published in French in 1943 by Université Laval. (Editions Fides.) The translation from the French is by Sean Collins.

## Preface to the Original Edition of 1943

The work presented here is not an ordinary book. It is pure wisdom. But one is no longer in the habit of looking at the practical world in the light of its most profound principles; except, perhaps, for those inverted thinkers who shake up the order of thought so that they might better thereafter disturb the real order, the political and moral order, and organize with an innocent air the most radical revolutions, those which finish by being altogether the most bloody and cynical. At the same time, good souls raise their hands with terror and scandal; but little by little they come to think like the revolutionaries, not noticing the equivocations hidden under seemingly acceptable formulas, nor noticing that such concession is a way of actually cooperating with the shedding of blood.

The author sees undoubtedly better than most the horrible perils and the social disorders which are borne of Nazism and communism. He sees them better because he penetrates their false wisdom, the principles which remain in latent activity under the advances and retreats of these organizations of disorder. He sees these principles in all of their perfidiousness, in their truth turned backwards, truth poisoned by the germ of pride which then uses terms of truth to make them carry error, and words of virtue to cover sin and evil. And what horrifies him, what grips his soul, is that the good, sometimes the best

among us, accustom themselves, perhaps at first frightened by the revolutions which unfold before their eyes, to conceive amiss the essence of what they witness, letting their minds be intoxicated with the most deleterious formulas. In a word the cause of fright is that the world grows accustomed to think as a communist does, as a Marxist, a radical negator, first unconscious, befuddled, and then cynical and enthusiastic, negating all things which are true because they are real, just because ordered, all that perfects man because it is subordinated to God and rectified by order to the true sovereign end.

In former studies the author has already shown the historical origins and the evolution of this essentially deviant and corrosive philosophy. One must go back to the Averroism which seeks emancipation from the natural order, to voluntarism which tends towards the emancipation of desire, to nominalism which conduces towards emancipation of human discourse, to the moralism of good will which seeks the emancipation of sentiment, to methodic and pretended skepticism which seeks the emancipation of purely human thought, to Kantian subjectivism which tends towards the emancipation of reason against understanding and of rights against the common good, and which has continued its avatars in the emancipated dialectic of Hegel, turning against all nature in Marxism, acquiring its power of destruction in Bolshevism and Nazism. And it is from seeing how, little by little, even on the part of the traditional, revolutionary thought gains more or less conscious adherents, that the author finds himself both horrified and inflamed with zeal for the truth.

Currently, it is personalism which has become fashionable. Very sincere minds advocate it. The dignity of the human person is exalted; respect for the human person is desired; authors write to defend

a personalist order, and one works to create a civilization which is for man... That is all very well, but too simple, for the person, man, is not ordered to himself as his end, nor is he the end of everything. The person has God as his end, and to want to borrow the language of others, even when one seems to correct it by the charm of the best adjectives (have they not even gone as far as to speak of the "dialectical materialism of Aristotle and Saint Thomas" to designate their natural doctrine?), even if one does not exclude the tacit suppositions which orthodoxy requires, one still implies the thought of others, a thought which is naturalist and atheist even if only by its indifference, radically humanist, and one encourages the overthrow of civilization because one overthrows language, and with it philosophy and theology. It is this that the author rises up against. He is not mistaken. For now is the time, more than ever, to cry out in warning. Now is the time to hope that societies will not reorganize themselves around the individual person, but around the common good, in its various degrees, that is, around the sovereign end, that is, around God.

The author openly attacks the personalists, but in order to truly defend the dignity of the human person. His study insists without flattery on the greatness of the person. It is opposed to any doctrine which, under pretext of glorification, diminishes and atrophies the human person and deprives it of its most divine goods.

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Among the Christian thinkers today there is agreement concerning the social facts of the contemporary age, but at the same time one

discerns among them two clearly contrary tendencies when it comes to interpreting those facts.

Everyone seems to recognize that political society fails more and more in its obligations, that it is dissolving and becoming less worthy of its most essential tasks; it cares no longer about God, about the soul, about nontemporal goods; it drowns and consumes itself in entirely economic preoccupations and in corporeal well-being. That is what, in fact, makes the responsibility of the family grow heavier, for under the constraint of circumstances the family must supply more and more of the goods which it itself should expect from public society. But—alas!—the same authors see moreover a constantly growing dissolution of the family; the individual person is more and more isolated and abandoned to himself by the home, as the family is by the society. What to do?

When it comes to interpreting these facts, so as to correct the misfortunes, some, imbued with the idea of Progress, see in this increasing dissolution a reemphasis of the true hierarchy; in the utter failure of civil society, they find a good which inclines them to justify this failure, namely the opportunity for the individual person, whom they conceive as the term of all human order, to climb back onto his pedestal, to shine forth more brilliantly, forgetting that by nature the person is a part of the greater order, that one does not fully and profoundly attain perfection except by reason of the various common goods to which one is in fact ordered as to the greatest goods, which have at the very summit, as beginning and end, that sovereign common good which is God Himself. They make, in effect, an essential concession to Marxism. They pervert the rule of Christian optimism, God only permits evil if He can bring a greater good out of it,

by confusing evolutionary progress with perfection which is necessarily based on order and which rests on the essential and immutable.

Others, on the contrary, and our author is decisively among them, see in this social and familial dissolution, predicted and deplored by the most authoritative voice, namely that of the Church, a pure and simple increase of human misery, a gradual impoverishment. And they see that this collapse is the natural consequence of exploiting civil society and the family for the profit of an individual person.

It is true that the role of the family must increase—it always ought to—but it must do so now so much the more because the very existence of the family is threatened. It is true that now it has become more important than ever to insist upon the dignity of the individual person, to say it out loud, to the public powers, and to individual persons. The person must be saved in spite of the corruption of the family environment and the social environment. But that does not at all imply that the corruption of the environment is good, an occasion for the person to demonstrate richer qualities. You have lost an eye. Now the one which remains requires more care and special prudence. Understood. But should the semi-blind man console himself by pretending it is better to have one eye than two, on account of the value which the remaining one receives? Because of practical expedients for surmounting misfortune, should we theoretically renounce things better in themselves? Must the speculative order then be subject to the practical? Must we falsify the dignity of the person and preach personalism because corrupt society no longer fulfills its role towards the common good, and because the person is thus deprived of those supports which would be natural to him if the family and society remained centered on the notion of the common good?

There is the thesis of this work: the primacy of the common good, in society, in the family, for the soul itself, provided that the notion of a common good is well understood, as the greatest good of the singular, not by being a collection of singular goods, but best for each of the particular individuals who participate in it precisely on account of its being common. Those who defend the primacy of the singular good of the singular person suppose a false notion of the common good as if it were alien to the good of the singular; whereas it is natural and proper that the singular seek more the good of the species than his singular good. Since the person, an intellectual substance, is a part of the universe in whom the perfection of the whole universe can exist according to knowledge, his most proper good as intellectual substance will be the good of the universe, which is an essentially common good. Rational creatures, persons, are distinguished from irrational, by being more ordered to the common good and by being able to act expressly for its sake. It is true also that a person can perversely prefer his own singular good to the common good, attaching himself to the singularity of his person, or as we say today to his personality, set up as a common measure of all good. Furthermore, if the reasonable creature cannot entirely limit himself to a subordinate common good, such as the family or political society, this is not because his particular good as such is greater; it is because of his proper ordination to a superior common good to which he is principally ordered. In this case, the common good is not sacrificed to the good of the individual as individual, but to the good of the individual insofar as the latter is ordered to a more universal common good, indeed to God. A society consisting of persons who love their private good above the common good, or who identify the com-

mon good with a private good, is not a society of free men, but of tyrants, who menace each other by force, and in which the final head is merely the most astute and the strongest among the tyrants, the subjects being nothing but frustrated tyrants.

That is the substance of the book. It establishes its position by the hammer of reason, striking blows firmly on the anvil of fundamental and evident notions, the iron hot with the truth, making clear as well the inconsistency and absurdity of equivocation and error.

The dissolution of human societies would not be such a great evil if it was not the corruption of the greatest of human goods, the common good, and if that did not at the same time lead to clouding of the very notion of a common good. One cannot build a better society with personalism, if one destroys the very principle of all society, the very first principle which is the common good.

It is therefore not in a personalist conception of marriage, nor in a so-called Christian and socialist personalism, which both result from theoretical and ethical concessions to error, that one will be able to find the solution to the problems which deviations from the truth more and more tragically produce. It is always the truth which must deliver us. But these conceptions merely aim to push to the point of exasperation the perilous solitude in which the human person is placed, once he is detached and isolated from the common good under the pretext of exalting his dignity.

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Some have dared to see, in the insistence of Encyclicals on the dignity of the person, a late recognition of the doctrine of personal emancipa-

tion. They go even so far as to say that communism will be a salutary expedient for putting the new conception of society into practice; some think the danger of such evil doctrines is exaggerated, that it is in the logic of things that human nature should always come out victorious.

And so it is that now the most evident truths, and the most firmly established principles, are to be subjected to a historical dialectic. The errors that the popes have not ceased to condemn are supposed to have become now, after mature reflection and thanks to new perspectives furnished by the advantage of new experience, very just claims. Certain Catholics even suggest, forgetting that Pope Pius XI denounced communism as a false redemption and as intrinsically perverse (in the Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*), that the Church has not made the concessions that it ought to make, and that could save so many generous souls vexed by its rebuffs. Ingratitude and blasphemy. They find our Mother the holy Church to be at fault precisely where She shows Herself to be heroic. For the Church defends the person against the very consequences of doctrines which, following a false conception of the state, following the exclusive preoccupation which States have for the purely personal good, following the apathy of persons towards the common good, have given to the state a growing and blind power to crush.

There will only be a still greater manifestation of the Divine mercy, which can save the person from the solitude into which men have placed him. Karl Marx observed that privation increases in the world, but this privation according to him is merely an occasion for man to show his own power; he called upon man purely as man to correct

such privation; not at all upon man as ordered to the common good, ordered to God.

We, faced with the greatest of menaces, still maintain the truth, namely that the person must rely upon the family and the society, and that all created order must rely upon God. We, faced with the scandal of the world which scorns the hungry and those who seek justice, we call upon God, upon His hidden mercy. And faced with a world which thinks badly in order to accommodate evil realities, which wants to find good in evil, we have no easy solutions, none but to correct the facts according to the principles of all good.

Evil could not exist if God could not draw good from it; evil could not be so great, if God could not draw from it a greater good. But woe to those who, either by teaching or by action, push men into that extreme indulgence, into that infernal solitude in which the person himself would perish unless the pure liberality of God does not save him. Woe to those who encourage evil ut eveniat bonum.

When the tempter addresses himself to men, he knows that he must speak to them of divinity; you will be like gods. Since then, every attack against religion and truth, against the rights of God and the true dignity of the person, has been made in analogous terms. Even Karl Marx could gain a hearing only by proclaiming that "the human consciousness is the highest divinity." But just as Divine mercy increases over the course of time, so also does the cleverness of the devil grow sharper. Listen attentively to the warning of the Apostle: I do fear lest, as Eve was seduced by the cleverness of the serpent, your thoughts also be corrupted and lose their simplicity with regard to Christ. (II Cor. XI, 3)

In circuitu impii ambulat, according to the Book of

Psalms (XI, 9). The evil walk in circles without ceasing. And they always come back to the attack. When they have been chased out one door, they try to enter by another, especially by one where they are not expected.

We must expect a more veiled return of the most ill-omened doctrines of the past. There is perhaps no doctrine that has had more rebirths than the many-headed monster, Pelagianism. That is still another reason for Christians to proclaim the necessity of grace for saving man from sin and for healing his wounds, to proclaim that the person is nothing except by imitation of God, by participation in uncreated Being, by ordination to the divine common good, by the supernatural vocation to partake in the life and splendor of the Lord.

May the sons of St. Thomas, who directly bestir themselves even as the shadow of this peril appears, obtain from God that they might never weaken in their vigilance.

That is the justified warning of the author of *The Primacy of the Common Good Against the Personalists*.

Some would dispute, under pretext of prudence, whether there should be relentless agitation about the irresolvable doctrinal differences which are the object of this study. To them we recall these words of the Apostle, which one finds in the Epistle of the Mass for a Doctor: Before God and before Christ Jesus, I put this duty to you, in the name of His Appearing and of His kingdom: proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, call to obedience—but do all with patience and with the intention of teaching. The time is sure to come when, far from being content with sound teaching, people will be avid for the latest novelty and collect themselves a whole series of teachers according to

their own tastes; and then, instead of listening to the truth, they will turn to myths (II Timothy IV:1-4).

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Archbishop of Quebec.  
Cardinal Palace,  
March 25, 1943.

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## FOREWORD

Human society is made for man. Any political doctrine which ignores the rational nature of man, and which consequently denies the freedom and dignity of man, is vitiated at its very roots and subjects man to inhuman conditions. It is therefore with good reason that totalitarian doctrines are rejected in the name of human dignity.

Does this mean that we must agree with all of those who invoke the dignity of man? It must not be forgotten that the philosophers responsible for modern totalitarianism did not deny the dignity of the human person; on the contrary, they exalted this dignity more than ever before. Hence it is evidently necessary to determine what the dignity of man consists of.

The Marxists push the dignity of man even to the point of denying God. "Philosophy makes no secret of it," Marx says. "The profession of Prometheus: 'in a word, I hate all gods... ,' is the profession of philosophy itself, the discourse which it holds and which it will always hold against every god of heaven and earth which does not recognize human consciousness as the highest divinity. This divinity suffers no rival."<sup>1</sup>

Let us not forget that the sin of him who sins since the beginning consisted in the exaltation of his personal dignity and of the proper good of his nature; he preferred his proper good to the common good, to a beatitude which was participated and common to many; he refused this latter because it was participated and common. Even

though he possessed his natural happiness and the excellence of his person by no special favor, but rather by a right founded on his creation itself—to God he owed his creation, but all else belonged properly to him—, by this invitation to participate he felt injured in his proper dignity. "Taking hold of their proper dignity (the fallen angels) desired their 'singularity,' which is most proper to those who are proud."<sup>2</sup>

The dignity of the created person is not without ties, and the purpose of our liberty is not to overcome these ties, but to free us by strengthening them. These ties are the principal cause of our dignity. Liberty itself is not a guarantee of dignity and of practical truth. "Even aversion towards God has the character of an end insofar as it is desired under the notion of liberty, as according to the words of Jeremiah (II, 20): For a long time you have broken the yoke, you have broken bonds, and you have said, 'I will not serve.'<sup>3</sup>

One can affirm personal dignity and at the same time be in very bad company. Does it suffice then to affirm the primacy of the common good? That will not suffice either. Totalitarian regimes recognize the common good as a pretext for subjugating persons in the most ignoble way. Compared with the slavery with which they menace us, the slavery of brute animals is liberty. Shall we be so lax as to allow totalitarianism this perversion of the common good and of its primacy?

Might there not be, between the exaltation of the entirely personal good above any good that is truly common on the one hand, and the negation of the dignity of persons on the other, a very logical connection which could be seen working in the course of history? The sin of the angels was practically a personalist error: they

preferred the dignity of their own person to the dignity which they would receive through their subordination to a good which was superior but common in its very superiority. The Pelagian heresy, according to John of St. Thomas, can be considered as somewhat like the sin of the angels. It is only somewhat like it, because whereas the angels committed a purely practical sin, the error of the Pelagians was at the same time speculative.<sup>4</sup> We believe that modern personalism is but a reflection of the Pelagian heresy, speculatively still more feeble. It raises to the level of a speculative doctrine an error which was at the beginning only practical. The enslavement of the person in the name of the common good is like a diabolical vengeance, both remarkable and cruel, a cunning attack against the community of good to which the devil refused to submit. The denial of the higher dignity which man receives through the subordination of his purely personal good to the common good would ensure the denial of all human dignity.

We do not mean to claim that the error of those who today call themselves personalists is anything more than speculative. Let there be no ambiguity about this. Undoubtedly our insistence could injure those personalists who have identified themselves with what they hold. That is their own very personal responsibility. But we have our responsibility as well—and we judge this doctrine to be pernicious in the extreme.

... Although the (fallen) Angel was really abased by this abandonment of superior goods, although he was, as St. Augustine says, fallen to the level of his proper good, nonetheless he elevated himself in his own eyes, and he forced himself, by mighty arguments (*magna negotiatione*) to prove completely to others that he aimed in this only at a greater resemblance with

God, because thus he proceeded with less dependence on His grace and His favors, and in a more personal manner (magis singulariter), and also by not communicating with inferiors.

John of St. Thomas,  
On the Evil of the Angels

I will never exchange, be sure, my miserable lot to serve you. I would rather be bound to this rock than be the faithful valet, the messenger of Father Zeus.

Prometheus, cited by Karl Marx

# I ON THE PRIMACY OF THE COMMON GOOD AGAINST THE PERSONALISTS

## The Common Good and against its Primacy

The good is what all things desire insofar as they desire their perfection. Therefore the good has the notion of a final cause. Hence it is the first of causes, and consequently diffusive of itself. But "the higher a cause is, the more numerous the beings to which it extends its causality. For a more elevated cause has a more elevated proper effect, which is more common and present in many things."<sup>5</sup> "Whence it follows that the good, which has the notion of a final cause, is so much the more efficacious as it communicates itself to more numerous beings. And therefore, if the same thing is a good for each individual of a city and for the city itself, it is clear that it is much greater and more perfect to have at heart—that is, to secure and defend—that which is the good of the entire city than that which is the good of a single man. Certainly the love that should exist between men has for its end to conserve the good even of the individual. But it is much better and more divine to show this love towards the entire nation and towards cities. Or, if it is certainly desirable sometimes to show this love to a single city, it is much more divine to show it for the entire nation, which contains several cities. We say that it is more 'divine' because it is more like God, who is the ultimate cause of all goods."<sup>6</sup>

The common good differs from the singular good by this very universality. It has the character of superabundance and it is eminently diffusive of itself insofar as it is more communicable: it reaches the singular more than the singular good: it is the greater good of the singular.

The common good is greater not because it includes the singular good of all the singulars; in that case it would not have the unity of the common good which comes from a certain kind of universality in the latter, but would merely be a collection, and only materially better than the singular good. The common good is better for each of the particulars which participate in it, insofar as it is communicable to the other particulars; communicability is the very reason for its perfection. The particular attains to the common good considered precisely as common good only insofar as it attains to it as to something communicable to others. The good of the family is better than the singular good not because all the members of the family find therein their singular good; it is better because, for each of the individual members, it is also the good of the others. That does not mean that the others are the reason for the love which the common good itself merits; on the contrary, in this formal relationship it is the others which are lovable insofar as they are able to participate in this common good.

Thus the common good is not a good other than the good of the particulars, a good which is merely the good of the collectivity looked upon as a kind of singular. In that case, it would be common only accidentally; properly speaking it would be singular, or if you wish, it would differ from the singular by being nullius. But when we distinguish the common good from the particular good, we do not mean

thereby that it is not the good of the particulars; if it were not, then it would not be truly common.

The good is what all things desire insofar as they desire their perfection. This perfection is for each thing its good—*bonum suum*—and in this sense, its good is a proper good. But thus the proper good is not opposed to the common good. For the proper good to which a being tends, the '*bonum suum*', can in fact be understood in different ways, according to the diverse good in which it finds its perfection.<sup>7</sup> It can be understood first of the proper good of a particular considered as an individual. It is this good which animals pursue when they desire nourishment for conserving their being. Secondly, it can be understood as the good of a particular on account of the species of the particular. This is the good which an animal desires in the generation, the nutrition, and the defense of the individuals of its species. The singular animal 'naturally'—i.e., in virtue of the inclination which is in it by nature (*ratio indita rebus ab arte divina*) prefers the good of its species to its singular good. "Every singular naturally loves the good of its species more than its singular good."<sup>8</sup> For the good of the species is a greater good for the singular than its singular good. This is not therefore a species prescindend from individuals, which desires its good against the natural desire of the individual; it is the singular itself, which, by nature, desires more the good of the species than its particular good. This desire for the common good is in the singular itself. Hence the common good does not have the character of an alien good—*bonum alienum*—as in the case of the good of another considered as such.<sup>9</sup> Is it not this which, in the social order, distinguishes our position profoundly from collectivism, which latter errs by abstraction, by demanding an alienation from the proper good as

such and consequently from the common good since the latter is the greatest of proper goods? Those who defend the primacy of the singular good of the singular person are themselves supposing this false notion of the common good. In the third place, the good of a particular can be understood of that good which belongs to it according to its genus. This is the good of equivocal agents and of intellectual substances, whose action can by itself attain not only to the good of the species, but also to a greater good, one which is communicable to many species. In the fourth place, the good of a particular can be understood of that good which belongs to it on account of the similitude of analogy which "principled things" (i.e., things which proceed from a principle) bear to their principle. Thus God, a purely and simply universal good, is the proper good which all things naturally desire as their highest and greatest good, the good which gives all things their entire being. In short, "nature turns back to itself not only in that which is singular, but much more in that which is common: for every being tends to conserve not only its individual, but also its species. And much more is every being borne naturally towards that which is the absolute universal good."<sup>10</sup>

Thence one sees to what a profound degree nature is a participation in intellect. It is thanks to this participation in intellect that every nature tends principally towards a universal good.

In that desire which follows knowledge, we find a similar order. Beings are more perfect to the degree that their desire extends to a good more distant from their mere singular good. The knowledge of irrational animals is bound to the sensible singular, and hence their desire cannot extend beyond the singular and private good; explicit action for a common good presupposes a knowledge which is

universal. Intellectual substance being "comprehensiva totius entis"<sup>11</sup>, being in other words a part of the universe in which the perfection of the entire universe can exist according to knowledge<sup>12</sup>, the most proper good of it taken as intellectual substance is the good of the universe, an essentially common good. Intellectual substance cannot be said to be this good in the way that it can be said to be the universe according to knowledge. It is indeed worth noting here the radical difference which exists between desire and knowledge: 'the known is in the knower; the good is in things'. If, like that which is known, the good were in the one who loves, we would ourselves be the good of the universe.

Consequently inferior beings differ from superior ones in that the most perfect good which they know is identified with their singular good, and in that the good which they can give is restricted to the good of the individual. "The more the virtue of a being is perfect and against its degree of goodness eminent, the more its desire for the good is universal and the more it seeks and works towards the good in beings which are distant from itself. For imperfect beings tend towards the mere good of the individual as properly understood; perfect beings tend towards the good of the species; and the most perfect beings towards the good of the genus. But God, Who is most perfectly good, tends towards the good of being as a whole. And thus not without reason it is said that the good as such is diffusive; for the more a being is good, the more it spreads forth its goodness to beings which are further from itself. And because that which is most perfect in each genus is the exemplar and measure of all which is contained in the genus, God, Who is most perfect in goodness and Who spreads forth this goodness most universally, must be the exemplar of all be-

ings which give forth any goodness."<sup>13</sup> It is the created common good, of any order, which imitates most properly the absolute common good.

Thus one sees that the more a being is perfect, the more it implies relation to the common good, and the more it acts principally for this good which not only in itself but also for the being which acts for it is the greatest. Rational creatures, persons, distinguish themselves from irrational beings in that they are more ordered to the common good and in that they can act expressly towards it. It is true as well that perversely they can prefer the singular good of their person to the common good, by attaching themselves to the singularity of their person, or as we say today, to their personality, set up as though it were a common measure of every good. Further, if a rational creature cannot limit itself entirely to a subordinate common good, such as the good of the family or the good of public society, this is not because its singular good as such is greater; rather it is because of its order to a superior common good to which it is principally ordered. In this case the common good is not sacrificed for the good of the individual as individual, but rather for the good of the individual considered as ordered to a more universal common good. Singularity alone cannot be the reason per se. In every genus the common good is superior. Comparison to cases which go beyond a single genus, far from disproving this principle, will presuppose it and confirm it.

It is in the most perfect created persons, pure spirits, that one sees best this profound ordering towards the common good. For the common good is more theirs in proportion as they are more intelligent. "Since desire follows knowledge, the more universal a knowledge is, the more the desire which derives from it tends to-

wards the common good; and the more a knowledge is particular, the more the desire which derives from it is borne towards the private good. Thus it is that in us love of the private good follows sensible knowledge, but the love of the common and absolute good follows intellectual knowledge. Thus, because the angels have a knowledge which is more elevated to the extent that they themselves are more perfect ... , their love tends more towards the common good."<sup>14</sup> And this love of the common good is so perfect and so great that the angels love their inequality and the very subordination of their singular good, which is always more distant from their common good, more subjected and more conformed thereto in proportion as they are higher in perfection. "Therefore by being different in species, as this pertains more to the perfection of the universe, they love each other more than if they were of one species, which would be fitting to the private good of a single species."<sup>15</sup> And this greater good exists because "their love looks more to the common good."

In sum, according to those authors who put the common good of persons in second place, the more perfect angels would also be the more subject and the least free. By his attachment to the common good, the citizen would be in truth the slave, whereas this latter would be the one who was free. For the slave lived principally on the margin of society, and he was free from the order of society, as the stone in a heap is free from the order of a being. "As it is with a house," said Aristotle, "so it is with the world, where free men are not at all subject to doing this or that according to occasional circumstances, but all of their functions, or the greater number of them are ruled; for slaves or beasts of burden, on the contrary, there are but a few things that have any relation to the common good, and most things are left to arbi-

trary decision."<sup>16</sup> In Marxist personalism, which is accomplished in the last phase of communism, the citizen is nothing other than a slave to whom one gives, while he remains in the condition of a slave, a title of apparent liberty by which even participation in true liberty is taken away.<sup>17</sup>

The common good is both in itself and for us more lovable than the private good. But there could still remain a confusion, for one can love the common good in two ways. One can love it to possess it, and one can love it for its conservation and against its diffusion. In effect, one can say: I prefer the common good because its possession is for me a greater good. But this is not a love of the common good as common good. It is a love which identifies the common good with the good of the singular person considered as such. "To love the good of a city in order to appropriate it and possess it for oneself is not what the good political man does; for thus it is that the tyrant, too, loves the good of the city, in order to dominate it, which is to love oneself more than the city; in effect it is for himself that the tyrant desires this good, and not for the city. But to love the good of the city in order that it be conserved and defended, this is truly to love the city, and it is what the good political man does, even so that, in order to conserve or augment the good of the city, he exposes himself to the danger of death and neglects his private good." And St. Thomas immediately applies this distinction to supernatural beatitude in which the notion of common good exists most perfectly: "Thus to love the good in which the blessed participate in order to acquire or possess it does not make man well disposed towards it, for the evil envy this good also; but to love it in itself, in order that it be conserved and spread, and so that nothing be done against it, this is what makes man well disposed to

this society of the blessed; and this is what charity consists of, to love God for himself, and the neighbor who is capable of beatitude as oneself."<sup>18</sup> Hence one cannot love the common good without loving it in its capacity to be participated in by others. The fallen angels did not refuse the perfection of the good which was offered to them; they refused the fact of its being common, and they despised this community. If truly the good of their singular person should have been first, how could they have sinned against the common good? And most of all, how could the most naturally worthy rational creature fall away from the most divine good that exists?

A society constituted by persons who love their private good above the common good, or who identify the common good with the private good, is a society not of free men, but of tyrants—"and thus the entire people becomes like one tyrant"<sup>19</sup>—who lead each other by force, in which the ultimate head is no one other than the most clever and strong among the tyrants, the subjects being merely frustrated tyrants. This refusal of the common good proceeds, at root, from mistrust and contempt of persons.

There are those who have tried to maintain that the good of the singular person is purely and simply superior to the common good, basing themselves on the absolute transcendence of supernatural beatitude—as though this beatitude were not, in its transcendence and even through its transcendence, the most universal common good which must be loved for itself and for its own spreading. This ultimate good does not distinguish itself from inferior common goods by being a singular good of the individual person. One can, indeed, play upon the words 'particular', 'proper', and 'singular.' "The proper good of man must be understood in di- verse ways, according as man is

taken in diverse ways. For the proper good of man considered as man is the good of reason, because for man, to be is to be rational. But the good of man considered as a maker is the artistic good; and likewise considered as a political being, his good is the common good of the city."<sup>20</sup> But just as the good of man considered as citizen is not the good of man considered as man simply, so also the good of beatitude is not the good of man only as man, nor the good of man as citizen of civil society, but as citizen of the celestial city. "To be politically good one must love the good of the city. But if man, insofar as he is admitted to participate in the good of some city and is made the citizen thereof, needs certain virtues to accomplish the things which pertain to citizens and to love the good of the city; so also is it for the man who, admitted by grace to the participation in celestial beatitude which consists in the vision and enjoyment of God, becomes as it were a citizen and member of this blessed society which is called the celestial Jerusalem, according to the words of St. Paul to the Ephesians, II, 19: You are citizens of the city of saints, and members of the family of God."<sup>21</sup> And as the virtues of man considered simply as such do not suffice to rectify us towards the common good of civil society, so also there must be entirely particular virtues, most superior and noble ones, to order us to beatitude, and beatitude considered under the very formal aspect of common good: "Therefore, to the man thus admitted to celestial life, certain free virtues are necessary; the infused virtues namely, whose proper exercise presupposes the love of the common good of the entire society, namely the divine good insofar as it is the object of beatitude."<sup>22</sup> And it is here that St. Thomas makes the distinction cited above between the love of possession and the love of diffusion. You are citizens, especially in this beatitude in

which the common good has more than anywhere else the notion of common good.

The elevation to the supernatural order only increases the dependence of the good of the singular person, considered as such, on a higher and more distant good. If a monastic virtue cannot accomplish an act ordered to the common good of civil society except insofar as it is elevated by a superior virtue which looks properly to this common good, it will be still less able to do so when the common good is properly divine: "Since there can be no merit without charity, the act of acquired virtue cannot be meritorious without charity... For a virtue ordered to an inferior end cannot accomplish this act ordered to a superior end, except by means of a superior virtue. For example, the strength which is the virtue of a man considered as man cannot order the action of a man to the political good, except by means of the strength which is the virtue of man considered as citizen."<sup>23</sup> The strength of a man considered as man by which he defends the good of his person does not suffice in order to sufficiently defend the common good. That society is very corrupt which cannot call upon the love of the arduous common good and the superior force of the citizen considered as citizen, but which must present its good under the shape of the good of the singular person.

We must not treat the virtues of the political man as mere accessory complements of the virtues of man considered simply as man. It is imagined that the latter are more profound, while yet on the other hand it is imagined that a man who is evil in his personal or domestic life might still be a good political man. That is a sign of the contempt bestowed upon whatever formally regards the common good. But "those will attain to an eminent degree of celestial beatitude who

fulfill in a noble and praiseworthy manner the office of king. For if that happiness which virtue achieves is a recompense, it follows that the greater virtue will lead to the greater happiness which is its due. But the virtue by which a man can not only direct himself but others as well is a superior virtue; and it is so much the more superior as it is able to direct a greater number of men; just as someone is reputed more virtuous according to corporal virtues when he can overcome a greater number of adversaries, or lift a greater weight. Thus, a greater virtue is required to direct a family than to direct oneself, and a still greater virtue to govern a city and a kingdom... But one is more pleasing to God insofar as he imitates God more: hence this admonition of the Apostle to the Ephesians, V, 1: Be imitators of God, as beloved sons. But, as the Sage says: 'Every animal likes its like, insofar as effects have a certain likeness to their cause; thence it follows that good kings are very pleasing to God and that they will receive from Him a very great recompense.'<sup>"24</sup>

The position which holds that the good of the singular person considered as such should be superior to the good of the community becomes abominable when one considers that the person is himself the object of the love of his singular good. "... As love has for its object the good, it is also diversified according to the diversity of goods. But there is a good proper to a man as the latter is a singular person; and as for the love which has this good for its object, each person is the principal object of his own love. But there is a common good which belongs to this or that individual insofar as he is a part of some whole, as for example to the soldier insofar as he is a part of the army, and to the citizen insofar as he is a part of the city; and in regard to the love whose object is this good, its principal object is that in which

this good principally exists, as the good of the army in the head of the army, and the good of the city in the king; that is why it is the duty of the good soldier to neglect even his proper safety in order to conserve the good of his head, just as a man will naturally expose his arm in order to conserve his head... "<sup>25</sup>

In other words, the highest good of a man belongs to him not insofar as he is himself a certain whole in which the self is the principal object of his love, but "insofar as he is part of a whole," a whole which is accessible to him because of the very universality of his knowledge. You say that the notion of part is not appropriate to man considered in his relation to the ultimate end? Here is the text immediately following what was just cited: "... and it is in this way that charity has, for its principal object, the divine good, which is the good of each according as each is able to participate in beatitude."<sup>26</sup> Thus it is indeed as part that we are ordered to this greatest of all goods which can only be ours most completely through being communicable to others. If the divine good were formally "a proper good of man insofar as he is a singular person", we should ourselves be the measure of this good, which is very properly an abomination.

Even the love of the proper good of the singular person depends on the love of the common good. For indeed we have so perfectly the nature of a part that rectification with regard to the proper good cannot be real unless it is in conformity with, and subordinated to, the common good. "... The goodness of every part is in its relation to the whole: that is why Augustine says that 'every part is bad which is not conformed to the whole'. Therefore, since every man is part of the city, it is impossible that a man be good if he is not perfectly proportioned to the common good; and the whole itself cannot well exist

except by means of parts which are proportioned to it."<sup>27</sup> This ordering is so integral that those who strive towards the common good strive towards their own proper good ex consequenti: "because, first, the proper good cannot exist without the common good of the family, of the city, or of the kingdom. For which reason Valerius Maximus says of the ancient Romans that 'they preferred to be poor in a rich empire than to be rich in a poor empire'. And because, in the second place, as man is a part of the household and of the city, it is necessary for him to judge what is good for himself in the light of prudence, whose object is the good of the multitude; for the right disposition of the part is found in its relation with the whole."<sup>28</sup> And this appears most strikingly in the common good of beatitude, in which the very universality of the good is the principle whereby it constitutes blessedness for the singular person. For it is indeed by reason of its universality that it can be the source of blessedness for the singular person. And this communication with the common good founds the communication among singular persons extra verbum: the common good insofar as it is common is the root of this communication which would not be possible if the Divine good were not already loved in its communicability to others: "praeexigitur amor boni communis toti societati, quod est bonum divinum, prout est beatitudinis obiectum."<sup>29</sup>

If it is conceded that singular persons are ordered to the ultimate separate good insofar as the latter has the notion of common good, one is still not likely to concede very willingly that, in the universe itself, persons are not willed except for the good of the order of the universe, a common intrinsic good which is better than the singular persons which materially constitute it. It is preferred that the

order of the universe be thought of as a mere superstructure of persons whom God wills, not as parts, but as radically independent wholes, and as parts only secondarily. For is it not true that rational creatures differ from irrational ones in that they are willed and governed for themselves, not only with regard to their species, but also with regard to the individual? "The acts ... of the rational creature are directed by Divine providence, not only on account of their pertaining to a species, but also insofar as they are personal acts."<sup>30</sup> Therefore, one apparently concludes, individual persons are themselves goods willed first of all for themselves, and in themselves superior to the good of the accidental whole whose constitution out of them is a kind of consequence and complement of their own existence.

But what is the end which God intends in the production of things? "God produced the being of all things, not by natural necessity, but by his intellect and will. His intellect and will can have nothing for an ultimate end other than His own goodness, which He communicates to things. Things participate in Divine goodness through similitude, insofar as they are themselves good. But what is best in created things is the good of the order of the universe, which is the most perfect, as the Philosopher says (XII Metaphysics, c. 10); this is also in accordance with Holy Scriptures, where it is said: And God saw all that He had made, and it was very good. (Gen. I, 31), whereas of the works of creation taken separately He had simply said that they were good. Consequently, the good of the order of things created by God is also the principal object of the will and intention of God (*praecipue volitum et intentum*). But to govern a being is none other than to impose an order upon it...

"Furthermore, that which tends towards an end is more concerned (*magis curat*) with that which is closer to the ultimate end, because the latter is also the end of all the other intermediate ends. But the ultimate end of the Divine will is its proper goodness, and in created things, it is the good of the order of the universe which is closest to this goodness (*cui propinquissimum*), for every particular good of this thing or that is ordered to the good of the order of the universe as to its end, as the less perfect is ordered to the more perfect. Hence each part is found to exist for the whole. Consequently, it is the order of the universe for which God has the greatest care among created things."<sup>31</sup>

Why does God will the distinction among things, their order and their inequality? "The distinction among things, and their multitude, is from the intention of the first agent, which is God. For God gave being to things in order to communicate His goodness to creatures, and to manifest this goodness through them; and because this goodness cannot be sufficiently manifested by one creature alone, He produced many and diverse creatures, in order that what is lacking in one towards manifesting the Divine goodness might be supplemented in another. For goodness, which exists in God according to a simple and uniform mode, exists in creatures in a multiple and divided way; that is why the whole universe participates more in the Divine goodness, and manifests the latter more perfectly than any other created thing."<sup>32</sup>

"... In every effect that which is an ultimate end is properly willed by the principal agent, as the order of the army is willed by the general. But what is most perfect in things is the good of the universal order... Therefore, the order of the universe is properly willed by

God, and is not an accidental product of the succession of agents... But, ... this same universal order is, in itself, created and willed by God... "<sup>33</sup>

"The end for which an effect is produced is that in it which is good and best. But what is good and best in the universe consists in the order which its parts have among themselves, which order cannot exist without distinction; for indeed it is this very order which constitutes the universe in its character of being a whole, which latter is what is best in it. Therefore the very order of the parts of the universe and their distinction, is the end for which it was created."<sup>34</sup>

This conception will certainly be rejected if one thinks of the singular person and his singular good as the primary root, as an ultimate intrinsic end, and consequently as the measure of all intrinsic good in the universe. This rejection comes either from a speculative ignorance or from a practical one.

Speculative ignorance of the common good consists in thinking of it as an alien good, a "bonum alienum," opposed to the "bonum suum"; thus one limits the "bonum suum" to the singular good of the singular person. In this position, the subordination of the private good to the common good would imply subordination of the more perfect good of the person to an alien good; the whole and the part will be alien to each other; the part of the whole will not be "its part." This error lowers the person in his most fundamental capacity: that of participating in a greater good than the singular good; it denies the most wonderful perfection of the universe, that perfection indeed which God principally wills and in which persons can find "their" greatest created good. This error rejects the created common

good, not because it is a merely created good, but because it is common. And there lies the gravity of this error: it must also reject the most Divine common good which is essentially common.

Even with a correct speculative understanding of the common good, there can still coexist a pernicious practical ignorance. One can refuse the primacy of the common good because it is not primarily the singular good of the singular person and because it requires a subordination of the latter to a good which does not belong to us on account of our singular personality. Through disordered love of singularity, one practically rejects the common good as a foreign good and one judges it to be incompatible with the excellence of our singular condition. One withdraws thus from order and takes refuge in oneself as though one were a universe for oneself, a universe rooted in a free and very personal act. One freely abdicates dignity as a rational creature in order to establish oneself as a radically independent whole. "Hatred itself of God has the notion of end insofar as it is desired under the notion of liberty, according to the words of Jeremiah (II, 20): You have long been breaking the yoke, breaking bonds, and you have said, I will not serve!"<sup>35</sup> One would not refuse the common good if one were oneself the principle of it, or if it drew its excellence from one's own free choice: the primacy is accorded to liberty itself. One wants to be first of all a whole so radically independent that one has no need of God except for that same purpose, and then one would enjoy a right to submit or not submit to order as one pleased. The act of submission itself would be an act which emanates as surplus from a pure "for self" and from the recognition of one's proper generosity as being so great that it does it no harm to spread itself forth; on the contrary, the personality thus would fulfill itself and pour forth the

good which it already possesses in itself.<sup>36</sup> It fulfills itself—that is, its good comes from within; it will owe to the exterior nothing but the generosity of extra space. It will recognize willingly its dependence on unformed matter, like the sculptor who recognizes his dependence on stone. One will even let oneself be directed by someone else; one will recognize a superior, provided that the latter be the "fruit" of one's own choice and the vicar, not of the community but first and foremost of oneself. Any good other than that which is due to us on account of our singular nature, any good anterior to this one and to which we must freely submit ourselves under pain of doing evil, is abhorred as an insult to our personality.

There is a revolt even against the very idea of order, although a creature is more perfect in the measure in which it participates more in order. The separated substances are more perfect than us, because they are more ordered to, and by nature participate more profoundly in, the perfection of the universe from which they receive splendor on account of this same ordination. "The things which are of God are ordered. But it is necessary that the superior parts of the universe participate more in the good of the universe, which is order. Things in which order exists per se participate more perfectly in order than things in which order is found only accidentally."<sup>37</sup> Why is there contempt for the order which is the work of Divine Wisdom? How could the angels love their inequality if the latter were not rooted in the common good, and if this common good were not their greatest good? If, on the contrary, the very being of their person were for them the greatest intrinsic good of the universe, inequality would be a principle of discord, both among the angels and among each individual person, and the common good would be a foreign good;

this inequality would proceed, not from Divine Wisdom, but either from free will and the contrariety of good and evil, or from a primacy given to material distinction.<sup>38</sup>

The fact that the principal parts which materially constitute the universe are ordered and governed for themselves can only make the supereminent perfection of the whole appear the more strikingly, this perfection being the primary intrinsic reason for the perfection of the parts. And, "When we say that Divine Providence orders intellectual substances for themselves, we do not mean that these substances have no further relation with God and with the perfection of the universe. We say for this reason that they are thus ruled for themselves and that the other creatures are ruled for them, because the goods which they receive by Divine Providence are not given to them for the utility of other creatures; on the contrary, the goods conferred on the other creatures are ordered by Divine Providence to the use of the intellectual substance."<sup>39</sup> Thus it is an entirely different thing to say that rational creatures are governed and ordered for themselves, and to say that they are such by themselves and for their singular good; they are ordered for themselves to the common good. The common good is for them, but it is for them as common good. The rational creatures can themselves attain in an explicit manner to that good to which all creatures are ordered; thus they differ from irrational creatures, which are pure instruments, merely useful, and which do not by themselves attain in an explicit manner to the universal good to which they are ordered. And therein consists the dignity of rational nature.

## Objections and Replies

## First Objection: Liberty and Personal Dignity

It seems that the dignity of the person is opposed to the notion of part and to this ordering to the common good. For "dignity signifies goodness for self; utility goodness for other than self—*dignitas significat bonitatem alicuius propter seipsum, utilitas vero propter aliud.*"<sup>40</sup> Moreover, "dignity belongs among things which are said absolutely—*dignitas est de absolute dictis.*"<sup>41</sup> Is it not for this reason that persons are ordered and governed for themselves?<sup>42</sup>

To this we reply that the rational creature draws its dignity from the fact that, by its proper operation, by its intelligence and against its love it can attain to the ultimate end of the universe. "Intellectual and rational creatures exceed other creatures both by the perfection of their nature, and by the dignity of their end. By the perfection of their nature, because the rational creature is the only one which is master of its acts and freely determines itself to operate as it does, whereas the other creatures are rather more moved to action than agents themselves. By the dignity of their end, because only the intellectual creature rises as high as the very ultimate end of the universe, namely, by knowing God and loving Him; whereas other creatures cannot attain to this end except by a certain participation in His likeness."<sup>43</sup>

Hence the rational creature, insofar as it can itself attain to the end of God's manifestation outside Himself, exists for itself. The irrational creatures exist only for the sake of this being which can by itself attain to an end which will belong to irrational creatures only implicitly. Man is the dignity which is their end. But, that does not mean that rational creatures exist for the dignity of their own being and

that they are themselves the dignity for which they exist. They draw their dignity from the end to which they can and must attain; their dignity consists in the fact that they can attain to the end of the universe, the end of the universe being, in this regard, for the rational creatures, that is for each of them. Still, the good of the universe is not for rational creatures as if the latter were the end of the former. The good of the universe is the good of each of the rational creatures insofar as it is their good as common good.

But the dignity with which the rational creature is invested on account of its end is so dependent upon this end that the creature can lose it as it can lose the attainment of its end. "By sinning, man sets himself outside the order of reason, and consequently, he loses human dignity, as namely man is naturally free and existing for himself, and he places himself in some way in the servitude of animals... For the bad man is worse than an animal."<sup>44</sup> Far from excluding the ordination of his private good (or his proper good when this is understood as not already including the common good) to the common good, or from making it indifferent to the common good, as though this ordination were purely a matter of freedom of contradiction, the dignity of the intelligent creature involves, on the contrary, the necessity of this ordination. Man fails in his human dignity when he refuses the very principle of that dignity: the good of the intellect realized in the common good. He subjects himself to the servitude of the animals when he judges the common good to be a foreign good. The perfection of human nature is so little an assurance of dignity that it suffices for man to turn himself inward upon his own dignity as upon a sufficient reason and first foundation, in order to fail to attain his being-for-self.

Because "dignitas est de absolute dictis", dignity cannot be a proper attribute of the person considered as such, but belongs rather to persons according to their nature. For the person is not an absolute as such. The Divine Persons are subsistent relations. "Paternity is the dignity of the Father, as it is the essence of the Father; for dignity is an absolute, and it belongs to the essence. Therefore just as the same essence which in the Father is paternity is in the Son filiation; so also, the same dignity which in the Father is paternity is in the Son filiation."<sup>45</sup> Likewise in man, dignity is not an attribute of the person considered as such, but rather of the rational nature; and if the created person is an absolute, this is because of its imperfection in its very character as a person. Moreover, in a purely created rational being, nature subordinates personality.<sup>46</sup> Still further it is important to note that person itself is universally defined by communicability: "rationalis naturae individua substantia—individual substance of a rational nature", where nature is to be understood as a principle of operation. The incommunicability of the person itself is not to be thought of as a term as though the person existed for its incommunicability; on the contrary, far from being a being "for self" in this incommunicability, it is this incommunicability that opens nature to communication—*actiones sunt suppositorum*. The Divine persons are essentially expressive of the fecundity of the Divine nature. In the case of the created person, communication is accomplished through vital participation in the common good.

The being-for-self of each created person is for the person's end which is God. Nothing is anterior to this being-for-self-for-God. Nothing can dissolve it except evil. Since the created person has from God all that it is—*secundum hoc ipsum quod est, alterius est*—the

created person must advance towards its end by a direct movement. In this fundamental perspective—and there is no other more fundamental—any deliberately reflexive regard of a created person upon himself is a dark regard and a turning away from God. If the human person were really what the personalists say, man should be able to find in himself a lovableness which would be his own in the face of his end; the self would be alone the principle of the person's destiny; it would also be the term; it would not subordinate itself to any other end than itself, except in order to subordinate that end to itself; it would not turn towards things other than self except in view of this same end of making them its own.

Consider now the intelligent creature in its perfection as a free agent. The perfection of nature which is the root of liberty only has the notion of an end in God. God, moreover, is only said to be free in relation to things which are inferior to Him. Liberty is not concerned with the end as such, but with means; when it is concerned with an end, it is because this end is a subordinate one and thus takes upon itself the character of a means. God is necessarily the end of all things He freely makes, and His liberty only pertains to what He makes in view of this end which is the highest good. God's dignity is the only dignity which is identical to his Being, and hence infallible. Because no other agent is its own ultimate end, and because the proper end of all other beings can be ordered to a higher end, the rational creature is fallible and can lose its dignity; its dignity is not assured except insofar as it remains in the order of the whole and acts according to this order. Unlike irrational creatures, the rational creature must keep itself in the order which is established independently of itself; but to remain in this order is to submit oneself to it and allow oneself to be

measured by it; dignity is thus connected to order, and to place oneself outside of it is to fail of one's dignity. If dignity belonged absolutely to rational creatures, if it were assured by liberty of contradiction, it would be infallible by reason of our mere ability to submit to order or not to submit. The excellence of the rational creature does not consist in the ability to set oneself outside the order of the whole, but in the ability to will oneself this order in which one must remain; one does not have the right to wander from it.

"Just as there is an order in active causes, so also there is one in final causes, such that the secondary end depends on the principal end, as the secondary agent depends on the principal agent. But a defect occurs in active causes when the secondary agent falls out of the order fixed by the principal agent; thus, when the leg, from being bent, fails to execute the motion that was commanded by the appetitive virtue, this fault causes defective walking. Therefore likewise for final causes, each time the secondary end recedes from the order of the principle end, the will is at fault, even if its object be good and constitute an end. But every will naturally wills the proper good of the one willing, that is, the perfection of the person's own being, and the will cannot will the contrary. Therefore there can be no defect of the will in him whose proper good is the ultimate end, an end which is not contained under the order of a higher end, but under whose order all other ends are contained. Such is the will of God, whose being is the highest good which is the ultimate end. In God therefore there can be no defect of the will. But in any other being who wills, whose proper good necessarily is contained under the order of another good, sin can inhere in the will... For although the natural inclination of the will belongs to each one who wills to will and love his own perfection so that one cannot will the contrary, this inclination is not nonetheless naturally endowed in such a way that it subordinates one's perfection to another end without the possibility of failure, the superior end being

not proper to its nature, but rather to a higher nature. Therefore, it depends on its free will to subordinate its proper perfection to the superior end; for beings endowed with will differ from those which are lacking therein in that the former subordinate themselves and what belongs to them to the end, which is why they are said to have free will; whereas other beings do not subordinate themselves to the end, but are subordinated thereto by a superior agent, as it were directed rather than directing themselves to this end."<sup>47</sup>

An angel cannot by itself fail to attain the end of its person or the common good proper to its nature. But the good of the angelic nature is not the highest good which is God as He is in Himself. But God commanded that the angels should order themselves to this highest good. Since the proper end of the angelic nature bears in this respect the character of an end which is to be ordered to a higher end, which ordering is not assured by the nature of the agent, its will can fail to attain to the higher end, and, by way of consequence, it can fail also to attain its proper end.

If the angel is not per se fallible except in regard to its supernatural end, man on the contrary is able per se to lose even his natural end. "There is this difference between man and the separated substances, that the same individual has several appetitive powers, of which some are subordinated to others; this does not occur at all in the separated substances, although the separated substances are subordinated one to another. But sin occurs in the will whenever the inferior appetite deviates in any way. Therefore just as sin in separated substances would occur if one deviated from the Divine order, or if an inferior deviated from the order of a superior while the latter remained in the Divine order; thus also in one man there are two ways in which sin may occur. First man may sin when the human will does not

order its proper good to God; this way man has in common with the separated substances. In another way man may sin if the good of the inferior appetite is not ruled according to the superior; as when the pleasures of the flesh, which are the object of the concupiscible appetite, are not sought observing the order of reason. This latter kind of sin does not occur in separated substances."<sup>48</sup> Even within man, there is a superiority of the good of the intellect over the good of the senses. The union of intellectual nature and sensible nature makes man subject to a certain contrariety. Sensible nature carries us towards the sensible and private good; intellectual nature has for its object the universal and the good understood according to its very character of goodness, which character is found principally in the common good. The good of the intellect, from which man receives his dignity as man, is not assured by man's own nature. The sensitive life is first in us; we cannot attain to acts of reason except by passing through the senses which, considered in this way, are a principle. As long as man is not rectified by the cardinal virtues which must be acquired, he is drawn principally towards the private good against the good of the intellect. For man there exists, even in the purely natural order, a liberty of contrariety which makes him fallible per se in relation to the attainment of his end. To achieve his dignity, he must submit his private good to the common good.

One could still object that if the dignity of the rational creature is bound up with subordination to God from Whom the person receives all that it is, its dignity is not tied to any subordination to other ends, no matter how high they be. Hence this dignity is anterior to any subordination other than the subordination to God, and independent of order in created things. For "when the proper good of a being is

subordinated to several superior goods, the agent endowed with will is free to withdraw from the order connected with one of these superior beings and to remain in another, whether this other be higher or lower."<sup>49</sup>—To this we reply that when an agent endowed with will must subordinate his proper good to a higher created good, this can only be insofar as the latter is itself conformed to the Divine order. Hence the inferior may be obliged to withdraw from the order of a superior if the superior himself deviates from the order he ought to follow. But as long as the superior remains in the order prescribed, he is a superior good to which the inferior must submit. "For example, the soldier who is subject to the king and to the general of the army can subordinate his will to the good of the general and not to that of the king, and inversely; but if the general transgresses the order given by the king, the will of the soldier will be good if he detaches himself from the will of the general and directs his will according to the will of the king; he will do wrong however if he follows the will of the general against the will of the king; for the order of an inferior principle depends on the order of the superior principle."<sup>50</sup> Still, "there would be sin in the separated substances if one of an inferior level withdrew from the order of a superior substance, which latter remained subject to the Divine order." Thus the revolt of the inferior against the unsubmitting superior is a revolt against disorder.

### Second Objection: Order and Liberty

Considered as such, free acts are above and outside of the order of the universe, because only the cause of being as a whole can act in our will. Therefore persons are not, according to the whole which

each one constitutes, contained in the order of the universe. Moreover, to be free is to be self-caused. Hence the person must hold its perfection from itself and not from the universe of which it is alleged to be a part.

In reply to these difficulties, note first that free action is not a term in itself. The free agent differs from the purely natural agent in this, that it moves itself to judge and to advance towards an end in virtue of this very judgement. It is lord over its own action for the sake of the end; it does not dominate the end as such. Its judgement must be just; the truth of this judgement will depend on the conformity of the appetite with the good which the end constitutes. But the good for which the intelligent creature must principally act and by which its judgement must be ruled is that good which is naturally better for the creature, i.e., the common good. But the common good is essentially one which is able to be participated in by many. Therefore, before this good every rational creature stands as a part. Free action must be ordered by the agent himself, towards a participated good.

Further, the perfection of the universe requires that there be intelligent creatures, and consequently creatures which are master over their own acts, which will move themselves towards their good. The perfection of the good which they must follow is such that they must bear themselves towards it. If free action cannot, considered in itself, be thought of as a part of the universe, it must nonetheless finally be ordered to an end in relation to which the intelligent creature has the character of a part. But the end is the first of causes.

Moreover, the order of the universe can be understood in two ways. Either it is the order which is the form of the universe: this form is the intrinsic good of the universe; or it is the order of the

universe to its very first principle—the separated good which is God. The order of the universe is for its order to the separated principle. And, as this latter order is purely and simply universal, it comprehends even free acts; God governs free agents and their acts just as He governs indeed fortuitous and chance events which have no determinate cause inherent in the order of the universe.<sup>51</sup>

Both the intrinsic good of the universe and the separated good have the character of a common good. Thus the rational creature is to be considered as a part by relation to either of them; he cannot be considered as a whole except by relation to the singular good of the singular person. But to fully exist the person must participate. It is true that to attain to fullness depends on my liberty; but fullness is not full on account of my liberty; my free act must be ordered to a fullness which is common. My free act is my own singular act; but it is not insofar as it is mine that my end is an end.

To the second part of the objection we reply that the proposition "*liberum est quod causa sui est*" must be understood not as meaning that the free agent is the cause of himself, or that he is, as such, the perfection for which he acts, but as meaning rather that he is himself, by his intellect and will, the cause of his act for the end to which he is ordered. One could also say that he is cause of himself in the line of final cause, insofar as he bears himself towards the end to which he is called as an intelligent and free agent, that is according to the principles themselves of his nature. But this end consists principally in the common good. The agent will be so much the more free and noble as he orders himself more perfectly to the common good. Hence one sees how the latter is the first principle of our free condition. The free agent would place himself in the condition of a slave if by himself

he could not or would not act except for the singular good of his person. Man retains no less his free state when, by his own reason and will he submits himself to a reason and will which are superior. Thus it is that citizen subjects can act as free men, for the common good.

One could push further the first part of the objection: not only is the free act outside the universe, but any intelligent creature can keep for himself, and hide from all others, the very term of his free thought: God alone knows the secrets of the heart. Thus any created person can make for his own self a universe of objects which is radically independent, and can withdraw himself freely from the order of the universe. Does not this show most strikingly the sovereign perfection of the person? Here is something which concerns the person alone, and the universe not in the least.

We reply that neither the faculty of retaining an object outside of an order, nor indeed the object thus retained and taken as such, can be considered as an end. Even the secrets of the heart must be conformed and ordered to the common good; they are purely means; they must always be conformed to the order established by God. Even in our secret thoughts we are not ourselves the supreme rule; otherwise those secret thoughts would be good simply because they are our singular possession, and because they concern only us. If the fool says in his heart: There is no God, or if he says: my own singular good is better than any common good; if he withdraws thus from all order, he is in no way protected by his singularity: he will be subject to the disorder in which he has placed himself.

Further the object considered as such holds no perfection from the mere fact that it is kept secret. If one should make it known to

another, it will not for all that be illuminating; not every locution is illuminating. "The manifestation of things which depend on the will of the one who knows them cannot be called illumination, but only locution, as for example, when a person says to another, 'I want to learn this,' or 'I want to do this or that'. This is because the created will is neither light nor rule of truth, but it participates in light; hence to communicate things which depend on the created will is not, as such, to illuminate. For it does not belong to the perfection of my intellect to know what you want, or what you understand, but only to know what is the truth of a thing."<sup>52</sup> Because only the Divine will is a rule of truth, only Divine locution is always illumination.

Again, to rejoice in secret thoughts insofar as they owe their secrecy to us is to act in a perverted way. In this way one becomes complacent in one's originality for its own sake, rather than ordering it to its greater good; this is to enjoy singularity in a disordered manner.

Still further, if the secrets of the heart escape from the order inherent in the universe, they remain within the universal order considered in relation to the separated principle. Just as He orders chance and fortune, so God can order secret thoughts to the intrinsic good of the universe.

Third Objection: Common Good and the Commonness of the Genus

The primacy of the common good would lead precisely to that egalitarian levelling for which personalists are reproached: the common character of this good would involve a sort of confusion of persons in

the face of their ultimate end. Attainment of the end would be the accomplishment of a body of persons, and not of persons as such.

We reply that the common character of the good must not be understood as a commonness of predication, but rather as a commonness of causality. The common good is not common in the way that "animal" is in relation to "man" and "beast", but rather in the manner of a universal means of knowing, which in its very unity attains to the things known even in what is most proper to them. It reaches many, not by confusion but because of its very high determination which principally reaches that which is highest in the inferiors: "a higher cause has a higher proper effect." It reaches Peter, not first of all insofar as Peter is an animal, nor even insofar as he is a merely rational nature, but insofar as he is "this" rational nature; it is the good of Peter considered in his most proper personality. That is why the common good is also the most intimate connection between persons, and also the most noble one.

#### Fourth Objection: Common Good and Beatitude

The beatitude of the singular person does not depend on the communication of this beatitude to many. Further, one must love God first and neighbor *ex consequenti*. Therefore the common character of beatitude is secondary; for beatitude is first and foremost the good of the singular person.

We reply that if beatitude in itself does not depend on its actually being communicated to many, it does nonetheless depend on its essential communicability to many. And the reason for this is the super-

abundance of this good in which beatitude consists, and against its incommensurability with the singular good of the person. The sin of the angels consisted in wanting to make every good commensurable with their proper good. Man sins when he wants the good of the intellect to be commensurable with his private good. And so if even only one single person enjoys beatitude, that person still must always have the aspect of a part vis-à-vis this superabundant good; for even if in fact the person were the only one to enjoy it, the single person could not consider this good as his singular good.

### Fifth Objection: Society is an Accidental Whole

It is claimed that the good of an accidental whole is inferior to the good of a substantial whole. But society is an accidental being and it is one merely per accidens. Therefore the common good must be subordinate to the good of the person.

This difficulty presupposes a false notion of the common good. The common good does not formally look to the society insofar as the latter is an accidental whole; it is the good of the substantial wholes which are the members of the society. But it is the good of these substantial wholes only insofar as the latter are members of the society. And, if one considers the intrinsic common good constituted by society as an accidental form, it does not at all follow that it is inferior to what is substantial. We are speaking of the good, and the division of the good is not that of being. "It is because of its substantial being that each thing is said to be absolutely (*simpliciter*); whereas it is because of acts added over and above the substance that a thing is said to be in a certain respect (*secundum quid*)... But the good has the notion of perfection, which is desirable, and consequently it has the notion of end. That is why the being which possesses its ultimate perfection is said to be good absolutely speaking; but the being which does not possess the ultimate perfection which belongs to it, even though it has a certain perfection from the fact that it is in act, is nonetheless said to be perfect absolutely speaking, nor good absolutely, but rather in a certain respect."<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, if, in order to determine the superiority of a good, one were to base oneself on its union with us according to our sub-

stance considered absolutely, it would be necessary to conclude that each thing loves itself above all things, and that love of the singular good is the measure of the common good. That would presuppose moreover that created persons are first of all wholes, absolutes, and that for them "to be a part" is secondary. But that is not the case. We are first of all and principally parts of the universe. It is for this reason that we love naturally, and to a greater degree, the good of the whole. "In natural things, each being which is according to nature and in its very being of another (*quod secundum naturam hoc ipsum quod est alterius est*), is principally and more inclined towards that from which it has its being (*id in cuius est*) than towards itself. And this natural inclination is made manifest by things which naturally occur; because, as is said in the Second Book of the Physics, every being is born with the inclination or aptitude to act in the manner in which it does act naturally. For we see that the part exposes itself naturally for the conservation of the whole, as for example the hand which exposes itself to being struck, without deliberation, for the conservation of the body as a whole." One may object that this is what happens in things and actions insofar as they are natural, but that it is otherwise for actions which are accomplished freely and not by nature. But let us read what immediately follows the text just quoted: "And because reason imitates nature, we find a similar inclination in political virtues: it is the act of a virtuous citizen to expose himself to the peril of death in order to conserve the republic; and if man were a natural part of the city, this tendency would be natural to him."<sup>54</sup> Because the human person is of another in his very being, he is radically dependent, radically a part *primo et per se*. And consequently he is principally and to a greater degree inclined towards that in which he participates in

his very being.

It is this principle, observed first in nature and in political virtues which imitate nature, which serves as a basis for concluding that we love God more than ourselves according to natural love. "... The nature and the substance of the part, precisely because of what it is, is first of all and essentially for the whole and the being of the whole. It is evident that this is true of every creature considered in relation to God. For every creature is, by its nature, a natural part of the universe, and on account of this naturally loves the universe more than itself... Therefore, a fortiori, it will love still more the universal good itself, because it is greater than the universe as a whole; or because it is entirely good; or because the universal good, which is God in His glory, is the end and the good of the universe itself, and consequently whoever loves the universe more will also love God more. We see this in the case of the army and against its leader, according to the doctrine of Book XII of the *Metaphysics* (c. 10)."<sup>55</sup>

If it were otherwise, natural love would be perverse. And in the political domain, for example, the sacrifice of the individual person for the common good would have its principle and against its term in the love of the proper good of the singular person.<sup>56</sup> All love would be confined to the particular. Having identified the common good as an alien good, and considering that one must love oneself more than one's neighbor, one would have to conclude it necessary to love one's own particular good more than any common good, and this latter would be worthy of love only insofar as it could be reduced to one's particular good. It is very true that "the part loves the good of the whole according as this good is appropriate to it [i.e., to the part]; but not in such a way that the part orders the good of the whole

to itself, but rather because it orders itself to the good of the whole."<sup>57</sup>

One could, basing oneself on the Philosopher (IX Ethic., ch. 4 and 8) push this objection further: "The witness of friendship that one shows to others is but a witness of friendship shown to oneself.— To this objection St. Thomas replies "that the Philosopher is speaking here of witness of friendship given to another in whom the good which is an object of friendship is found in some particular mode: he is not speaking of witness of friendship given to another in whom the good in question is by reason of the good of the whole."<sup>58</sup> That is why, in the political order, any civic friendship which is anterior to the common good is a principle of corruption; it is a conspiracy against the common good, as one sees in politicians who favor their private friends under pretext of civic friendship.

Moreover, if, according to natural love, every being loved his proper good the most, and the common good for his singular good, charity could not perfect natural love; it would be contrary thereto and would destroy it.<sup>59</sup>

#### Sixth Objection: Solitude and the Speculative Life

The practical order is entirely ordered to the speculative order. But perfect happiness consists in the speculative life. Speculative life however is solitary. Therefore the practical happiness of society is ordered to the speculative happiness of the singular person.

We reply that the practical happiness of the community is not, per se, ordered to the speculative happiness of the singular per-

son, but to the speculative happiness of the person considered as a member of the community.<sup>60</sup> For it would be contradictory for a common good to be, per se, ordered to the singular person as such. It is very true that the speculative life is solitary, but it remains true also that even the highest beatitude, which consists in the vision of God, is essentially a common good. This apparent opposition between the solitary life and the common good which is the object of this good is explained by the fact that this happiness can be considered either from the part of those who enjoy it, or from the part of the object of enjoyment itself. The object is, of itself, communicable to many. Under this aspect, it is the speculative good of the community. The practical common good must be ordered to this speculative good which reaches persons as a common good. The independence of persons from each other in the vision itself does not prevent the object from having that universality which means, for any created intellect, essential communicability to many. Independence, far from excluding or abstracting from communicability, presupposes the latter.

#### Seventh Objection: The Good of Grace and the Good of the Universe

One could also object that "the good of grace of one single individual is greater than the good of nature of the entire universe"<sup>61</sup>, in order to conclude that the intrinsic common good of the universe considered according to its nature is subordinate to the good of the singular person.

This objection is based on a transgression of genera, which only permits an accidental comparison. It must be noted that St. Thomas

does not oppose the good of grace of a singular person to the good of grace of the community, but to the good of nature of the universe. And if the spiritual good of the person is superior to any created common good, and if, according to this spiritual good, the person must love himself more, it does not at all follow that the created common good is, as such, subordinated to the singular person. Again, the spiritual good of man implies an essential relation to the separated common good, and in this order, man has more the character of a part than anywhere else. The supernatural good of the singular person is essentially ordered to the supernatural common good, even to the point that one cannot distinguish between man's supernatural virtue and the supernatural virtue which belongs to man insofar as he is a part of the celestial city.

#### Eighth Objection: The Image of God and Society

The singular person is in the image of God. But no society is properly in the image of God.<sup>62</sup> Therefore the singular person is purely and simply superior to any society.

Like the preceding ones, this objection presupposes a collectivist interpretation of our conception of society. But in truth society is not an entity separable from its members; it is constituted of persons who are in the image of God. And it is this society constituted of persons, and not some abstract entity, which is the principal intention of God. That its members are in the image of God is a sign of the perfection of the whole which they constitute. Why did He make an ordered multitude of persons, rather than one person only? Is the Divine goodness not more striking in a multitude and an order of rational creatures

than in one single person as such? Is the truth not more fully communicated in the contemplative life of a community than in the contemplative life of a single person? Does beatitude not have the character of a common principle? Does the incommunicability of persons in the act of vision prevent the object from being universal? And does the love which this object arouses concern the universal good as such, or the good insofar as it might be appropriated to a single person? And is this good like an inferior common good whose distribution results in a division of itself and a particularization wherein it belongs to the part as such and loses its character of commonness?

Let us recall once more that the common good is said to be common in its superabundance and in its incommensurability with the singular good. The properly Divine good is so great that it cannot be the proper good even of the whole of creation; the latter will always have in some way the character of a part. It is very true that in the face of the common good the singular person can say that it is "mine", but that does not mean that it is appropriated to the person as a singular good. The good which the person calls "mine" is not an end for the person. If it were, the good which the person himself constitutes would be its own end. "When one says that the angel loves God insofar as God is a good for him, if 'in so far as' signifies end, the proposition is false; for the angel does not love God naturally for its own good, but for God Himself. But if 'in so far as' signifies the reason for the love on the side of the one who loves, then the proposition is true; for it could not be someone's nature to love God, unless it were because that person depends on the good which is God."<sup>63</sup>

## Ninth Objection: Society and the Whole of Man

"... Man is not ordered to political society according to all of himself and all of that which is his."<sup>64</sup>

This isolated text has been made the ground for concluding that political society is ultimately subordinated to the singular person considered as such. And whoever dares to contradict this crude inference on behalf of personalism is thought to be totalitarian. But, as we have seen, it is contrary to the very nature of the common good to be, as such, subordinated to a singular, unless this singular itself has the character of a common good. St. Thomas only means that man is not ordered to political society alone. It is not according to all of himself that man is a part of political society, since the common good of the latter is only a subordinate common good. Man is ordered to this society as a citizen only. Though man, the individual, the family member, the civil citizen, the celestial citizen, etc., are the same subject, they are different formally. Totalitarianism identifies the formality "man" with the formality "citizen". For us, on the contrary, not only are these formalities distinct, but they are subordinated one to another according to the order of goods itself. And it is the order among goods, final and first causes, and not man simply as such, which is the principle of the order among these formalities of a single subject. Personalism reverses this order of goods; it makes the most inferior formality of man to be the greatest good. What personalists understand by person is in truth what we understand by a pure individual, completely material and substantial, closed in upon self; and they reduce rational nature to sensible nature which has the private good as its object.

Man cannot order himself to the good of political society alone; he must order himself to the good of that whole which is perfectly universal, to which every inferior common good must be expressly ordered. The common good of political society must be expressly ordered to God, as much by the head citizen as by the citizen who is a part, each according to his proper manner. The common good itself requires this ordination. Without this explicit and public ordination, society degenerates into a state which is frozen and closed in upon itself.

#### Tenth Objection: The City is for Man

"The city exists for man, not man for the city."<sup>65</sup> To make this text into a true objection against our position, one would have to translate it thus: "The common good of the city exists for the private good of man." Thereto we might cite in reply the immediate continuation of this very same text: "This however is not to be understood to mean, as individualist liberalism claims, that society is subordinate to the selfish utility of the individual."

The city exists for man. This must be understood in two ways. First, the city considered as an organization in view of the common good, must be entirely subject to this good insofar as it is common. Considered in this way, it has no other reason for being than the common good. But this common good itself is for the members of the society; not for their private good as such; it is for the members as a common good. And, since it is a common good of rational natures, it must be conformed to reason; it must look to rational natures in so far as they are rational. The city is not, it cannot be, a "for self" con-

gealed and closed upon itself, opposed as a singular to other singulars; its good must be none other than the good of its members. If the common good were the good of the city as the latter is accidentally a sort of individual, it would be by the very fact a particular good and properly foreign to the members of the society. In fact one would have to attribute intellect and will to such an organization stolen from its members. The city would then be an anonymous tyrant which enslaves man. Man would be for the city. This good would be neither common nor the good of rational natures. Man would be subject to a foreign good.—Secondly, the city, like the common good of the city, is for man in the sense that man has formalities which order him to superior common goods, formalities which are in man superior to that which orders him to the common good of the city. This identity of a subject having diverse formalities can lead to confusion. The private good and the common good are both goods of man. Yet not every good of man is a good of man considered simply as man. The good of man considered simply as such, according to the meaning given by St. Thomas in the texts already cited<sup>66</sup>, is not other than the good which belongs to him as considered as an individual. The common good can never be subordinated to this man considered merely as such. The formality "man considered simply as man" cannot be identified with the formality "citizen", as neither can it be identified with the subject "man." And so when we speak of a common good subordinated to man, it can only be on account of a formality which looks to a superior common good. In this sense, only the most perfect common good is unable to be subordinated to man.

Further, when we say that the common good can never be considered as a pure extension of the good of man considered in his

singularity, such that the common good would be but a detour to return to the singular good, we do not mean that the singular good is contemptible, that it is nothing, that it must not be respected, or that it is not in itself respectable. Still, a greater respect is due to the person when we consider the latter in its ordination to the common good. Even the singular good of the person is greater when we consider it as ordered to the person's common good. It is also true that a city which does not respect the private good or the good of families acts against the common good. Just as the intellect depends on the senses being well disposed, so the good of the city depends on the integrity of the family and of its members. And just as a sensible nature which is well subject to reason is more perfect even in the line of sensible nature itself, so also in a well ordered city the singular good of the individual and the common good of the family must inevitably be more perfectly realized and assured. It remains however that if the common good of the city were subordinated to these latter goods, it would not be their common good and man would be deprived of his greatest temporal good: the city would no longer be a city. It would be like an intellect which is subordinated to the senses, and thus reduced to the condition of an instrument of the private good.<sup>67</sup>

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Most of these objections play upon a transgression of genera, and exploit the per accidens. From the fact that that some private good is better than some common good, as for instance is true in the case of virginity being better than marriage, it is concluded that some private good, considered as private good, is better than some common

good, considered as common good; that the private good as such can have a pre-eminence which exceeds the common good as such; that hence one can prefer a private good to a common good, because it is private. What would be easier than to use this method to deny all first principles?

Thus one tries to dismiss a proposition which is, simply through the notification of the common good itself, *per se nota*.

## Personalism and Totalitarianism

Jacques de Monleon made this remark about personalism: "Note that the so-called personalists who place the person above the common good can no longer find in the latter the bond among persons. And so they replace this bond with another, a sordid fraternity which is supposed to immediately unite persons among themselves; as if each person were a common good for all the others. This amounts to making each citizen into a tyrant, *amans seipsum magis quam civitatem*." Yet that was Marx's ideal. In the last phase of communism, each individual person puts himself in place of the common good, appropriates for himself "his essence of many and varied aspects, as a complete man"; the individual man "will have become a generic man"; each individual will become for himself the good of his species. "... It will be the real end of the quarrel ... between the individual and the species." The common good will no longer be distinct from the singular good, and the individual will become, himself, the first principle of the social order and of all political power; as a generic being, "he will recognize his own powers as social powers and will organize them himself as such... he will no longer make social strength in the forum

of political power separate from himself."<sup>68</sup> But this "integral development of the individual" cannot be accomplished without the complicity of the confused masses; the I cannot all alone establish the totalitarianism of itself; there must be a fraternity of men, a fraternity born of self love and of a need for anonymous power, blind and violent, in order to realise this I which is its own proper end. A very logical fraternity in its cynicism: the obstacle constituted by the other person who likewise acts for nothing but self is overcome by the confusion of the latter in the indistinct masses. In this cauldron each person can make all others subject to himself without anyone being servant.

By their false notion of the common good, the personalists are fundamentally in accord with those whose errors they suppose they are fighting. To individualism they oppose and recommend the generosity of the person and a fraternity exterior to any common good, as if the common good had its principle in the generosity of persons; as if the common good were not the very first principle for which persons must act. To totalitarianism they oppose the superiority of the person-whole and a common good reduced to the state of a particular good of persons. Their protestation is made not in the name of the person as a citizen, but in the name of the citizen as a person, as if the person were not greater in the order of the common good than in the order of the personal good.

In fact, personalism adopts as its own the totalitarian notion of the State. In totalitarian regimes, the common good is singularised, and it is opposed as a more powerful singular to singulars which are purely and simply subjected. The common good loses its distinctive character; it becomes alien. It becomes subordinate to this

monster of modern invention which is called the State, not the state taken as synonym of civil society or of city, but the State which signifies a city set up as a sort of physical person. For note that the person, "individual substance of a rational nature" can be said of civil society by a metaphor only, not by analogy.<sup>69</sup> In this reduction of the moral person to a physical personality, the city loses its reason for being called a community. That which is owed to the common good becomes something owed to the singular good, to a singular which orders everything to self. Legal justice is destroyed. For having turned away from the community of the common good, the State acquires the status of the personalist's person. It loses any ordination to a superior common good, "so that one considers the common reason of being a state as the end, which is the ruin of a well ordered republic."<sup>70</sup>

This kind of State is born either when its leader, in the guise of a member-person of the society, appropriates the common good as his own, or when the moral personality of the society is erected into a physical person. In both cases, the State is a power foreign to the individuals, a power of alienation against which the subjects must unceasingly defend themselves. This totalitarian conception establishes a tension between the person and society, inevitable conflict, and a competition which some sociologists imagine to be a principle of fecundity. Society is thus openly totalitarian when the State acquires liberty through victory over individuals; it is openly individualist, when the individuals dominate the State. But in either case, the conception of the city is personalist and totalitarian.

In short, the state understood in this sense, that is as a city congealed and closed in upon itself, is by nature tyrannical. It singularizes the common good; it denies its community. In the condition of

liberty of this State, obedience is made the substitute for the legal justice which belongs to the citizen-subjects.<sup>71</sup> The state absorbs the citizens and substitutes in their place an abstract citizen, along with an abstract liberty.<sup>72</sup>

The totalitarian State, founded on the negation of the common good and raised up as a person for itself, cannot be ordered to a superior common good, cannot be referred to God. The negation of the very notion of the common good and of its primacy is a negation of God. In denying the universality of the end to which man is ordered, one denies the dignity which man receives from this ordination, and one leaves him with nothing but his inalienable personality to take with him to hell, *ubi nullus ordo*. Even the Marxists can sing to the glory of this invincible soul.

When those in whose charge the common good lies do not order it explicitly to God, is society not corrupted at its very root? Why does one not require, as a matter of principle and as an essential condition, that the leaders of society be men who are good purely and simply? How can one admit that a bad man might make a good politician? To be sure, it is not new to see subjects governed by bad men, men to whom one does nonetheless owe obedience in those things which pertain to their authority.<sup>73</sup> What is new however is the manner of accepting and defending them. If, in truth, the politician must possess all the moral virtues and prudence, is this not because he is at the head and must judge and order all things towards the common good of political society, and the latter to God? Political prudence rules the common good insofar as the latter is Divine. For that reason Cajetan and John of St. Thomas held that the legal justice of the prince is

more perfect than the virtue of religion.<sup>74</sup>Undoubtedly the reasons why we are ignorant of the common good are the very same ones on account of which we are ignorant of political prudence. "We have too long been in error concerning the role of the intellect. We have neglected the substance of man. We have believed that the virtuosity of low souls could assist in the triumph of noble causes, that clever selfishness could lift up the spirit of sacrifice, that aridity of heart could, through the wind of discourse, found fraternity or love."<sup>75</sup>

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

## II

### THE PRINCIPLE OF THE NEW ORDER<sup>77</sup>

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

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

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

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

The problem of international order is not properly a problem of metaphysics, but of political science and political prudence. Among the speculative sciences even the philosophy of nature will be more closely pertinent than metaphysics. Yet it is significant that the most

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

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

## Negation of the Primacy of the Speculative

In spite of their apparent divergence, modern philosophers generally agree in holding that metaphysics or speculative wisdom, for as

much as it principally concerns things which are better than man, alienates man from himself, that it divests him of his true self. Being in some sense superhuman, it is thought to be unhuman. It would distract man from the total effort that is required to conquer the earth, and to respond to his desire to live.<sup>79</sup> It would be destructive of human nature, and consequently it must be considered as one of the great enemies of humanity.

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

The first consequence, and the most general one, is that things would be no more, at most, than what we want them to be. For political science and prudence are practical in that they direct towards an end in conformity with right reason. But that presupposes that we know in some way the nature of the thing to direct and of the end; which is to say that the rectitude of practical rule presupposes the rectification of the speculative intellect.<sup>81</sup> Therefore if, per impossible, practical rule were independent of speculative truth, then what things are or ought to be—man for instance, or the good for man or society—would simply be what we want them to be. Even practical science would no longer be science. Simple practical knowledge would no longer really be practical. All direction would proceed according to chance; it would no longer be direction.

This hypothesis implies more specifically the negation of prudence. One might argue however that we are free to choose the

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

Following this hypothesis, man would be in truth the measure of all things, and there could be no other measure. But the proposition "man is the measure of all things" remains abstract. To be consistent, we must ask "What man?", or "What men?" Note that we could not ask, "What man or men have the right to impose themselves as

measure?" The right will belong to the person who has the power to impose it. In good logic, the most one can do is wait for it to happen.

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

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

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

One is tempted to prefer art to prudence because truth in art is not conditioned by the conformity of the appetite to the good but uniquely to the chosen work, whether the latter be good or bad. And the end of art is this particular work, this machine, this statue;

but the goodness of this prudential act depends on its conformity to the good life considered in its totality.<sup>88</sup>

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

Still further, on account of the weakness of his speculative intellect, man will be tempted to exalt his ability to construct pleasant imitations. He will be tempted to dominate every imitable original, those greater than us as well as those which are inferior to ourselves. The fine arts are, in fact, the most human means of making objects which are better than us more proportioned to ourselves.

### In the Beginning, the Word of Man

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

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

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

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

Lastly, the best of the workers (*opifex*) decreed that this creature, to whom he had not been able to give anything which would be proper

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

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

We will not analyse this text in detail. Note only this insistence on the unformed character. It is true that by his faculty of receiving the form of what is other and of being all things according to knowledge, man is in the center of the cosmos, whereas the other

cosmic creatures are limited, whether to their individual form, or to sensible and singular forms alone. But when we consider formally this unformedness, this unlimited potentiality, we attain rational nature in its characteristic non-being, and far from occupying thereby the center of creation, man is at the lowest degree among the intelligent creatures.

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

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

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

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

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

\* \* \*

The exaltation of that poetic activity in which man himself makes objects or imitations which have the character of a term in the line of knowledge and which suffice unto themselves, was a deliberate return to the time when divinities were in a large measure in the image of man, subject to human conditions, and over which the poet could wield dominion. It was not a return to classical art considered in all of its fullness; the latter was, in many ways, truly religious, that is to say subordinated to originals which were recognized as superior. It was rather a deliberate return to classical poetry for as much as the latter could be profane even faced with divine originals. The desire was in sum to have a profane poetry with universal dominion, religious at most by extrinsic denomination. It was to emancipate pure poetry "which has for its object those things which, because of their deficiency of truth, cannot be grasped by reason."<sup>96</sup> All imitable originals were to stand before the genius of man and be reduced to the condition of operable matter. That is what giving primacy to the "infima doctrina" amounts to.<sup>97</sup>

Descartes speaks explicitly of this philosophy which has for its end not knowledge for its own sake, but the transformation of all things for man's profit. Marx is the very faithful echo of the following passage in the Discourse on Method (Part VI): "... rather than that speculative philosophy that is taught in the schools, there is a practical philosophy by which, knowing the force and the actions of fire, water, air, stars, the heavens and all the other bodies which surround us, as distinctly as we know the different trades of our artisans, we could use them in the same way for all the uses for which they are fitted, and

thus make ourselves as masters and possessors of nature. This is not only desirable for the invention of an infinity of artifices which would enable us to enjoy the fruits and all the commodities of the earth without pain, but principally also for the conservation of health ... "

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

Even speculative philosophy is too difficult, too uncertain and insufficiently adjusted to the level of reason. What remains for us then other than this practical philosophy which will, moreover, finish by leaving off ethics and substitute in its place medicine and a hygiene to be used to heal and prevent all spiritual ills?

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

It seems, then, that nature has pointed out a mixed kind of life as most suitable to the human race, and secretly admonished them to allow none of these biases to draw too much, so as to incapacitate them for other occupations and entertainments. Indulge your passion for science, says she, but let your science be human, and such as may have a direct reference to action and society. Abstruse thought and

profound researches I prohibit, and will severely punish, by the pensive melancholy which they introduce, by the endless uncertainty in which they involve you, and by the cold reception which your pretended discoveries shall meet with, when communicated. Be a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man.<sup>98</sup>

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

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

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

Thus is also discovered the faculty of "composing" history. The latter becomes purely scientific, as our manner of speaking has it. The

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

And the fear of God?

The attitude of philosophers towards their readers has completely changed. It is no longer the truth they speak, but more rather the reader and the writer who become the principal object of their pre-occupation. They themselves confess that they always hope, for their own sake, that the reader will approve of their opinions. What is still more important is that the reader for whom they write is no longer the philosopher, but rather that vague individual called the man of good sense on some occasions, the cultivated man on others, and the general reader on others. Compare that procedure with that of

Aristotle or of St. Thomas. The Discourse on Method is essentially a rhetorical work. It was also one of the first appeals to unformed man precisely as he is unformed, an appeal which will some day shine forth in the appeal to the unformed masses insofar as they are unformed.

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

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

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

Kant's effort to deliver the speculative intellect from the shackles of metaphysics by confining the former to the logical order (of which latter he thought he had quite sufficient knowledge)<sup>99</sup> was the most decisive step towards this revolutionary philosophy—the future "armed criticism"—which today openly menaces the whole world. Perhaps we ourselves, succumb- ing under the weight of this

modern tradition, have lost faith in the human intellect to such a degree that we are reluctant to admit that what men think, or what they teach in the apparently peaceful classrooms, can have any serious consequences for the grocer who lives down the street. How could scholarly negations of the principle of contradiction by these wonderful professors ever really affect the working masses? Who would be so simple as to believe that one day the most prominent statesman will himself teach Hegelian dialectic, edited and corrected, to his people and to people of the whole world?<sup>100</sup>

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

This same art, which has its roots in the potential character of our intellect, becomes the all-powerful method of Hegel. "Method is the absolute, unique, supreme, infinite force, which no object can resist; it is the tendency of reason to discover itself, to recognize itself in everything." Everything henceforth is in the image of our thought, the latter having become the principle which posits all things.<sup>102</sup>

Further, Hegel bases himself on that part of logic which can serve his end most fittingly—dialectic. Not simply the dialectic of the *Topics*, but more properly the dialectic which consists of using principles of *logica docens* to attain to reality. Kantian, Hegelian, and Marxist dialecticians have nothing that is merely a matter of opinion. The latter two retain from topical dialectic only the element of conflict and struggle.<sup>103</sup> But it is very true that beginning with common intentions of reason one can descend to reality, one can deal with the subjects of the sciences and with real beings (*ens naturae*).<sup>104</sup> On this point one finds no fault with these dialecticians. This use of logic could not, however, of itself adequately attain to reality unless the logical and the real were identical, and that cannot be unless contradiction were possible. But that is precisely what Hegel maintained. For him, contradiction is simply a fact, and he illustrates it with an example from geometry. "A notion which has simultaneously two contradictory signs or which has neither the one nor the other, for example a square circle, is held to be logically false. But, although a polygonal circle and a rectilinear arc also contradict this maxim just as much, geometers do not hesitate to treat the circle as a polygon having rectilinear sides."<sup>105</sup>

The principle of contradiction is a rather important matter. And it is very closely related to our subject, since its negation constitutes the first principle of the modern philosophy of the revolution.<sup>106</sup> "Unlike metaphysics," Stalin says, "dialectics begins from the position that objects and natural phenomena imply internal contradictions..." And he quotes Lenin: "Dialectic, in the proper sense of the word, is the study of contradictions in the very essence of things."<sup>107</sup> Marx, Engels, and Lenin expressed their fear at the lack of respect and the negligence in which Hegelian logic was held by

their disciples, and orthodox Marxism continues to accentuate its importance. Let us briefly see, in Aristotelian terms, what Hegel did to convert the principle of contradiction, and how he arrived at proclaiming it as the very principle of all fecundity.

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

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

multiplicity in which our knowledge is lacking in the very character of wisdom.

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

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

hence reason considered formally in its pure ratiocinative character, and negation, that other characteristic of the human intellect: both of them perfectly emancipated and together taking on divine attributes.<sup>110</sup>

## Et Facta Est Nox

This perversion of human thought at the very root was to bear its fruit in Marxism, which, not content to have this procedure be a mere game to amuse philosophers, brings it into the practical world even to the point of reaching "the pen of Herr Krug"<sup>111</sup>. It is true that Hegelian dialectic was already fundamentally compositive and practical in mode, but it remained practically sterile. Marxism identifies Hegel's dialectical process with things considered in their final concretion. But among the things which surround us it is in fact matter which is the proper principle of their ultimate concretion. Matter will itself become the primordial principle, the 'first reason'. You believe you are ruled by a perfect intellect and an infinitely good will? You are exclusively determined by the conditions of material life. Finality? Scholastic notion!

And just as in Hegel the movement of reason arose from the contradiction inherent in being, so also, for the Marxists, the contradiction of matter shows itself in the motion of matter, movement itself being contradictory for them; contradiction and movement of contradiction from which all things are born. In contradiction, i.e., in birth by destruction, the fruitfulness of privation, of non-being, shines forth—that which you call being, but which in truth is not. That which is not, there is what is! "For the dialectical method," Stalin

says, "what is most important is not what seems stable at some moment but is already beginning to perish; rather what is most important is what is born and develops, even if the thing seems unstable at some moment, because for the dialectical method only that which is born and develops is invincible."<sup>112</sup> Applied to society, that means that progress must be accomplished by the revolt of the dispossessed, i.e., of the deprived class. In it resides power, for it is what is not. "Social reforms never complete themselves by the weakness of the strong, but always by the strength of the weak."<sup>113</sup> "Feudalism had its proletariat too—the serfdom, which contained within itself all the germs of the bourgeoisie. Feudal production also had two antagonistic elements, which are spoken of as the good side and the bad side of feudalism, as though it were not always the bad side which ultimately wins over the good side. It is the bad side which produces movement and makes history, by constituting struggle."<sup>114</sup>

You feel pity for human misery, for the lot of the dispossessed? You are indignant against the selfishness and the meanness of the rich? Bourgeois! Do you not see then that you are trying to kill the chicken that lays golden eggs? "If it is true," Stalin continues, "that development occurs through internal contradictions coming to light, by the conflict of contrary forces which is destined to surmount those forces, it is clear that the class struggle of the proletariat is a perfectly natural and inevitable phenomenon."<sup>115</sup> Far from wishing to smother the conflict by a just distribution of goods, far from having recourse to an "eternal justice"<sup>116</sup> to which every man must conform, we must, on the contrary, encourage struggle and push conflict to the point of exasperation. The ways must be opened for the emancipation of non-being! "Consequently, to avoid error in politics, one must follow

a political method of the proletariat class, intransigent, and not a reformist political method of harmony of interests between the proletariat and the bourgeois, not a conciliatory method of 'integration' of capitalism within socialism."<sup>117</sup> Make an agreement with your enemy, provided that it be the surest means of crushing him. You can count on weakness. In the integrity of his cowardice, he will not dare to expose your cynicism.

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

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

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

Where will it finish, this process of deprivation even unto absolute privation? "It was necessary," says Marx, for the human essence to fall into this absolute poverty in order to be able to bring to birth from itself its interior richness."<sup>119</sup> Once man has broken all ties with anything at all, he will be able to move "around himself, his true sun".<sup>120</sup>

There is the principle of the new order.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Non serviam!

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

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

\* \* \*

Who could explain these positions in the light of philosophy alone? Of course we could note "technical errors". There would no doubt remain the weight of "systems" singularly enlarged in number by the death of authors and the liberty thereby engendered. But who does not see that such critiques can never reach the ultimate root of these philosophies? We are not dealing with purely accidental errors of a thought which is evolving towards an ever fuller truth, as was the case with ancient wisdom. These errors have their roots in desire.

The practical force with which these authors and their disciples adhere to their errors can only be explained by a love of the errors

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

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

Negation of what? Against whom are we angry?  
Amen, amen, I say to you, if the grain of wheat does not fall to the ground and die, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life will lose it; he who hates his life in this world will

conserve it for eternal life.

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

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

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

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

We witness here the supreme effort to attack the work of God. There is a desire to take the humble away from Him, those who are most powerful before the All Powerful—the true power of the weak. They shall be tempted to pride, because no one is more unworthy of mercy than he who is both proud and miserable. They will be inculcated with the philosophy of the wise of this world. "... Theory too," says Marx, "becomes a material force when it penetrates the masses.

Theory is able to penetrate the masses as soon as it makes demonstrations ad hominem, and it makes demonstrations ad hominem as soon as it becomes radical. To be radical is to take things by the roots. And the root of man is man himself." "As philosophy finds its material arms in the proletariat, so also the proletariat finds its spiritual arms in philosophy, and as soon as the flash of thought has penetrated to the bottom of this naive terror of the people..."<sup>126</sup> Thus do the wise of this world wish to seduce the parvuli by dark wisdom. They have vengeance for God's contempt of their wisdom. Has God not confounded the wisdom of this world with folly?

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

The intrigues and the intelligence of the human will, thought to be emancipated from the supernatural, are in fact no longer intelligible except as simulations of properly Divine truths.<sup>127</sup> How can we explain this exaltation of the unformed except as a perversion of the obediential power and the very special capacity for elevation of the least perfect intelligent creature? Why this effort to liberate the words of our thought? In truth we order the Divine names to God insofar as He surpasses our conception of Him. How should we understand this deification of movement, whether it is real movement, the most imperfect of acts, or the ratiocinative movement of reason, the most extrinsic and the most tenuous kind of thought? In the light of revealed doctrine this deification is nothing but a seductive profanation of the wisdom which is more mobile than any mobile thing. The very idea of universal struggle and combat is again a simulation of a real

state of affairs which in some way has its principle in the supernatural order. For indeed, without grace the pure spirits, entirely determined in their nature and indefectible, would have always remained since the morning of their existence in a state of perpetual peace. Their order would have been absolutely imperturbable. But the elevation to the supernatural order by that grace which is the principle of merit, and the exercise of a liberty of contrariety: are these not what gave way to the fall and to a combat which invaded the whole of creation, a combat in which God himself takes part by the sacrifice of His only Son? And did God not place an enmity between the creature whom He had created most intelligent and most powerful by nature, and the most humble of human creatures which are at the lowest level of immortal creation? That the victory should be the work of the weak is a monstrous caricature of the Woman who, from the beginning, was destined to crush the head of the master of all pride.

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

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

the night which is a counter-image of the obscure and caliginous depth of the Inaccessible Light.

## Appendix I: Personal Fulfillment

We uphold the necessity of taking account of particular characteristics of an individual, either to encourage natural inclinations and aptitudes or to discourage them, according as they are either good or bad. But it must be remarked that it is the end that is the reason for this necessity of considering the individuating notes of the subject in whom the necessity lies, and that it is the end which is the measure and the criterion of what is necessary to attain the end. In short, this is a hypothetical necessity, and not a necessity such "that what is necessary be necessary as an end; for the necessary is given on the side of matter (*ponitur ex parte materiae*) whereas it is from the end that the reason for necessity is given. For we do not say that it is necessary that there be a certain end because the matter is such and such; rather, on the contrary it is because the end and the form are such that the matter should be of such a sort. And so it is that necessity is in matter (*ponitur ad materiam*), whereas the reason for necessity is in the end."<sup>128</sup>

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

But the humanists, who accord the primacy to material and efficient causes, do not understand it in this way. Through those things which characterize him personally, the individual person is him-

self the measure of his end; the end, first principle of the ordination of the person to the end, would be identical with the order itself which is inscribed in the person. The accomplishment of the end would then consist, for the person, of returning to himself, of finding and recognizing himself in the interior richness which is entirely characteristic of himself and sealed by his individuating characteristics. He will himself be the first principle of respect and of liberty which are due to him as regards this 'personality'.

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

ment of his I?

As we have noted, the nation, understood in the Thomist sense of *patria*, does also have its rights to the fulfillment of certain of its proper characteristics. The common good of civil society requires respect for the proper character of the nation or nations for which it must really be the common good. The common good does not require a homogeneity of subjects, but rather the contrary. But if we say that the common good of civil society is for the nation, we do not mean that the latter is the end of the former, or that the common good is the pure means of fulfillment of the nation. The good of civil society must be conformed to the nation in the sense that it must be 'its' good. It does not follow that the former is subordinated to the latter. To subordinate the good of civil society to the good of the nation is to subordinate reason to nature. Then one falls into the irrational and voluntaristic nationalism of the Discourse to the German Nation. Civil society would be purely a means for the nation to achieve its nationhood, whereas in truth the good of civil society is more divine than that of the nation. The fulfillment of the latter is not even the proper end of the nation, but remains within the order of dispositions and means.

## Appendix II: Every Person Desires His Good

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

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

"In short, every act of justice implies a relation to the common good, and as seems paradoxical, is by that very fact selfish, because the common good is not an end in itself; it is a means for the individual happiness that every man pursues, but which he cannot attain and possess except through virtue, including justice. Hence it follows that no obligation founded on justice can turn a man away from the pursuit of his own happiness towards the pursuit of some alien good, unless this obligation is a part of his individual good, or is a means of the attainment thereof."(pp. 323-24). "As we have seen, the intentions

of natural justice are selfish. They do not aim at the good of another man as other, but only as a part of the community which must be conserved for the proper good of oneself. Further, as natural justice and natural love are selfish, so also none of them is heroic. Neither the one nor the other leads men to martyrdom. Although natural love is less selfish than justice, from the fact that it involves a certain real forgetting of self, and although natural love, unlike justice, pushes men to the generosity of sacrifice, it still remains an imperfect kind of action, by which the agent always seeks self perfection at the same time that he seeks the perfection of another, and in fact considers the other as an extension of self—like an alter ego. In this sense, the impulses of natural love never deviate from the fundamental tendency of natural desire—which consists, for all things, in seeking their proper perfection." (pp. 329-30)

And in a note (256) they add:

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

cern for his reputation—pride for himself and for his family, which had to be satisfied by this kind of 'immortality' which a man enjoys when he is honored in the annals of his people."

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

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

There is the love of the common good.

### Appendix III: Nebuchadnezzar, My Servant

"But the bad princes themselves are the ministers of God, for it is by a disposition of God that they are princes, to inflict punishments, although that be not their intention, according to the passage in Isaiah, X, 7: Woe to Assur, rod of My anger! The rod which is in his hand is the instrument of My furor; I send him against an impious nation, I give him My orders against the people of My anger, to put them to ruin and plunder, and to trample them underfoot like the mud of the streets. But it is not thus that he understands it, and that is not the thought in his heart; for he wishes only to destroy, and to exterminate nations not a few. And Jeremiah, XXV, 9: I am sending for all the tribes of the Septentrion, and I am bringing them to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; I will bring them against this country and against its inhabitants, and against all those nations surrounding, which I will strike with anathema, and of which I will make a solitude, an object of mockery, an eternal ruin. And also because these bad princes sometimes, when God permits it, afflict the good, which turns to the good of the latter, according to these words: We know besides that all things concur to the good of those who love God." (St. Thomas, In Epist. ad Romanos, c. xiii, 3, lect. 1.)

"The will to harm comes from man himself, but the power to harm comes from God Who permits it (a Deo permittente). And God does not permit that the evil should harm as much as he pleases, but imposes a limit. You shall come this far, and no further; here ceases the pride of your torrent. (Job XXXVIII, 11). And thus the devil did not harm Job, except in the measure that God permitted. Likewise

Arius did not harm the Church, except in the measure that God permitted. In Apocalypse VII, the angel says (to the four angels to whom it was given to harm the earth and the sea, in these words:) Do no evil to the earth, nor to the sea, nor to the trees, until we have marked with a seal on the forehead the servants of our God." In II ad Tim., c. iii, lect. 2.

## Appendix IV: Ludwig Feuerbach Interprets St. Thomas

Feuerbach, from whom Marx and Engels adopted their absolute humanism, considers authentic Christian thought as being in evolution towards its own proper anthropotheismus. In *Das Wesen des Christenthums*<sup>129</sup>, he opposes the conception of Christians to that of the ancients concerning the relation of the human individual to his entire species, to the entire society, and to the universe.

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

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

As is well known, Aristotle explicitly says in his *Politics* that the individual (*der Einzelne*), since he does not suffice unto himself, is in his relation to the state as the part to the whole...—It is true that

Christians as well "sacrificed the individual", meaning here the singular as part of the whole, of being in general (Gemeinwesen). "The part," says St. Thomas, one of the greatest Christian thinkers and theologians, "sacrifices itself by natural instinct for the conservation of the whole. Every part by nature loves the whole more than itself. And by nature every singular loves more the good of its species than the singular good or well being. Each being therefore loves, in its own way and naturally, God Who is the universal good, more than himself." (Summae P. I Qu. 60 Art. V.) In this perspective, Christians think, therefore, like the ancients. St. Thomas praises (de Regim. Princip. 1. III. c. 4.) the Romans because they placed their country before all and sacrificed their own well being to the well being of the country. And yet, all these thoughts and sentences are valid for the Christian only on the earth, and not in heaven; in morals, and not in dogmatics; in anthropology, and not in theology. As object of theology, the individual is the singular supernatural being, immortal, self sufficient, absolute, divine being. The pagan thinker Aristotle declared friendship (Ethic. L. 9, c. 9) necessary for happiness; the Christian thinker St. Thomas Aquinas does not think thus. "The society of friendship is not necessarily required for beatitude, for man finds the plenitude of his perfection in God." "Thus had there been only a single soul enjoying the possession of God, that soul would still be happy, even without another to love. (Prima Secundae. Qu. 4. 8.) Thus the pagan considers himself as an individual even in the state of happiness, as an individual and consequently as needing another being similar to himself, of his species; the Christian on the contrary has no need of another self, for the individual is not only an individual but also a whole (Gattung), a general being (allgemeines Wesen), since he possesses "the plenitude of his perfection in God", and thus in himself. (p. 212).<sup>131</sup>

There are things we could question in this presentation; but let us go directly to the essential point. Is there such an opposition be-

tween the point of view of St. Thomas in the *Prima Pars* q. 60 on the one hand and *Ia IIa* q. 4 on the other? It would be ridiculous to say that in the first case St. Thomas is placing himself in a purely natural point of view, or that in the former passage he is only considering the created person for as much as the latter can be considered as a part of the universe, whereas in the *Ia IIae* he is considering things from a supernatural point of view in which the person should be considered on the contrary as a whole. That would imply a strange conception of the subject of the *Summa* and the order of its treatises.

Feuerbach must have recourse to this distinction because he does not see that it is an entirely different thing to be dependent on the whole and against its parts to attain the good of the whole, than it is to attain the good of the whole. The fundamental reason why we call every created person a part is because his greatest good is incommensurable with the good of the singular person as such; it is indeed rather as an individual that the human person is a whole. No created person is either proportioned or proportionable to the absolutely universal good as to its proper good as a singular person. Otherwise every person would be God. And indeed, for Feuerbach, man is God.

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

For Hegel, as no doubt was true for David of Dinant also, being is a *summum genus*, and this genus is the first explanation of all

things. In fact this Hegelian being is none other than what we call 'the first thing known,' that is to say the most common predicate being, the most indeterminate, the most confused, the most superficial concept that one can conceive, the most purely potential concept, which best reflects the pure potentiality of the most imperfect intellect that there can be, which signifies most immediately the pure original subjectivity of our intelligent self. By the movement of reason, the Hegelian being is endowed with the nature of that power which is act. Dialectic has as its function to make explicit the infinite richness of being. Pure potentiality presents itself as a substitute for pure actuality. It is the pure indeterminate which has this fertility which we attribute to pure act.

Just the same, what is this summum genus? The question is appropriate. Feuerbach explicitly identifies the infinity of the genus (*die Unendlichkeit der Gattung*) with the most common predicate being; he identifies the pure commonness of the latter with the subject being of metaphysics; the subject being of metaphysics with the plenitude of being, with God in Whom thought is identical with being; and, since we are what we know, the plenitude of being will be none other than the proper being of man. God is therefore nothing other than man. Each individual human being is simultaneously part and whole, mere individual and God. As individual, man is limited; as a properly conscious being, he is unlimited, infinite. "Consciousness in the proper and rigorous sense, and consciousness of the infinite are inseparable; limited consciousness is not consciousness; consciousness is essentially all-comprehensive and infinite nature. Consciousness of the infinite is nothing other than the infinity of consciousness. Or: in the consciousness of the infinite, the consciousness of the infinity of

the proper being (of self) is the object." (p. 26).

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

Feuerbach recognizes also that "man is nothing without an object". As long as man does not recognize himself as unlimited *Gattung*, as long as he does not recognize himself in his pure universality, he is nothing. Does he then depend on an object? Certainly. The object must be conquered; the self must be conquered. As long as the object of man is conceived as exterior to man, man conceives himself as limited; he remains a mere individual, only the part of a whole; he alienates himself in a foreign God, the God of religion. God must be at the very center of man, man the center of himself; man must return to himself as to his own source. "The object to which a subject is essentially and necessarily related is none other than the proper being of the subject considered this time as an object being (*gegenstandliche Wesen*)". (p. 28) "The absolute being, the God of man, is the proper being of man. The power of the object over man is consequently the power of his proper being." (p. 30)

The German philosopher also believes he can surmount the antinomy between Catholicism and Protestantism by pushing the

latter to its ultimate conclusion. "In Catholicism, man exists for God; in Protestantism, God exists for man. (p. 436). The History of Christianity has had as its main result the revelation of this mystery: the realization and the knowledge of theology as anthropology." (p. 435)

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

In theology which has become openly anthropology, the Pelagian and the Augustinian must no longer speak in a hidden manner. Both of them have their qualities and their defaults. Fundamentally the difference between them amounts to merely a 'pious illusion.' "The distinction between Augustinianism and Pelagianism consists uniquely in this, that the first expresses according to the religious mode what the second expresses according to the rationalist mode. The two say the same thing; both appropriate the good to man—

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

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

The clearest and most incontestable proof that, in religion, man considers himself as a divine object, as the divine end, that thus in religion man is only related to himself—the clearest and most incontestable proof of all this is the love of God for man, the foundation and central point of religion. For man, God divests himself of his divinity. The uplifting effect of the Incarnation consists in just that: the highest being, who knows no need, humiliates himself, lowers himself

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

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

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

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

"The Passion", Feuerbach continues, "is an essential condition of God become man, or in other words of the human God, therefore of Christ. Love reveals itself in suffering. All the thoughts and all the feelings which principally belong to Christ lead back to the idea of suffering. God as God is the sum of all human perfection; God as Christ is the sum of all human misery. The pagan philosophers

celebrated activity, especially the immanent activity (Selbstthätigkeit) of the intellect as the highest activity, as divine activity; the Christians celebrated suffering, and even placed suffering in God. Whereas God as Actus purus, as pure activity, is the God of abstract philosophy, Christ, on the contrary, the God of Christians, is Passio pura, pure suffering—the highest metaphysical thought, the most supreme being of the heart." (p. 97).

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

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

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

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

## Appendix V: The Revolution of the Philosophers of Nature

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

Just as in France in the eighteenth century, the philosophic revolution in the nineteenth century in Germany preceded the political revolution. But what a difference between the two! The French in open arms against all official science, against the Church, often even against the State, their works printed beyond the border, in Holland or England, and themselves quite often on the point of heading for the Bastille. The Germans, on the contrary, were professors, teachers of youth named by the State, their works recognized as manuals for teaching, and the system that crowns the whole development, that of Hegel, raised even in some way to the rank of an official philosophy of the Prussian royalty! And the revolution was to be hidden behind these professors, behind their pedantic and obscure statements, in their heavy and boring classes. The men who were then considered as representatives of the revolution, were they not precisely the most bitter adversaries of this philosophy which was sowing trouble in men's minds? But what neither the government nor the liberals saw was seen by at least one man as early as 1833. It is true that his name was Heinrich Heine.<sup>135</sup>

Engels is without doubt making allusion to Heine's *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, in which he concludes his reflections with the following remarks on the destruc-

tive character of Kant's Critique, and of the apparently detached and inoffensive system of Hegel:<sup>136</sup>

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

We are not so foolish as to seriously refute those who showed such discontent. German philosophy is an important matter which concerns the whole of humanity, and our great nephews alone will be able to decide if we merit praise or blame for having reworked our philosophy first and our revolution afterwards. It seems to me that a methodic people, such as ourselves, should begin with reform, then concern itself with philosophy, and arrive at the political revolution only after having passed through these prior phases. I find this order entirely reasonable. The minds that philosophy has employed for meditation can be cut down at pleasure by the revolution; but philosophy will never be able to use the minds that the revolution has already destroyed. And yet, my dear fellow countrymen, be not worried; the German revolution will be neither more easy going nor sweeter from having been preceded by the critique of Kant, the transcendental idealism of Fichte, and natural philosophy. These doctrines have developed revolutionary forces which are but waiting for the right moment to explode and fill the world with fright and wonder. Then there will appear Kantians who will no more want to hear piety spoken of in the world of events than in that of ideas, and

they will overthrow without mercy, with the axe and the sword, the sun of our European life in order to extricate the last roots of the past. Upon the same scene there will appear armed Fichteans, whose fanaticism of will will be overcome neither by fear nor by interest; for they live in the spirit and scorn matter, like the first Christians who were daunted neither by corporal punishments nor by terrestrial pleasures. Indeed, such transcendental idealists would, in a social uprising, be more inflexible than the first Christians; for the latter endured martyrdom in order to arrive at celestial beatitude, whereas the transcendental idealist regards martyrdom as a pure appearance, and keeps himself inaccessible in the fortress of his thought. But the worst of all would be the natural philosophers, who would intervene in a German revolution with action, and would identify themselves with work of destruction; for if the hand of the Kantian strikes sure and forcefully, because his heart is not moved by any traditional respect; if the Fichtean heartily despises all dangers, because they do not exist at all for him in reality; the natural philosopher will be terrible because he is in communication with the original powers of the earth, because he conjures forces hidden in tradition, because he can call forth the forces of the whole of German pantheism and awaken therein that ardour of combat which we find in the ancient Germans; because he wishes to fight, not to destroy, nor even to conquer, but simply to fight. Christianity softened, to a point, this brutal fighting ardour of the Germans; but it could not destroy it, and when the cross, the talisman which ties him down, is broken, then the ferociousness of the ancient fighters, the frenetic exaltation of the Berserkers that the northern poets still sing today, will once again overflow. Then—and alas, the day will come—the old warlike divinities will rise from their

ulous tombs, will wipe the age-old dust from their eyes; Thor will rise up with his giant hammer and demolish the gothic cathedrals... When you hear the din and the tumult, be on your guard, dear neighbors in France, and stay clear of what we are about here in Germany; it could do you harm. Do not try to extinguish the fire; you may burn your fingers. Do not laugh at these counsels, even if they come from a dreamer who invites you to mistrust the Kantians, the Fichteans and the philosophers of nature; do not laugh at this whimsical poet who expects to see in the world of events the same revolution which has occurred in the domain of the mind. Thought precedes action as lightning precedes thunder. The thunder in Germany is true to the German way: it is not quick and agile, and comes rolling somewhat slowly; but it will come, and when you hear a crack of thunder as has been never heard before in the history of the world, know that the German thunder has finally reached its goal. Upon that sound, the eagles will fall dead from the heights, and the lions, in the most remote deserts of Africa, will lower their tail and retreat into their royal dens. There will be in Germany a drama compared to which the French revolution will be like an innocent romance. It is true that today all is calm, and if you see here and there a few men gesticulating in somewhat lively fashion, do not believe that they are the actors who will be one day charged with representing the revolution. They are merely the dogs who run in the empty arena, barking and exchanging a few bites, before the moment when the troop of gladiators enters who will fight to the death.

And that hour will come. People will come together as spectators to an amphitheatre, around Germany, to see the great and terrible games. I warn you, French, stay very quiet then, and most of all

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

In spite of your present ro- manticism, you were born classi-

cal, and so you are acquainted with Olympus. Among the joyful divinities that take pleasure there in nectar and ambrosia, you know of a goddess who, amid these pleasant recreations, nonetheless conserves a breastplate, a helmet on her head and and a spear in her hand.

She is the goddess of wisdom.<sup>[137](#)</sup>

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

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

The goal of natural philosophy is to know, even to their ultimate specific concretion, these Divine logoi and the end which specifies each of them and which they call forth; to know perfectly the natural being whose form is separable and the term of all other natures, according to what Aristotle says in the same book of the *Physics*, (Ch. 2) as well as in the first book of *De Partibus Animalium* (Ch. 5). This goal, however, is only a dialectical limit for the study of nature, a term which we can unceasingly approach, but which we can never adequately attain.

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

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

We have already said that the attempt to see the entire cosmos

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

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

Hegel did not recognize that for the deduction of each species he could not but presuppose this species, just as with the straight line, which notion is absolutely anterior to its character of being a limit, the latter never being anything but phenomenal. It is true that dialectical Reason presupposes the Understanding, but it is the former that will always be the root of the latter.<sup>141</sup>

When one expects this method to achieve the results that the Hegelian expects from it, it shows itself to be just as sterile as it is fruitful when properly understood. Marx clearly recognized this ste-

rility. The study of nature can never renounce the primacy of sensible experience. The pretensions of idealist deduction are nothing but "hypocritical turns of speculation, which constructs a priori. (op. cit., p. 47) He also clearly recognized that all these constructions of our thought have only the character of means. Hegel surmounts nature in themselves only in a purely apparent manner.

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

"In its 'mystified' form," says Marx, "dialectic was a German fashion, because it seemed to transfigure existing things. In its rational form, it is a scandal and an abomination for the bourgeois and their doctrinal spokesmen, because in the positive understanding of existing things it implies at the same moment the understanding of their negation, of their necessary destruction, because it conceives all forms in the course of change, consequently from their ephemeral

side, allowing itself to be imposed upon by nothing, being essentially critical and revolutionary." (op. cit. p. 68).

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

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

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

We say, "even to the most remote confines of creation." The natural philosopher will therefore take hold even of that cause

which is the most feeble, the indeterminate cause which consists of chance and fortune, a cause which is "without reason" (paralogon)<sup>143</sup>; he will rationalise it, in order that the world may be really ours and that nothing may escape from our domination. Especially will he do so in order to deny the existence of ineffable Providence which is so much the more striking in those chance and fortuitous events of which Providence alone is the determinate cause. Profane reason will be substituted for the Reason which governs history. Marxism will therefore be a historic materialism. The judgement of history will supplant the Judgement of God.

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