

The same two elements are manifest in the fundamental Scholastic technique of the quaestio. In the definition of Gilbert de la Porrée, a quaestio exists if and only if both sides of a contradiction are supported by authoritative statements or by solid reasons or by both. Hence, there arose and endlessly was repeated the procedure, first, of setting forth the arguments for and against a position (Videtur quod non..., Sed contra est...), secondly, of laying down one's principles for a solution (Respondeo dicendum), and thirdly of applying one's principles to the arguments already advanced (Ad primum..., Ad primum vero quod in contrarium...). Now, manifestly, this whole procedure is meaningless, either if true propositions ^{do not} exist or if true propositions ~~bear no relation to~~ reality do not correspond to reality.

Such, then, is dogmatic realism. In its content it is extremely simple. In its origins and its development it is the product of the Hebrew and Christian religions, of the conciliar decisions of the Catholic Church, and of the search for consistency in scriptural, ecclesiastical, and patristic statements that motivated the activity of mediaeval theologians. Finally, among Catholics, it is outside the range of possible controversy, and so it provides a solid foundation for a determination of what the word, realism, traditionally ~~means~~ and genuinely means.

Philosophic Realism

By philosophic realism I shall mean a doctrine that not only makes dogmatic realism explicit but also assigns its foundation.

To define the word, foundation, let it be said that A is the foundation of B, if and only if (1) knowledge of A is prior to knowledge of B, (2) A is the sufficient condition of B, and (3) A is the necessary condition of B.

It happens that I believe the issue of validity cannot be evaded. By this, of course, I do not mean that the existence of ~~valid~~ valid knowledge is to be proved. That is nonsense: proofs suppose premisses; premisses suppose valid knowledge; and so every proof of valid knowledge is necessarily a petitio principii. My meaning is that one has to distinguish the various grounds on which knowing may be conceived as valid and that one has to determine which of these conceptions is correct. My reason for asserting the necessity of this inquiry into the meaning of validity is that, without it, there seems to be no likelihood of getting people to recognize mere matters of cognitional fact; for their unscrutinized views on the nature of validity function as a criterion of what cognitional fact can be everyone means by cognitional fact only the facts relevant to valid cognition, and so everyone's unscrutinized preconceptions on what validity means settle what cognitional fact be before any cognitional facts are considered.

But the generality of realism is reflexive: it is concerned not with any set of particular propositions and of particular correspondences; on the contrary