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3 The basic contentions of Hume and Kant make clear what is meant by this transcendence and immanence. Hume ended his study of perception with the conclusion that causality was not given in experience. By experience he meant what has here been termed pure presentation. The pure presentation does not contain causality but only succession. We do not see one man causing the death of another; what we see is the sword in the hand of one going through the body of the other. In reading Hume, Kant was awakened from his dogmatic slumbers; he granted Hume's contention that cause was not presented; more, he felt that substance and other terms did not represent what was presented in the strict sense, what was simply appearances, phenomenon. Then, he went a step further; since these terms did not represent transcendent knowledge, they must be due to the immanent activity of the mind, to the understanding of what was presented, to a grasping of the *ratio intelligibilis* of the thing – a *ratio* that was not presented, that could not conceivably be presented.

4 Hence, the idea of substance has become the trial case, the *experimentum crucis*, between the dogmatic and the critical schools. For if understanding is ultimately apprehensive, then 'substance,' what lies beneath or stands beneath the appearances, must be had by apprehension: this is the Scholastic position. On the critical theory, the substance is known by an immanent activity and so is not apprehended but merely understood to be there; clearly, this corresponds exactly with our knowledge of substance; we do not know what it is – as we would if we had ever apprehended it; all we know is that it is there.

5 Of course, it does not follow that subscription to the main contention of Hume or to the initial moment of Kant's thought implies either Hume's phenomenalism or the lumber of categories and antinomies – invented by Kant but hardly ever believed by anybody. Undoubtedly there are consequences to such subscription or acceptance; but what they are is to be decided not historically but logically. Meanwhile, the evidence in favour of the critical view is not limited to the obscurity of the Scholastics' spiritual apprehension, or to the correspondence between (*men*) the critical theory of our knowledge of substance and (*de*) what we de facto know about it. Verification of the hypothesis may be found all over philosophic inquiry. Such verification, and at the same time, a fuller and more detailed account of the hypothesis is our next concern.

III

First, we may consider an argument from the name. There is a connotation to the word 'understanding,' suggestive that by understanding we know what is not presented. The same connotation may be found in the French 'entendement,' the German 'verstand,' the medieval 'intus-legere,' the Greek 'epistemi.'

The classical illustration of the intellectual act is light. This is very apposite for an immanent act. For as light does not add new features to the presented object but simply makes the features of the object actually visible, so intelligence does not add new features to the sensible presentation, is not a supervening, spiritual apprehension, but only serves to make the sensible features intelligible, or understood, or interpreted. What else can be meant by the traditional phrase 'intellectus agentis est illuminare phantasmata' I have been unable to fathom. Viderint sapientiores.

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A different use of the simile of light is found in the words 'clear,' 'evident,' 'luminous,' 'perspicuous,' 'elucidate,' 'illuminating,' etc. This refers to the peculiar experience, the subjective reaction as it were of mind, to the act of understanding. For as understanding is preceded by wonder, as Aristotle noted for all time in the opening lines of his metaphysics, so it is followed by its proper satisfaction. This may be illustrated by the parallel appetite and satisfaction of apprehension. The desire to apprehend we call curiosity. The satisfaction of apprehension, in its intenser forms, we call aesthetic pleasure, when the apprehension wants to prolong itself into contemplation: such was the experience attributed by Keats to Cortez when he describes him as gazing fixedly, eagle-eyed, at the Pacific. Curiosity and wonder are both conspicuous in children who have not only a 'Let-me-see-it' complex but also a passion to know the 'why' and 'what for' and 'how it works' of everything. The intenser forms of the pleasure, the joy, or still less grossly the light, of understanding are found in the student who has traced trains of influence in the drama of history, unraveled the mysteries of mathematics, or in philosophy catches unsuspected relations that link together into a harmony what else was but a bleak and insignificant plurality. Similar to the last are what we call lights in mental prayer. Still more profound is the 'Light that enlighteneth every man coming into this world' and the illumination for which Our Lord blessed St Peter, to whom his divinity was revealed not by flesh and blood but by 'my Father who is in heaven.'

This light or evidence has close relations with truth in the intellectual order. Truth in the order of apprehension simply has normality as its criterion; its evidence is its palpableness, and the opinions of the colour-blind or of the tone-deaf are disregarded because the majority of men look upon this minority as abnormal. But intellectual truth has for its stamp and criterion this evidence. Evidence in itself is subjective; but evidence bears witness to truth, shows that the evident way of understanding is objectively the right way. We accept a theory, a way of understanding, as objectively the right way (i.e., as true) because it explains, illuminates, interprets, synthetizes, all the facts. The emphasis is on the fact of explanation; 'all the facts' are important because, unless all the facts are included, then the evidence of the theory will be destroyed when the incompatible fact receives attention. Then the explanation will not explain.

Hence the definition 'veritas est conformitas intellectus et rei' may be considered unsatisfactory. As applied to truth of presentation, it is probably false; things are not what they seem, but eddies in the ether or whirling electrons. As applied to truth of understanding, it is meaningless for it only asks the understanding to be conformed to itself. However, if it means, as it does not, that in truth the way of understanding is objectively the right way, the way the thing should be understood, then this *conformitas* is acceptable.

We go a step further in our inquiry by discussing the Kantian synthetic judgments a priori. It is no answer to the Kantian position to assert that 'ens contingens habet causam' is an analytic judgment, that the subject implies the predicate. There is no dispute over the point (at least from the point of view of the hypothesis here proposed). What may be disputed is the origin of the implication. An *ens contingens* must indeed have a cause; but why? Because otherwise its existence could not be understood, would have no sufficient reason. There must be a sufficient reason, else we should be utterly unable to understand. We must be able to understand, else reality is not per se intelligible. The dispute over synthetic judgments is whether the decisive element comes

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from the presentation, from the subject transcending itself, or from the immanent activity of the subject, from the subject's demand to understand. It seems obvious that the latter is the case. [Handwritten: I.e., 'ens contingens' the concept implies a cause: granted, but is the concept a compound of presentation – transcendent, and understanding – immanent. If it is such a compound, then the fact of the

implication proves nothing to the point. The Scholastic has to prove a spiritual apprehension; he doesn't and I do not think he can. See also back of page 8. [1]

This introduces the critical problem. What justification is there for the subject's demand to understand? Why may we presuppose that evidence, a subjective experience, the illumination that comes of having things explained, should be an ear-mark of truth, that is, of the way things-in-themselves (so distinct from our minds) should be explained? First, let us state Kant's error. Kant suffered from the obsession that the only possible justification was some sort of spiritual apprehension of the thing-in-itself – a presentation and not a mere understanding of the ratio intelligibilis of the object. Since such a presentation was not to be had and, in fact, may be all but meaningless if carefully examined, Kant decided that there could be no theoretical justification for a demand to understand. Metaphysics had to go by the boards; we have no right to understand; all that we have is a practical need of understanding, so as to be able to carry on the dull business of daily life. We may use our heads for practical purposes since there is a practical justification; we may not use them for theoretical purposes, for a discovery of the eternal verities, since there is no theoretical justification.

[Handwritten: Distinguish (1) understanding that, (2) understanding what or how or why; (1) is a substitute for apprehension, (2) is sui generis, unique. Kant's error seems a confusion of (1) and (2). This is the same error as the scholastics!]

Hegel indicated the germ of the solution by positing an identity of intelligence and reality. His interest in theory made him give the upper hand in this identity to intelligence; for him, the world is the idea gaining consciousness of itself and unfolding itself according to thesis, antithesis, and higher synthesis. This is all very nice for the theoretical side of things, however misty, but what happens to the practical? Feuerbach solved this by turning Hegel's house upside down. He asserted the identity of intelligence and reality but gave the upper hand to reality, in particular to material reality. Hence the Marxian materialist dialectic necessitating communism, also Lenin's unity of theory and practice, the basis of Bolshevism.

Now, though an identity of intelligence and reality is the solution, it does not follow that this identity need be verified in the actual world. A radical and

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[1] [Back of page 8: ens contingens: contingent = not its own explanation, sufficient reason

Ens contingens habet causam = A thing that is not its own sufficient reason must have some other thing as its sufficient reason. Obviously, a direct application of the principle that reality must be intelligible.

Hence the infinite series of causes is no explanation since there has to be an explanation for the series.]

fundamental identity is quite sufficient, the theist as opposed to the monist position. This sets up a pre-established harmony (I do not mean a psycho-physical parallelism) which makes the intellect of man apt to understand in the right way, and so justifies the demand of the subject to understand, gives a sufficient reason for the axiom 'ens et intelligible convertuntur.' Once such a reason is supplied, the Kantian position against theoretical thought falls to the ground, and as well the acceptance of understanding for practical purposes is rationalized.

Plato's expression of this ultimate identity of intelligence and reality is in the myth of recollection (anamnesis). Socrates is using his heuristic method upon a slave, who first tends merely to guess but under the pressure of Socrates' questions elicits the acts of understanding necessary for grasping the geometrical theorem under discussion. The procedure here, as always in the heuristic method, is simply a recognition of the fact that understanding is an immanent act, that the teacher cannot understand it in public, so to speak, that the best way to get the pupils to understand is by asking them leading questions. The point to note is not that the slave knew geometry in a prenatal state (for which no evidence is given) but that the slave was able to understand geometry, i.e., to know what was not presented, what could not be presented. Strip the imagery off Plato's myth of anamnesis and we are left with an assertion of the ultimate identity of intelligence and reality.

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… concrete is model, exemplar, paradigm, and the like. [Arrow to margin, where the following is handwritten: All art is an idea in the concrete. The art critic deals with notions and always complains that he cannot do justice to the work of art. E.g, Shakespeare.] Since there is no actual understanding but only a reference to it unless something is actually being understood, we have here an explanation of the need of phantasm, of diagrams in geometry, of experiments in physics. Parallel to this is the need of illustration in oratory and exposition, of the importance of similitude, parable, analogy in gaining ideas of things unseen. The last brings us to the most profound example of the idea in the concrete, the Incarnation; in the words of St John, *kai ho logos sarx egeneto.*

It is worth noting what a thoroughgoing application of this principle is the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. And while on the point, one may mention how well the theory of intellection as an immanent act fits in with a philosophy of mysticism; the mystical experience is sui generis because it is an experience, a transcendence, of the soul as soul and not merely as united to the body. The uniqueness of this

experience is the more readily understood, if our theory of ordinary knowledge does not postulate spiritual apprehensions.

Returning to less elevated topics, we may observe that on the one hand the Scholastic theory of abstraction seems to require nothing more than a concentration of attention upon the common features of similar objects. Just what the spiritual apprehension has to do with the matter of concentrating attention is not quite clear.

[Marginal: If one tries to think of the spiritual apprehension as separate one gets the ridiculous Aristotelian interpretation of Plato as holding 'universalia a parte rei.' The very argument Aristotle uses against Plato (tritos anthropos) is used in one of Plato's dialogues by Parmenides against 'young' Socrates, i.e., Socrates gets over that notion in his youth. Cf. *Plato's Theory of Ideas* by Stewart, Oxon.]

Plato, in speaking of the idea as separate or separable (choriston), may very well have been no more than referring to the idea as such, the abstract idea separate and distinct and entirely different from the pure presentation which it informs. His intellectual place (noetos topos) may be no more than a metaphor for what we with other metaphors describe as the intellectual order, the intellectual level, the intellectual plane.

A brief discussion of language is here appended to expedite later discussions in logic and metaphysics. Language is a system of vocal gestures and has as the unit gesture the sentence. This unit, which alone makes complete sense, is composed of words. Words have a triple significance, as follows: (1) Objective reference to experiences, presentations, interpretations, either as members of a class or to the class taken collectively. (2) Word function: what part of speech a word is. (3) Sentence function: the function of the word in the sentence; thus, subject tells what we are speaking about, predicate tells what we wish to say of subject. The relations between these three are somewhat complex; we shall touch upon only a few pertinent points.

In word function, we may note the distinction between noun and adjective, which has close relations to the Scholastic distinction between substance and accident. The noun (common as opposed to collective and concrete as opposed to abstract) denotes an intellectual grouping of phenomena, our understanding them as constituting but a single unit, a thing by itself, a thing in its own right, an *ens per se* (substance plus accidents). The adjective primarily denotes the mere phenomenon, the appearance, whether quality, relation, action, passion, etc. The abstract noun is the adjective fulfilling the normal function of noun, i.e., being subject; e.g., heat is

a vibration. The verb is the adjective fulfilling the sentence function of predicate; commonly, when what is denoted is action or passion, the verb form is historically prior to the analytically fundamental adjective form, e.g., the boy sings. Suffixes are regularly added to adjectives to make them fulfill the function of a noun; to have them fulfill the function of predicating, a special verb is used when the language has not …

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… *cum fundamento in re. Ens rationis* means noumenon, act of understanding, the laws and principles we apply in arguing about spatial relationships, (in its developed form) a geometry. But the Scholastic cannot get beyond the idea in the concrete to the idea in the abstract; hence he will speak of real and possible and imaginary (ideal) space; these are not the idea of space but the material in which the idea (laws, principles, etc.) are verified. Similarly for time. The idea of time is an act of understanding that unifies into a single succession all the successions and sequences of changing objects; it is the universal applicability to the world of our experience of one simultaneity with its prior and posterior; the Scholastic confuses this idea or law of temporal relationships with the concrete in which the law is verified or symbolized; hence, *tempus est numerus et mensura motus*.

The critical theory does not explain space or time as facts. It will tell you that you have apprehensions or experience of them; it will tell you how you understand these apprehensions or experiences either by distinguishing parts in these continua and relating the parts or by taking the continuum as a whole and relating it with other things (e.g., explaining time as a condition of change or explaining space as the condition of sensible knowledge and mechanical action). It will not explain the continuum as such, but it will tell you why it cannot be explained, viz., because it is a unit, and a unit cannot be explained.

The foregoing part of critical metaphysic is deductive, a deduction from the necessary intelligibility of the objective world. (The discussion of space and time does not strictly belong to this part, since it involves a discussion of specified experiences or presentations.) Insofar as the critical metaphysic is a view or theory of reality, it is more pronouncedly positive and inductive; it takes advantage of all human understanding or science of the objective world and is, in the theoretic order, a science of sciences. The particular sciences begin from the facts of a particular sphere; they discover empirical laws, i.e., actual relationships, concomitances, etc.; they then endeavor to explain, to make intelligible, to give the reason why of the empirical law. Thus, Tycho Brahe tabulated the facts; Kepler

discovered that the orbits of the planets were ellipses by studying Brahe's tables and making hypotheses. That the planets move in ellipses is an empirical law, an objective relation but unexplained; Newton explained why they moved in ellipses by his theory of universal gravitation. Critical metaphysic takes the explanations arrived at in every field of science – physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, history, ethics, etc. – and frames a unified view of reality in its totality.

Let me adumbrate as well as I can what would be its theory of substance.

In the first place, our apprehension of the object is not formal but causal. Geny in his *Critica* discusses the issue and holds to a sort of formal apprehension called *perceptionismus integralis*; he avows, nonetheless, that he would accept the *causaliter* view if he could be certain that it was free from Kantian implications. Having met Kant on his own ground, a critical metaphysician would have no reason, therefore, for rejecting the *causaliter* theory.

The substance, therefore, is not only what unifies the different appearances of the object and makes it an *ens per se*, a thing by itself distinct from other things; it also is the cause of the appearances. In other words, the appearances are the substance manifested to us sensibly. Hence there is no real

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distinction between the substance and the appearances, that is, there is no real distinction between substance and accidents as the Scholastic theory requires. For example, the white of the object is not something objectively different from the object itself; white is what the object appears to be to the eye.

(Thus, in the Holy Eucharist, the species are what the Body and Blood of Our Lord appear to be despite the fact of transubstantiation and in virtue of a miraculous interposition of God.)

Again, not only is the substance the cause of the appearances but also it is the explanation of its action and reaction. Being the cause of the appearances and the explanation of action and reaction are not being two things but one thing. These two are both *intrinseci modi, expressiones conceptus unius eiusdemque realitatis*; they proceed from the understanding. This is a priori and applicable to all interpretations of substance. A posteriori we may remark that being the explanation of action includes being the explanation or cause of sensation (insofar as sensation is caused by the object perceived and not by the subject perceiving).

The action of the substance and its reaction is according to intelligible law; this follows from the principle of the intelligibility of reality; but the human race progresses in understanding and at any particular time it may have to be content with few or many, vague or precise empirical laws. This is the uniformity of nature of the scientist. The principle of intelligibility cannot be shown to be absolute in its application to the actions of things; it is therefore sufficient if the uniformity of nature, when violated, is violated in an intelligible manner (i.e., by a superior cause and for a sufficient reason). Hence the possibility of miracles.

This idea of the law of the object corresponds to but differs from the Scholastic idea of essence, for the notion (classification, methodology) enters into the Scholastic idea of essence.

The law of the object is distinct from the fact that the object exists. This distinctness is due to the nature of our knowledge. For the fact of existence is known by the apprehension; the law of the object is known by understanding. Knowledge consists of a conjunction of presentation and understanding into one whole; the pure presentation of experience and the pure intellection (abstract idea) are the *entia quibus* of knowledge (human). This distinction the Scholastic theory objectifies by a real distinction between essence and existence; it puts the composition, not in the mind, but, in some very obscure way, in the object. Whether the critical metaphysician will assert such a real distinction or not, I shall discuss presently. But if he does, it will not be due to the distinction in the mind but only on the analogy of this distinction and as a theory to explain definite facts.

Substances are of different kinds. Perhaps lowest is the physical unit whose action is only mutual. [The following is marked 'Omit': Aristotle's *nihil movetur nisi ab alio movetur* belongs to this sphere or level of being. It does not stand in that form, however, but rather as Newton's third law of motion, that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Motion is not caused by a mover; it arises from the mutual influences of two physical units. Aristotle's theory is a vicious circle, a progress *in infinitum*, or a postulate of a motionless mover, which does not square with his principle since to move you must move and your moving requires a mover. Moreover, motion is defined not as mere movement but technically as a change of velocity. The states of rest or of motion with an uniform velocity are similar; they are not changes but the negation of change.]

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... reality. In fact, natural religion as it has existed always tends to be an answer to these questions and a solution of these needs; in morality it holds some middle course between naturalism and humanism, which are not its antecedents but its consequents when an age of faith and action has yielded to an age of achievement and doubt. The will of the gods is at once man's naturalistic good (for there is a possibility of retribution) and an expression of the cosmic plan. Such religion may degenerate into a matter of statecraft as in the Sumerian cities and ancient Egypt, into naturalistic excess as in the fertility cults and Dionysiac rites of the peasant peoples, into a crystallization of barbarism in the gods of war, the sky-gods honored by the tamers of horses.

And besides the gods of the poets and of the state, the gods satisfying personal requirements and sanctioning social order, there are the gods of the philosophers or prophets who represent an element in religion that was never absent but by *them* [margin: i.e., the philosophers and prophets] is specialized and brought into distinctness. Such is the religion of the Egyptian who wrote the conversations of a man with his own soul amidst the desolation of the Middle Kingdom's social revolution, of the pastoral Job proclaiming the immortality of the soul, of the prophets of Israel specially inspired by God to bring back the people to the ways of righteousness and truth, of the mystic Socrates and the speculator Plato. In these we have a glimpse or a vision of a religion that transcends the humanism whether of Stoic or of more subtle Buddhist, that foreshadows the *aner pneumatikos*, the new man that is to envelop and assimilate the old, the man born not of blood (the human animal), nor of the will of the flesh (*aner sarkhikos*), nor of the will of man *(aner psychikos*), but of God.

The humanism of Stoic or Buddhist is in itself and if we only consider the life of apprehension and understanding, of assent and consent, a rounded theory. It is the life of a man, were man not also an animal and in a society, were man made to live unto himself and by himself finding his proper activity within himself and not made to live in a lower order while tending to a higher. It is a theory that fits an aspect of the facts, their most intimate aspect, but does not take into account either the material of the activity of man nor the telos of that activity. It would produce a perfect man, a Stoic *sophos*, an enlightened one (Buddhist), were the *aner psychikos* not an unstable and incomplete being. This inadequacy of humanism makes it incredible as a philosophy to the majority of men, while its adherents, when they do not fail in their practice, are cold in their relationships, indifferent to the lot of humanity in the concrete, haughty in their self-sufficient isolation, preachers perhaps but not men of action (cf. the traditional idea of Indian indolence or such figures as Thrasea in the Roman Empire), and ultimately vacuous and

ineffectual with regard to that fundamental need of self-transcendence which is not self-mastery but being infinitely more than one is and being infinitely less than God is, yet in union, in vital contact with Him. *Fecisti nos ad te, Domine, et inquietum cor nostrum donec requiescat in te.*

The life of the *aner pneumatikos* is a life above the life of the human soul as intellect and will, it is the life of grace, a gratuitous life, a seminal partaking of the life of the divinity and a pledge of that greater partaking when through Jesus Christ Our Lord (I am the vine, you are the branches) the children of God are in God in a way perhaps analogous to the presence of the chemical element in the plant.

But this higher life has its influence upon the life of the *aner psychikos*. It is an illumination of the

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understanding, for 'the carnal man discerneth not the things of the spirit,' and 'there are not among you many wise, many learned …,' and 'he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' This leads to the assent called faith (which, as an *actus humanus*, has its correlative in the higher order, the gift of faith which is for justification (?)) and to that generic subordination of the will (the will of man) to the will of God as is expressed in the baptismal vows or the Ignatian 'Sume et suscipe.' It also is for the strengthening of the will that it fail not. Finally, the supernatural life overflows into exterior action; and there its law is charity, the new commandment.

Such then is the 'Whole I planned,' the general scheme of human life into which the acts of assent and certitude must be fitted and of which they form parts. We now may consider them in themselves and then in their action in an environment.

The *actus humanus* is twofold: with regard to truth it is assent, with regard to action it is consent. The plant intussuscepts and makes its own in some way chemical matter. By apprehension and understanding, man has truth offered him directly; indirectly, insofar as truth is the right way to live or the good life, apprehension and understanding offer to man the good. The act by which man makes truth part of himself is assent; the act by which he makes the good part of himself is consent; similarly, for evil and error, which however are taken in, only on the pretence of the good or the true.

Assent and consent are not two different acts but different aspects of what is basically the same act. This act is a personal act; it is performed by the ego. It is a free act, for the true or the good that are offered are not Truth or Goodness substantially considered, which would determine the person *ad unum* (cf. Beatific Vision). They are not absolutely free acts, for the person is determined by nature to *verum* and *bonum in genere*; that is, the person must have a reason for his acts. This is what makes man rational; the necessity of having a reason for every *actus humanus*. Acts are right or wrong according as the reason for them is a right reason or not. When a person deceives himself, sets aside the voice of reason, rationalizes his act by false reasons, then he sins. The sin against the light is the refusal of truth.

Assent and consent, therefore, differ not in themselves but in their objects.

The Scholastics speak of necessary assents and free assents. Strictly, every assent is a free assent. The obligation of assenting may be more clear in some cases than in others, but this does not change the nature of the act. Again, the possibility of rationalizing a refusal of truth may be more difficult in some cases than in others. But it is a plain fact of history that there is very little that has not been denied, from the principle of contradiction down. Hence to speak of necessary assents is a misnomer. If on the Scholastic theory it is impossible to deny the principle of causality, then it is too bad for the Scholastic theory. No one philosopher may have denied everything, but between them all I fancy everything has been denied.

The *actus humanus* is the principle of human growth or development. Unlike the growth of the plant, this growth is internal and self-determined. The person changes. This does not mean that new accidents have been added or subtracted from a constant quantity we call the person. But *eadem res aliter se habet nunc ac prius*. The person was this but now is …

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To the practical importance of this theory of assent we shall later return. For the present we shall be concerned with the theory itself.

By denying that assents differed in degree Newman refers to the fact that an assent is different from a mere inference, that it is an *actus humanus* and not an indicator that registers an inference and varies in intensity with the inference. Now accepting this assertion of the substantiality, as it were, of the act of assent, it is still possible to point to differences in degree of the act as an act. This difference in degree arises not from the nature of the inference but from the seriousness with which the

subject regards the inference. This seriousness is due to an estimate of value, that is, a relation between this assent and the well-being or development of man. A Catholic will be serious about the immortality of the soul; a scientist about the theory of evolution; both, perhaps, will make little of the other's assent because of their divergent views upon human life and its meaning; both might agree in attaching no importance to the latest novels though the novelists might have different views upon the subject.

This difference in degree is due to the measure of consciousness and deliberateness that accompanies the assent. As we distinguish between mortal and venial sins and believe that no man is free from venial sins altogether and is perfect in each and every one of his consents, so the multiplicity of the assents we make during the course of the day, the week, the month, the year make us draw distinctions between classes of assents. Some we regard as of the utmost importance not to be surrendered even when threatened with death; others we barely attend to as the mere 'tits détails' of intellectual life. It is not that we do not consider truth in any and every instance as something of absolute value any more than we have such an attitude towards goodness. But we are human and not perfect, and it is a simple matter of wisdom to attend to what are the bigger things carefully at the risk of letting the smaller ones take care of themselves.

And as examples of such difference in degree we may cite Newman's list of assents as professions, credence, opinion, presumption, speculation. A profession is an assent that is little more than an assertion. It is an assent that we make with such little reflection that it seems forced upon us by external circumstances and environmental influence. Such are the assents to religion of the man who pays no attention to religion. Credence is the acceptance of what we hear or read without reflection and simply because it is in itself possible or likely. As Newman remarks it is the great means by which we furnish the mind, storing it with facts and views. Opinion is the acceptance of a proposition (after reflection) as a probability. In these cases we have instances of assents to which the mind holds with varying degrees of seriousness. A profession will wash off at the first attack; credence will immediately take refuge in 'I merely heard that the thing was so'; an opinion from the first does not claim to represent the truth but only the verisimile; we will be ready to relinquish it but with an argument. (Presumptions and speculations are not pertinent to this point and theoretically unsound.)

A note upon doubt. Doubt is not the state of not having yet assented. One has first to assent before one can doubt; and in general one has to assent seriously before we speak of undoing the assent as a doubt. But the general character of doubt is this,

that an assent which once was given is now assailed and in danger of being retracted. Once the assent is retracted the doubt ends. Doubt is the act of undoing an assent.

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To the practical importance of this theory of assent we shall later return. For the present we shall be concerned with the theoretical issues themselves.

Assents differ in the kind of apprehensions that are their concomitants, as has been noted above. They also differ as to the note to be attached to the proposition. Certitude is an assent to a proposition as necessarily true. Opinion assents to the proposition as probably true; here arise all the varying degrees of probability from all but certain to the hypothesis that is merely possibly true …

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Assent is to a proposition as true, simpliciter. There are modalities that are given the assent when by a further act of understanding we see that the proposition must be true, is necessarily true; or, on the other hand, when we see that it need not be true but is only very likely to be true. The first is a certitude; the second a probability. [Margin: Doubt might be a third modality.]

These modalities follow naturally from the critical theory of knowledge. The idea, if it can fit the facts at all, is evident in the facts and so appeals to our acceptance. If we are unwary we naturally accept it as true; that is, we take the evidence, which is in a sense subjective inasmuch as it is what appears to me, as the measure of what is objectively the right way of understanding, the measure or the criterion of truth. But the experience of error teaches us to be more careful. The idea on the critical theory is not per se infallible; it may be wrong. After it has proved wrong in our past experience – our great teacher – then we begin to cast about for a way of testing ideas, for a way to distinguish between such as are final and such as may not be final however evident they may appear to be. This is the distinction between certitude and probability.

Certitude is therefore an assent to an idea, to a theory, as the sole possible explanation of the facts. (N.B. What is in itself a fact may be in this light viewed as a theory. That a certain man Jesus Christ existed 19 centuries ago is in itself a fact. But if I wish to make certain of the fact, then I view it as the sole possible

explanation of other facts, viz., the historical evidence and the existence of Christianity.)

Four ways may be distinguished in which we understand that a theory is the sole possible explanation of the facts. I shall call them metaphysical, methodical, physical, and practical.

The metaphysical method is to attach a proposition to the metaphysical principle of the intelligibility of reality either as a necessary antecedent or consequent. Thus we understand in a certain way, in virtue of principles of contradiction, sufficient reason, causality; hypotheses that contradict these principles are ipso facto eliminated. Again, the intelligibility of reality itself needs an explanation. The sole explanation is that there is an ultimate identity of intelligence and reality; i.e., that that in virtue of which other things are must be not only a cause but also an intelligence.

Methodical certitude is certitude about propositions that deal with a defined subject matter as defined. The chief example is geometry. The geometer is completely indifferent to the possibility of there being real straight lines or of drawing a circle in which de facto all the radii are equal. In consequence, he can be master of his ideas and be certain that they are the sole explanation of the facts because he is master of the facts which cannot be anything different from what he wants them to be.

Physical certitude is similarly based upon an elimination of possible hypotheses and a narrowing down of the field of sole possible explanations. The physical certitude admits that under a different dispensation, in a world differently constituted from the way our world de facto is constituted, other theories might be possible. But assuming the fact of the present known order, then this is the sole possible explanation.

Finally, there is a practical or personal certitude, which does not consider the present order as a notional thing, the common factor of human experience, but as a real thing, the thing which I personally have experienced and as I have experienced it.

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In general one may say that physical certitudes are defended in the name of common sense while practical are defended in the name of personal knowledge. It

is not common sense to deny the existence of the external world, the grades of being, the existence of secondary causes. It would seem far-fetched to anyone who studied the gospels and the early history of the church to suggest that Christianity is a syncretism, provided the study had been made by one with an appreciation of the spiritual values of Christianity.

So much then for the definition of various spheres: metaphysical certitudes derive from the metaphysical principle; methodical from this and from a defined subject matter; physical from the above two and from an acceptance of the general facts of experience; practical from these three and an acceptance of the personal facts of experience.

Now to approach the question of how the elimination will take place. It is a twofold process. On the one hand, it is a real elimination excluding classes of possible hypotheses and narrowing down the issue. On the other, it is not a matter of elimination at all but of enlarging the proposition about which will be certain by making it less specific. Thus in geometry we rotate lines to determine whether the construction of proof is applicable to all kinds of cases, as was noted above; but we do not pay any attention to the size of the triangle or to any lines except the lines of the triangle itself, which determine the arrangement of the other lines. We pay no attention to size because size is impertinent; it is the arrangement that is significant. This forms a part of the Scholastic blanket term of abstraction. We pay no attention to other than the fundamental lines, because these are the logical *prius* and the others follow them methodically. As an example of the inclusiveness of the theory established as certain we may instance the certitude of an external world; this certitude is compatible with all sorts of theories about the nature of the external world; it is in itself no more than a denial that the external world is an illusion; we disprove the illusoriness and are left with what appears a positive theory. Similarly with regard to the certitude that Jesus Christ was an authentic character; it amounts to a negation of a wholesale deception; it is compatible with all the heretical and rationalist views of the nature of that Person.

One theorizing upon the subject of certitude might be inclined to urge that the number of possible explanations is infinite and consequently that to determine that this given explanation or theory or idea for any particular case is impossible. This view goes very well with some acquaintance with scientific method and the assumption that a hypothesis is a mere guess while new facts that completely change the whole aspect of affairs are constantly arising. The facts are altogether different. On the one hand, the hypothesis is not a mere guess; the hypothesis has to be a possible explanation and a rather plausible explanation; it is an act of

understanding, an idea that has to be evident in the object. Thus there is an intelligible relation between the hypothesis and the facts; the necessity of this relation limits the number of hypotheses immediately and the greater the knowledge of the facts the greater the limitation. On the other hand, new facts are not constantly occurring and meeting with attention; in particular, human life is essentially the same today as when the hunting peoples of Aurignacian times drew animals upon the walls of caves. Hence, the basis of physical certitude; there is a general course of nature and new discoveries are but insignificant details compared to the whole. Finally, the understanding, the idea, may be verified as being the sole idea that could conceivably fit the facts, when the facts are not viewed notionally as a general course of nature but really as the facts as I know them. This is the point that Newman was aiming at when he emphasized the importance of the distinction between notional and real apprehension. If the apprehension is intimate enough and real enough then the idea that can be evident in it is the sole possible idea. It is a question not of multiplying measurements and observations as in the case of the physical and biological sciences where our apprehensions are not intimate things but of increasing the quality, the fullness, the penetration, the reality of the apprehension. For it is above all in the knowledge of the self (gnothi sauton) of human living, and of human reality that this form is certitude is paramount. Hence it is called a practical, and more commonly even, a moral certitude: its reference is to man. When I spoke above of 'personal' experience I was referring to this real and very sane intimacy; I was not referring to emotionalism, or visions, or what goes by the name of religious experience and commonly or often is simply abnormal experience. The experience I refer to is the very normal experience of a man who comes to know himself, to realize his responsibility, the freedom of his will, the law of his members, the law of his mind and heart, the law of God. It is what is characteristically human experience; it may not be common among naturalistic poets, or modern novelists, or any of that wide and unfortunate class of souls who have been uprooted form tradition by the slop of rationalism and float helplessly and despairingly as flotsam and jetsam upon the surging misery of the modern world.

Assent and particularly certitude (which is a complex assent and a specially conscious and deliberate act) are moral. It has the Aristotelian characteristic of a moral act, for it has its proper virtue, which we call reasonableness and which is a golden mean between two extremes, credulity and skepticism. Its remote and proximate norms are the same as the remote and proximate norms of any moral act, for its remote norm is *natura humana adequate considerata* (i.e. really not notionally considered) while its proximate norm is the dictate of reason. By the dictate of reason is meant [men] in general a theory of *natura humana adequate*

considerata, that is, of man's action and *telos*, and [de] in particular what may be considered from the point of view of the moralist as a deduction from the general theory but what is from the point of view of normal and unanalyzed living simply an understanding of the facts of a situation and their relation to the action of the subject. The obligation of making right assents, however, differs *per accidens* from the obligation of making right consents. For the right consent is the one in conformity with the body of assents that make up the pattern; 'ought' means first the necessity of having a reason and second the duty of having this reason in consistency and harmony with one's reasonable view of man as a whole; sin is to fail in this consistency and harmony with the whole, to exalt a part and usually a minor or inferior part of human nature above the whole. On the other hand, the right assent is the duty of conforming the person's mentality, the body of his assents, with what is understood to be the objective truth; since the understanding is the light of the human soul (the *aner psychikos*), a refusal to effect this conformity is the sin against the light. This sin is the more grievous of the two classes in that it is the more deliberate; the sin of consent can find an excuse in human frailty, in the weakness of the moment, in the practical difficulty of reducing human complexity to the unity of self-consistency and harmony; but the sin of assent is the refusal to attempt this unity and harmony, not in any particular case but in the generality of all cases; it is a deliberate hardness of heart, a deliberate stiff-neckedness, a deliberate obduracy. And as a person will tend to bring his assents into conformity with his wrong consents, rationalizing and justifying his sins, as is so obvious today in the matters of contraception and divorce (public avowal and approbation following upon the Victorian secret sin and hypocrisy), so is it with assents. If a man would not assent to anything, he can always find reasons; and the self-deception here is all the more subtle in that it is reasons that decide whether or not he should assent. The conversion of Newman offers a striking illustration of this problem of light and assent. For a considerable time before his actual conversion, Newman was intellectually satisfied of the truth of Catholicism; he did not yet assent; he feared that this light of his intellect was a false light that had come upon him in punishment for his sins; he did not assent but he prayed. The kindly light had indeed led him on, led him where he never expected to be brought; it led him to an extremity that terrified him; he wrestled, as Jacob with the angel.

The morality of assent again appears in the differences of seriousness with which we regard assents, differences that are parallel in their foundation with the differences between mortal sin, venial sin, and imperfections. This point has already been mentioned.

The essential morality of assent is the supreme contention of the *Grammar of Assent*. Assent is moral in its prerequisite of moral living, in its appeal to men of good will, in the degrees of seriousness with which it is to be regarded, in its reaction upon our views of what right morality is, in its being an *actus humanus*, in its norm – a real apprehension of human nature. We are to determine our assents not merely by the artificial standards of logic, a mere common measure of minds, but by the light that God gives us, by our judgment, by our good sense, by our phronesis, by the facts as we know them to be. The right assent is not according to rule but by the act of the living mind. It has no criterion, no guarantee external to itself. It is to be made with all due circumspection, with careful investigation and examination, as the nature of the case demands and circumstances permit. Newman admits the possibility of wrong certitudes but *abusus non tollit usum.* As to the fact of wrong certitudes existing or having existed, he is extremely skeptical, and certainly in his chapter upon the indefectibility of certitude he dispels into thin air the vast majority of the instances that might be brought up to contradict his view.

Does not this doctrine of assent bring us to the very core of the drama of Christianity? 'Behold this child is set for the fall and the resurrection of many in Israel and for a sign which shall be contradicted.' 'Glory be to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will!' 'In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it.' 'I am the Way (right consent) the Truth (right assent) and the Life (harmony of assent and consent, the *actus humani* that change a man, principle of progress in living, of growth, of development; condition and concomitant of the free gift of God which is the life of grace.' 'I am come that you may have life and have it more abundantly.' The truth of which poets sing is an ideal truth, a complete understanding of all known and knowable reality. Truth for man has to be an idea in the concrete. Hence for man, Christ is the Truth and not merely a truth. 'Ho logos sarx egeneto.'