

a structure about a centre, that the centre is actual experience of seeing, and that to eliminate or disregard that experience would be to evacuate, so to speak, the structure.

Now as the experience of seeing stands to our knowledge of ocular vision, so the experience of understanding stands to our knowledge of human intellect. With that experience Aquinas was quite familiar. With that experience he expected others to be quite familiar. He wrote that anyone can experience in himself that, when he tries to understand something, he forms images by way of examples in which, as it were, he inspects what he is trying to understand. He wrote that we would know nothing about abstraction from phantasm and the reception of intelligibles in act, if we did not experience these activities in ourselves. He wrote that he preferred Aristotle's view of intellect because it was in greater conformity with our experience. He expressed the opinion that Aristotle worked out the nature of possible intellect by appealing to understanding and what is understood. He asserted that the human soul knows itself by appealing to its understanding, which is its proper act, which perfectly demonstrates its nature and virtue. If one by one's own experience of acts of understanding attains familiarity with acts of understanding, then one has not the slightest difficulty in knowing exactly what is meant by the question, quid sit. Still, whether that is so or not, can be discovered only by making the experiment. No one else can do it for you. You have do it for yourself.

A NOTE ON REALISM

Perhaps everyone is familiar with the schematic image that provides a definition of realism by placing it between such extremes as materialism and idealism. A variant on this procedure is employed by M. M. Gorce in introducing

AA NOTE ON REALISM

One of the difficulties inherent in the use of schematic images is the fact that they tend to survive after their basis has been removed

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In Lalande's Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie the task of defining the term, realism, seems to be evaded. We are told that this word shares all the indeterminacy of its opposite, idealism, and that the word, idealism, is so indeterminate that one had best avoid it altogether. In the Dictionnaire de théologie catholique the issue is met in a familiar manner. Realism is the philosophy that (1) is implicit in Catholicism and in most forms of Christianity and (2) occupies an intermediate position between extremes named nominalism and idealism.

L'une de ces positions deux positions extrêmes, le nominalisme, tend à nier la valeur des idées, au moins des concepts; l'autre position extrême, l'idéalisme, tend à ôter à la connaissance sensible sa valeur absolue de pure représentation d'un monde extérieur, sa valeur indépendante de l'esprit humain. In contrast, realism acknowledges the value or validity both of concepts and of sensitive knowledge.

A NOTE ON REALISM

In A. Lalande's Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie the term, realism, is said to share all the indeterminacy of its opposite, idealism; in turn, idealism is said to be so indeterminate that one would do well to avoid it altogether. In the Dictionnaire de théologie catholique M. M. Gorce characterizes realism (1) as the philosophy implicitly contained in catholicism and in most forms of christianity and (2) as intermediate between the extremes named nominalism, which denies value to ideas or at least to concepts, and idealism, which tends to deprive sensible knowledge of its absolute value in representing an external world, its^s value independent of the human spirit.

AA NOTE ON REALISM

In Lalande's Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie neither idealism nor realism are regarded as satisfactory terms. Idealism

Georgius ep. Laodicaeae 43 67 207 230

Germinius 63

Grillmeier, A. 15 98 104

Grillmeier-Bacht 210

Gummerus, J. 199

Günther, A. 282

Günthör, A. 196

It is not a defence of pre-rational knowledge against idealists;
it is not a defence of ideas and concepts against nominalists;
it is a defence of true judgement, as distinct from sense,
ideas, and concepts; and it is only through its defence of
true judgement that it defends the sensitive or conceptual
elements incorporated in true judgement.

Again, I find a certain ambiguity in the attribution to sensible knowledge of an absolute value or validity that is independent of the human mind. I am quite convinced (1) of the element of absolute ~~xi~~ value that is constitutive of the truth of rational judgement and (2) of the validity of a sensible knowledge that is independent of the human mind. But I should stoutly resist any confusion of the two. The former is easily associated with the truth of dogmas, with the realism implicit in Catholicism. The latter has a far broader diffusion. There exists a valid sensible knowledge independent of the human mind (1) in its pure form in dogs and cats, horses and cows, pigs and chickens, baboons and gorillas, and (2) in a transitional form in the human child that has not yet reached the age of reason.

Again, I find a certain ambiguity in the attribution to sensitive sensible knowledge of an absolute value or validity that is independent of the human mind. Such independence can rest on either of two quite different foundations. One can base it on the absoluteness of true judgement: one can reach true judgement only by grasping an und conditioned; what is unconditioned, is independent of any particular human mind; and so, in so far as sensibl sensitive knowledge in is included in true judgement, there accrues to it from true judgement an absolute value

If Aristotle and Aquinas merely deduced acts from objects, then their cognitional theory is open to the critical objection that it rests, not on knowledge of essence, but on a conceptualist deductivism. On the ~~the~~ other hand, if their procedure was introspective, if it involved not only the experience of acts but also a correct understanding of that experience, then their cognitional theory satisfies their own critical requirements; at least they attempted to know human knowledge by taking the steps that lead to a grasp of essence.

Secondly, let us illustrate the issue from ocular vision. Its proper object is color; its object common with other senses is motion and rest, ~~number~~ number, shape, and size. By opening and shutting one's eyes one can at will procure the presentation ~~and the removal of such objects~~ of this object ~~ot~~ to sight and its removal from sight. By exactly the same procedure one can procure at will and remove the experience of seeing. Now does the Aristotelian and Thomist account of ocular vision treat of seeing only by inference from its proper and common objects, or does it suppose direct experience of seeing. The former alternative is fantastic: the experience of seeing is so familiar to everyone except the blind that a positive and, indeed, elaborate effort would be required for one to prescind from it totally and ~~pretend~~ to think and speak of seeing as if one knew it only by inference. Further, the deductivist view gives rise to grave difficulties: if one has experiential knowledge of seeing, then it is easy enough to establish that besides its proper object, ~~sight~~ color, it also has an object common with other senses; but if one has no experiential knowledge ~~of seeing, then it is impossible~~

of seeing or, rather, pretends that one has none, then the pretence is difficult to maintain; for one has to deduce not only seeing from color but also the common object from color. Finally, there is the inconvenient fact that Aristotle discussed and Aquinas expanded Aristotle's discussion of our experience of seeing; was this experience of seeing experienced or was it ~~was~~ deduced? To put this issue in its general form, if one deduces acts from objects, does one also deduce conscious acts from objects? In other words, is the existence of consciousness merely an inference, or is the existence of consciousness immediately given?

A² NOTE ON REALISM

Perhaps everyone is familiar with the schematic image that offers some sort of definition of realism by locating it between such extremes as materialism and idealism. But less attention seems to be given the fact that the suppositions of this scheme are, in ~~XX~~ Prof. E. Gilson's language, essentialist. Thus, M. M. Gorce ~~xx~~ remarked that realism is the philosophy (1) that is implicit in Catholicism and in most forms of Christianity and (2) occupies an intermediate position between extremes named nominalism and idealism.

L'une de ces deux positions extrêmes, le nominalisme, tend à nier la valeur des idées, au moins des concepts; l'autre position extrême, l'idéalisme, tend à ôter à la connaissance sensible sa valeur absolue de représentation d'un monde extérieur, sa valeur indépendante de l'esprit humain. In contrast, realism acknowledges the value or validity both of sense and of concepts.

A NOTE ON REALISM

Realism has been described as (1) the philosophy implicit in Catholicism and in most forms of Christianity and (2) occupying an intermediate position between extremes named nominalism and idealism.

L'une de ces deux positions extrêmes, le nominalisme, tend à nier la valeur des idées, au moins des concepts; l'autre position extrême, l'idéalisme, tend à ôter à la connaissance sensible sa valeur absolue de représentation d'un monde extérieur, sa valeur indépendante de l'esprit humain.

In contrast, realism acknowledges the value or validity both of ideas and of sensitive knowledge.

Now dogs and cats, horses and cows, pigs and chickens, baboons and gorillas, all possess valid sensitive knowledge of an external world. This valid sensitive knowledge is quite independent of the human mind. Moreover, the human child, prior to reaching the age of reason, grasps ideas and forms concepts; such ideas and concepts are derived from ~~the~~ valid sensitive knowledge and they correspond to parts or aspects of an external world. There is, then, a realism that (1) differs from idealism by attributing to sensitive knowledge a value that is independent of the human mind, (2) differs from nominalism by attributing value to ideas and concepts, and (3) differs from any rational philosophy inasmuch as it lies within the reach of children that have not yet attained the age of reason. Such realism is not the one and only meaning of the term, realism; it is no more than one type of realism; without injustice it may be named naive realism.

Rather conspicuously this account omits all reference to formal truth and the existential judgement. The only cognitional factors considered operative are sensitive knowledge on the one hand and, on the other, ideas and concepts. It seems to follow that we are offered a characterization, not of realism, but of the view named by Prof. Gilson essentialism. Further, if it is essentialism that occupies the intermediate position between nominalism and idealism, and if there exists a philosophic position that is realist yet not essentialist, then where in the schematic image or, if you prefer, where in the general theory of possible philosophic differences is this non-essentialist realism to be located? Plainly, unless the schematic image is transformed