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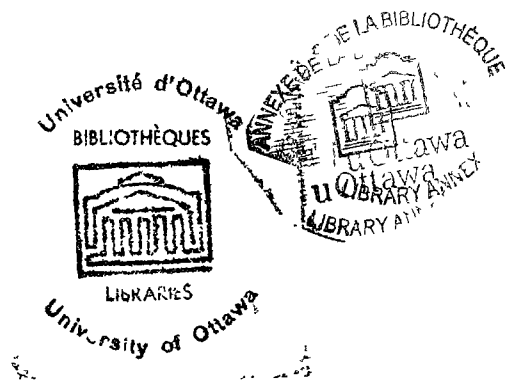
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ERIC MASCALL'S NOTION
OF INTUITION

by

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Philosophy of the University of Ottawa
in partial fulfillment of the require-
ments for the degree of Master in
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. The Young Eric Lionel Mascall

In the inside cover of Dr. Mascall's¹ short work The God-Man (1940) can be found the following "Publisher's Note":

This book is one of a series dealing with the relevance of the Christian Faith to the contemporary crisis of civilization. The authors are young philosophers and theologians of the Church of England.²

Eric Mascall was one of these young philosophers and theologians. In fact, it was in the midst of the crisis that the young Mascall began his philosophical and theological career. In his work Man: His Origin and Destiny (1940) he refers to the crisis as "the tragedy of our time ...

¹Dr. Eric Mascall is a distinguished "Anglican" theologian and philosopher. (Perhaps the adjective "Anglican" is too restrictive a term when applied to Dr. Mascall, for his philosophical and theological thought carries him beyond his denominational boundaries. L.W. Grensted in his review of Dr. Mascall's work Existence and Analogy (1949) remarks that "Dr. Mascall deserves the thanks of Anglicans and non-Roman theologians generally for his efforts to keep them in touch with the modern developments of Thomism ...", in the Journal of Theological Studies I (1950), pp. 230-232.) Dr. Mascall was born in England in 1905. He graduated from Cambridge with a B.A. degree and from the University of London with a B.Sc. degree (First Class Honors) in Mathematics. He holds a Doctor of Divinity degree from both Cambridge and Oxford. He has been for a long time associated with the University of Oxford. In 1962 he occupied the Chair of Historical Theology at King's College at the University of London where he has been ever since.

²Eric Mascall, The God-Man (Signposts No. 5), Westminster: Dacre Press, 1940, inside cover.

... that man, who for the last 300 years has believed that he was gradually conquering the realm of Nature and making himself supreme over the things of this life, now finds himself helpless and terrified in a world of irrational forces and nameless, half-discerned horrors.³

Man was in a state of frustration.⁴ He had abandoned all belief in himself, others and God.⁵ Hope in any future relief seemed futile and meaningless. Twenty years had gone by since he had suffered the pains of a devastating World War. Now, just as he was slowly recovering from a severe economic depression another World War beset him. For this reason the young Mascall saw that the Christian Church with all its philosophers and theologians had no greater and more urgent task than to give witness to and proclaim its belief about man and to show the bearing this belief could have on all human activity.⁶ Thus in a small work Man: His Origin and Destiny, Dr. Mascall attempts to do just that. In this work he sets out to formulate a Christian Anthropology and to show how such a view could restore to man belief in things, persons and God.

³Eric Mascall, Man: His Origin and Destiny (Signposts No. 3), Westminster: Dacre Press, 1940, p. 12.

⁴Ibid., p. 11.

⁵Ibid., pp. 11-12.

⁶Ibid.

A pre-occupation with the establishment of a sound Anthropology is also evident in several later works, viz., Christian Theology and Natural Science (1956), The Importance of Being Human (1960), The Christian Universe (1966) and Theology and the Future (1968). This indicates, as it will be maintained in the Second Chapter, that Mascall's implicit starting point in his philosophical enterprise is an Anthropology, and in particular, a Christian Anthropology. Of course, this is not to say that his philosophy is reducible to an anthropology or that, following the modern philosophers Mascall begins philosophizing from within the Cartesian Cogito. This would surely be a grave misinterpretation of his thought. What is implied in the above statement is that Mascall begins his philosophizing with a pre-understanding of man, an understanding acquired prior to philosophic reflection from Christian revelation.

B. Eric Mascall the Christian Philosopher.

"Actus sequitur ens." Being a Christian, being a philosopher and theologian, Dr. Mascall's response to the crisis took the form, and necessarily so, of a concerned Christian who happened to be a philosopher and theologian. It must be maintained, and rightly so, that if one is to act as a whole person he cannot bracket any essential modality of his being unless he is willing to undergo some

form of alienation. And if he is willing to undergo the latter, such a person's acts cannot but be viewed as inauthentic and incomplete. It follows that Mascall's response to the crisis could not but have been a response of a Christian philosopher and theologian. Thus his philosophical acts could not but be acts posited by a Christian philosopher and theologian, one having already in his possession a pre-philosophic understanding of man and the Universe.

Obviously this raises anew the question whether or not the Christian can philosophize like any other philosopher and, subsequently, the question concerning the possibility and validity of a Christian Philosophy. These questions inevitably emerge in any discussion of this type. And they are fundamental questions! And as such they require, if not complete and absolute answers, at least a reflective consideration. The problematic involved has been expounded at lengths by both Etienne Gilson⁷ and Jacques Maritain.⁸ Dr. Mascall, along the same lines as the latter two, has also contributed to the discussion. Therefore an examination of Dr. Mascall's

⁷Etienne Gilson, The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940, pp. 1-43; Le philosophe et la théologie, Paris: A. Fayard, 1960, pp. 174-236.

⁸Jacques Maritain, De la philosophie chrétienne, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1933, pp. 50-69.

ideas on the subject would be in order not only because of the fundamental nature of the idea of a Christian Philosophy but also because this consideration will serve as a good introduction to the problematic of this present thesis.

Dr. Mascall phrases the question thus: How can a philosophy "which by definition is an exploit of the human reason making no appeal to the deliverances of supernatural revelation, ... be specifically Christian?"⁹ The natural objection raised is that if philosophy does deal with anything Christian in nature, the science will not be a philosophy but a theology.¹⁰ On the other hand if it is a philosophy in the strictest sense, that is, purely a rational enquiry, then it cannot in any way be related to Christianity. Thus the term "Christian Philosophy" becomes a contradiction for if it is a Christian Philosophy it cannot be considered a philosophy but a theology, and if it is a philosophy it cannot be considered Christian.¹¹ Along with both Gilson and Maritain Mascall asserts that:

⁹Eric Mascall, "Theism and Thomism: Some Answers to Professor Emmet" in Theology 53 (1950), pp. 130-131.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 131.

¹¹Ibid.

... what the Christian revelation can do for the Christian Philosopher is to divert his attention to an aspect of the world which without its assistance he is only too likely to overlook - namely, the entire contingency and dependence of all finite beings.¹²

Furthermore in his work Existence and Analogy he states that precisely because the Christian philosopher has a notion of God "which comes to him from a source other than human reason that he can discuss the question of the existence of God as a purely rational problem with the directedness and cogency that are denied to the non-Christian whose definition of God always remains more or less in suspense."¹³ Thus the non-Christian can arbitrarily give the name "God" to any ultimate principle he may posit as a possible explanation for the Universe. Moreover this choice is usually not determined or arrived at by any rational process but is often the result of the individual's general view of life. This is not to imply that today's non-Christian

¹²Ibid., Cf. Pope Leo's statement concerning the Christian Philosopher in his encyclical Aeterni Patris (1879): "Those, therefore, who to the study of philosophy unite obedience to the Christian faith, are philosophers in the best possible way; for the splendour of the divine truths, received into the mind, helps the understanding, and not only detracts in nowise from its dignity, but adds greatly to its nobility, keenness and stability." (The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII, ed. by John Wynne, New York: Benziger Bros., 1903, p. 42).

¹³Eric Mascall, Existence and Analogy, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1949, p. 17.

when speaking about God is not referring to the Christian God since, probably, his very notion has been influenced in one way or another by the Christian tradition. What Mascall is saying is that without this tradition and revelation the influenced non-Christian or the Christian could not proceed rationally to discuss the question concerning the existence of God. More of this later on in the Third Chapter.

Needless to say, Dr. Mascall is a Thomist! However he wishes it to be well understood that he is not a Thomist in the strictest sense of the word - that is, one who interprets or writes long commentaries on St. Thomas Aquinas' thought.¹⁴ He considers himself a Thomist in the widest sense of the word - that is, one who bases his cosmology on the fundamental epistemological principle that "Nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu" and, furthermore, who maintains that the existence of the finite world "apodictically" points to the existence of a self-sufficient transcendent cause which Christian theology calls "God".¹⁵ Thus by these two principles Mascall defines himself as a Thomist, and furthermore, provides the basis for a Philosophical Theology. The latter becomes much more evident from the two

¹⁴Eric Mascall, "Theism and Thomism: Some Answers to Professor Emmet", p. 130.

¹⁵Ibid.

assertions which he makes at the beginning of his first major philosophical work, He Who Is (1943), and which he considers fundamental to the establishment of a Natural Theology:

(1) That the human mind can, from the consideration of finite beings, arrive, without appeal to 'religious experience' or 'revelation', at a sure knowledge of the existence of God whose primary character is that of self-existent being.

(2) That the finite world derives its existence and its persistence from a free act of will upon the part of God, to whom it is altogether unnecessary and who would be in every respect complete without it ...¹⁶

It is these two assertions which Dr. Mascall considers to be the basis of a Natural Theology or a Christian Philosophy which "while professing to be purely a rational study, has as a matter of history, grown up in a climate of the Christian revelation" which provides the philosopher with a new set of optics for viewing reality.¹⁷ For Mascall believes, along with Gilson and Maritain, that there is a certain knowledge of God which is accessible to man without revelation.¹⁸ However this knowledge of God which is accessible to man

¹⁶Eric Mascall, He Who Is, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1943, p. ix.

¹⁷Eric Mascall, "Theism and Thomism: Some Answers to Professor Emmet", p. 131.

¹⁸Eric Mascall, Christ, the Christian and the Church, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1946, pp. 232-233.

through reason is partial and insufficient.¹⁹ In addition, man's cognitive faculties are themselves weakened by sin.²⁰ Thus even the natural knowledge attained by man is distorted and clouded.²¹ In Christ, the Christian and the Church (1946), Mascall poses two questions pertinent to this discussion: 'If Philosophy, which includes Philosophical Theology, is the work of man's rational powers and not of revelation, what difference does it then make to a man's philosophy whether he is a Christian or not?'²² Moreover, 'What accounts for the difference between the philosophical theology of Aristotle and that of Aquinas?'²³ Both Gilson and Maritain, whom Mascall follows very closely, give the following answer.²⁴ Grace, besides supplying perfections

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.: Cf. Etienne Gilson, The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy, op. cit.: "Thus I call Christian every philosophy which, although, keeping the two orders formally distinct (the natural and the supernatural) nevertheless considers the Christian revelation as an indispensable auxiliary to reason" (p. 37); "From the very fact that faith eliminates vain curiosity, the influence of revelation on philosophy facilitates the work of its constitution. From any Christian point of view the merely curious man is engaged on an interminable enterprise. He takes all knowledge for his province, every reality falls within it, and of none is he entitled to say that, if he knew it, it would not

to nature, restores nature to its own integrity.²⁵ Consequently, Mascall adds:

... it follows, that while in principle there is a certain limited knowledge of God which is accessible to the human reason as such, in practice it is only in the light of revelation

transform his knowledge of the rest. Reality is inexhaustible and the attempt to synthesize it under principles is consequently impracticable. It may even be, as Comte was later on to suggest that natural reality is not synthetic, and that it can be unified only by considering it from the point of view of a subject. Choosing man in relation to God as his central theme, the Christian philosopher acquires a fixed centre of reference which helps him to bring order and unity into his thought" (pp. 38-39).

Also Jacques Maritain in De la philosophie chrétienne, op. cit., pp. 52-61: "En un certain sens l'avènement du christianisme a déplacé de son siège la sagesse des philosophes, pour exalter au-dessus d'elle la sagesse théologique et la sagesse du Saint-Esprit. Si la philosophie reconnaît cet ordre, sa condition dans le sujet est foncièrement changée ..." (p. 52); "En définitive on comprend que ce n'est pas seulement du côté des objets proposés, mais aussi du côté de la vitalité de l'intelligence, et de ses inspirations les plus profondes, que l'état de la philosophie a été changé et élevé par le christianisme ..." (p. 54); "La philosophie chrétienne n'est pas une doctrine déterminée encore qu'à notre avis la doctrine de Saint Thomas en soit l'expression la plus achevée et la plus pure. C'est la philosophie elle-même en tant qu'elle est placée dans les conditions d'existence et d'exercice absolument caractéristiques où le christianisme a introduit le sujet pensant, à raison de quoi certains objets sont 'vus', certaines assertions 'établies valablement' par elle qui dans d'autres conditions lui échappent plus ou moins ..." (pp. 55-56); "Nous rejoignons ainsi les conclusions de M. Gilson. 'Les deux ordres restent distincts, bien que la relation qui les unit soit intrinsèque.' Cette relation n'est pas accidentelle, elle résulte de la nature même de la philosophie, de ses aspirations naturelles à connaître ses objets propres, les mieux possible, et de la nature même de la doctrine et de la vie chrétiennes, des renforcements externes et internes qu'elles apportent à la raison ..." (Ibid.).

²⁵Eric Mascall, Christ, the Christian and the Church, p. 233.

and under the assistance of grace that the human reason can function adequately and can obtain, even within its own proper sphere, a knowledge of God which is free from error.²⁶

From the premise that human nature is restored to its own integrity through revelation, Mascall draws the conclusion that "in the concrete a true philosophy can only be developed in the light of the Christian revelation."²⁷ And this is exactly the position which Mascall upholds and shares with both M. Gilson and Jacques Maritain.

However, Mascall follows Gilson to "higher plateaus". It is in this case when one is made to wonder as to whether or not Mascall remains within his definition of himself as a Thomist in the widest sense of the word. As it is evident from both He Who Is and Existence and Analogy Dr. Mascall has certainly succumbed to the influence of Gilson's experiment of making maximum use of his interpretation of Christian Philosophy with his existentialist interpretation of St. Thomas' thought. Clement Webb, the reviewer of Mascall's He Who Is, remarks that the title itself (He Who Is) proclaims Mascall a follower of Gilson's metaphysics of the

²⁶Eric Mascall, Christ, the Christian and the Church, p. 233.

²⁷Ibid.

Exodus.²⁸ And even Mascall himself admits in his introductory essay to the Libra edition of He Who Is (1966) that "for the principle of the primacy of existence over essence and for the view that, while essence is grasped in a concept, existence is affirmed in a judgment, I was heavily indebted to M. Etienne Gilson."²⁹

Thus with Etienne Gilson Dr. Mascall accepts the claim that a fundamental transformation occurred in Philosophy, a transformation which was precipitated by Christian revelation and in particular by the Exodus passage, Exodus iii, 14 where God reveals Himself as "He Who Is" which St. Thomas proposes as the most proper name for God.³⁰ According to both Mascall and Gilson this transformation reached its most authentic expression in the primacy given to esse in the works of Saint Thomas Aquinas.³¹ Gilson's thesis first appeared in Le Thomisme (1941). This same thesis was formulated in historical form later on in Being and Some Philosophers (1949).

²⁸C.C. J. Webb, a review of Mascall's He Who Is in Journal of Theological Studies 45 (1944), pp. 110-115.

²⁹Eric Mascall, He Who Is, Libra ed., London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966, pp. xi-xii.

³⁰Eric Mascall, He Who Is, ch. I; Existence and Analogy, p. 9ff.; Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Ia, Q 13, a 11.

³¹Etienne Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, 5th ed., trans. by K. Shook, London: Gollancz, 1957, p. 93ff. Gilson comments that "... this pure act of being which St. Thomas the philosopher met at the end of metaphysics, St. Thomas the theologian had met too in Holy

In Le Thomisme (1941 ed.) Gilson maintained that before St. Thomas, philosophy was all essentialistic, a vicious philosophical attitude which assumes that the fundamental question with which finite beings confront the human intellect is the question concerning their nature rather than their existence. In other words, the question raised asks what sort of things finite beings are rather than why they are at all. According to Gilson this sort of philosophical essentialism was an overly pre-occupation with Greek ontology which tended to reduce the existence of a thing to its essence. Thus the answer to the question 'What is it for a thing to be?' was answered 'To be is to be that which it is.' In God and Philosophy (1941) Gilson maintains that

Scripture. It was no longer the conclusion of rational dialectic but a revelation of God Himself to all men that they might accept it by faith. There is no doubt that St. Thomas thought that God had revealed to men that His essence was to exist ... seeing these two beams of light so converging that they fused into each other, he was unable to withhold a word of admiration for the overwhelming truth blazing forth from their point of fusion ... Now this sublime truth ... God taught Moses when Moses asked what to reply if the children of Israel should ask His name (Exod. iii, 13). And the Lord replied: I am Who Am. You may say this to the children of Israel: He Who Is has sent me to you. Thus he showed that his proper name is Who Is. Now every name is intended to signify the nature or essence of something. It remains then that the divine act-of-being itself (*ipsum divinum esse*) is the essence or nature of God."

the apex of this metaphysical view was reached with Augustinian ontology.³² This essentialistic view, therefore, takes primacy over existence, either by eliminating existence from any consideration or by reducing it to a mode or accident of essence. This reduction or elimination would naturally follow since essences are conceptualizable, while existence is not and also because, in the thinking process, conceptualization precedes judgment.³³ Furthermore making judgments consists simply

³² Etienne Gilson, God and Philosophy, Yale University Press, 1941, p. 61: "His ontology (St. Augustine's), or science of being, is an 'essential' rather than an 'existential' one. In other words, it exhibits a marked tendency to reduce the existence of a thing to its essence, and to answer the question: What is for a thing to be? by saying: It is to be that which it is.

"A most sensible answer indeed, but perhaps not the deepest conceivable one in philosophy, and certainly not a perfectly suitable one for a Christian philosopher speculating on a world created by a Christian God ... It was not easy to go beyond St. Augustine because of the limit of Greek ontology itself, and therefore just about the very limit which the human mind can reach in matters of metaphysics."

³³ Etienne Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas, p. 42: "To formulate an experience such as ours in which all its objects are composite substances, we need a thought itself composite. To express the activity of the principles which determine these substances, our thought must duplicate the exterior act of the form, by the interior act of the verb. Because the very root of the real is an act, the act of judgment alone can attain the real in its root. This is what it does, first of all, in using the verb 'is' as a copula, in order to state that such or such a substance exists-with-such-a-determination. It may exist only in my thought, or also as real, but as yet we know nothing of this. In so far as the proposition uses this verb as a copula, it expresses nothing more than the community of act of the subject and of its determination. In order that the unity thus formed may be affirmed as

in comparing or contrasting concepts. However, there is according to Gilson, one type of judgment which is completely different from any other, and that is the existential judgment.³⁴

There is an act of judging which escapes the classical definition of judgment as the linking together of two objective concepts by a copula; it is the judgment of existence, 'x is,' which affirms that a subject exercises the trans-essential act of existing.³⁵

The acceptance of these affirmations provides the metaphysician with a completely new starting point for the investigation of being. Dr. Mascall's acceptance of Gilson's interpretation will become manifest in the course of this thesis. For in Existence and Analogy it becomes Mascall's thesis to posit that there is "a radical distinction between essence and existence; (and that) ... essence can be conceptualized, but existence can only be affirmed."³⁶ Mascall believes that it was

existing in reality and outside our mind, it must be actuated by an act of existing. It is only that our intellect uses the verb 'is' with the existential signification, for just as the act of existing is the act of all acts (actualitas omnium actuum), the first signification of the verb 'is' is actual existence: 'Est' simpliciter dictum, significat, 'in actu esse'."

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Etienne Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers, Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949, p. 211.

³⁶Eric Mascall, "Theism and Thomism: Some Answers to Professor Emmet", in Theology 53 (1950), p. 131.

the fallacy of the ontological argument that existence can be included in the concept of essence.³⁷

Of course, the bearing that this new metaphysical perspective had and does have on Christian Philosophy or Philosophical Theology is fundamental. For now the Christian philosopher's question becomes not why things are the sort of things that they are, but why things exist at all. It is, thus, by positing the existential-metaphysical question that the Christian philosopher will be able to arrive "at the affirmation of the transcendent self-sufficient God of Christian theism" Who first revealed Himself to the children of Israel as "He Who Is".³⁸

C. Formulating the Problematic.

Ever since Dr. Mascall first began to write he has carried on a consistent and constant "fight" against the Anglo-Saxon School of Philosophy whose source is none other than David Hume (1721-1776). As a matter of fact his very first article entitled "Contemporary Scientific Thought and Divine Personality" which appeared in the periodical Theology 19 (1929) is a critical consideration of this school of philosophy which claims that the sole "business of philosophy is

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

to synthesize the data of experience", to bring about "the unification of all those data that are presented to the mind, the synthesis into a coherent whole of all the elements of experience."³⁹ Philosophy must be based on the empirical if it is to have anything meaningful to say to man. All the thinkers that belong to this school of thought, in spite of their individual differences, agree that a philosophy, no matter what its teaching may be in regard to the existence of absolute truth, can be built on an empirical basis only.⁴⁰ This particular article marked the beginning of what has become a lifetime dialogue (Perhaps "polemic" would be a better word to express the fiery debates which Dr. Mascall has carried on with the Anglo-Saxon School) with this school of philosophy which, because of its particular conception of the role of philosophy, denies the possibility of metaphysics and consequently of any philosophical theology.

In an article to which earlier references were made, "Theism and Thomism: Some Answers to Professor Emmet" who had recently discussed his book Existence and Analogy,⁴¹ Dr.

³⁹Eric Mascall, "Contemporary Scientific Thought and Divine Personality", in Theology 19 (1929), pp. 139-146; p. 139.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 140.

⁴¹Dr. Emmet's discussion of Dr. Mascall's book Existence and Analogy may be found in the December issue of Theology 52 (1949) pp. 453ff. The article is entitled "Some Questions to a Modern Thomist".

Mascall indicates that fundamentally the difference between the Thomist (or the Christian Philosopher) and the positivist is that they both mean different things by the word "existence".⁴² The positivist, on the one hand, will not accept "existence" as a predicate. For the positivist existence is a mere occurrence from which "nothing can be deduced about anything else."⁴³ On the other hand, for the Thomist (of course, Mascall would not include all Thomists as maintaining this position for he feels that some so-called Thomistic metaphysics are just as superficial as the positivistic position⁴⁴) "existence" is an activity which is experienced as such.⁴⁵

We do not find ourselves in a world composed of discrete particulars lying passively about as objects of our awareness, but in a world of active existents which enter into real causal relationship with us when we experience them.⁴⁶

Dr. Mascall claims that it has been on account of the fact that the positivist has restricted himself to what is perceptual only that he has denied himself any knowledge of things in themselves, of persons and of God.⁴⁷

⁴²Eric Mascall, "Theism and Thomism: Some Answers to Professor Emmet", p. 131.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 132.

For neither God nor persons offer themselves to us with presentational immediacy the most that the positivists can do for God or for persons is to interpret them as logical constructs out of presentational data, and this tendency reaches the extreme in the doctrine held by some of them that there is no intelligible difference between a real human being and a well-constructed robot.⁴⁸

Dr. Mascall explains that the reason why the positivist hangs on to this narrow interpretation of reality is that he has an obsessive desire to obtain "clear and distinct ideas and logically coercive demonstrations"⁴⁹ - this to the detriment of his cognitive faculty.⁵⁰ Thus if there are aspects of reality which cannot be distinctly and clearly conceptualized and which cannot be characterized by "presentational immediacy" - they cannot be known and consequently no valid discourse can be had about them. The positivist criteria, it would seem, will enable man to attain a vast superficial understanding of reality, but an understanding lacking both depth and insight.⁵¹ Mascall accuses the contemporary positivists that, while they completely reject Cartesianism, they succumb to the Cartesian error of limiting philosophizing to the logical and conceptual order.⁵² Of course, it could be said that this is true of most of contemporary philosophizing - so why be different!

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

In the same article Mascall quotes a passage from de Burgh's book The Life of Reason where he remarks that:

... it is Aquinas' merit that he recognizes that the supreme knowledge accessible to man is vague and confused (not, as Descartes held, clear and distinct); for all his logical acumen and precision of language, he refused to imprison the mind of man, after the model of modern logisticians, in cast iron logical moulds.⁵³

Therefore, what the positivists lack, Christian theology does have. For Christian theology with its doctrine of the Trinitarian God Who is self-existent activity and source of all activity other than His own can transform philosophy by directing the philosopher's mind to that aspect of finite beings which can be very easily overlooked, that is, their fundamental status as exercisers of the activity of existing.⁵⁴ Unless the latter is given proper recognition and cognition then there can be no basis for a philosophical theology.⁵⁵

I am quite sure that what is really needed in natural theology is not so much brilliance in logical analysis as the power to look at finite beings and see them as they really are, and this is a capacity which most modern philosophical techniques tend rather to inhibit than to develop.⁵⁶

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 133.

⁵⁶Ibid.

It has been in the light of his attempt to solidly ground a Christian Philosophy or a Natural Theology on sound metaphysical and epistemological foundations that Dr. Mascall has re-interpreted and re-formulated the traditional Thomistic (St. Thomas') epistemology which has viewed the cognitive act as both "ratio" and "intellectus"; the emphasis being on "reformulated", although nowhere is his reformulation ever truly an explicit elaboration of the doctrine as such. And in this Mascall remains faithful to his own self-set limits as a Thomist in the widest sense. In anticipation of the concluding remarks it could be said that his mode of argumentation could have been much more effective had he tried to be a Thomist in the strictest sense. However, concerning this more will be said in the last chapter.

In the above quotation the words, "... the power to look at finite beings and see them as they really are", have been underlined deliberately in order to emphasize Dr. Mascall's epistemological concern which could be said to be an attempt to provide for man a basis for a true knowledge of things, of persons and of God. And of course, this basis is none other than man's capacity as "intellectus". As it will become more evident in the course of this development, Mascall has employed this notion constantly throughout all of his philosophical writings and

has made special use of it in his personal debates with the Anglo-Saxon School of Philosophy. A more intent formulation of this notion is not found until his later work Words and Images (1957) which Mascall considers as his contribution to the debate precipitated by A.J. Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic (1936) - a debate on the possibility of metaphysical and theological discourse, which was, simply, a debate on the possibility of metaphysics and theology.

Dr. Mascall maintains that knowing consists in the two-fold mental operation of "ratio" and "intellectus" - "ratio" being the discursive and searching power of the mind, and "intellectus" being that simple vision or "intuitus simplex" by which the intellect grasps the real and through which it penetrates beneath its surface. It is on the latter notion that, Mascall argues, it is possible to have a proper metaphysical and theological discourse. It would seem, then, that on Dr. Mascall's thesis rests the possibility of any future properly metaphysical and theological enterprises. In other words the possibility of a Christian Philosophy seems to rest on the cogency of Dr. Mascall's arguments which he bases on the traditional epistemological distinction between "ratio" and "intellectus". Furthermore it would follow, that if Dr. Mascall's position were accepted, all types of discourse had by all the various intellectual

disciplines are valid to the extent that they are all trying to explicitate the "simple vision" had by the intellect of the real they are respectively investigating.

The aim of this present thesis will be to carry out an epistemological consideration of Dr. Mascall's notion of intuition. This, in turn, will involve a close examination of his understanding of the traditional epistemology which he is interpreting and a closer exposition of the arguments which he employs to refute his long-time friends of the positivistic and phenomenalist schools of philosophy. The latter will serve as a test for Dr. Mascall's epistemological position which, if found invulnerable, may serve as the basis for a variety of intellectual renovations in all intellectual disciplines.

However, in order to understand clearly the nature of Dr. Mascall's epistemological position and, in particular, his notion of intuition and the role it plays in cognition, it is essential to locate it within his conception of man, which happens to be Christian. For in order to understand the nature of any epistemological position, it is necessary to view it, first of all, within its particular anthropological context since the act of knowledge is fundamentally an act of man. Consequently, it is not enough simply to describe and expound on Dr. Mascall's notion of intuition. In other words, to do full justice to any enquiry of this type it is not sufficient solely to answer the questions "What?" and

"How?" about the object under consideration. In doing so nothing essential about its very nature would have been explained. Thus, unless an answer is given or at least attempted to the "Why-question" the enquiry remains incomplete. It follows, in the present case, that once the Why-question is posed it becomes necessary not only to describe the role intuition plays in the cognitive process but also to explain why for Mascall and for the tradition he adheres to, the notion of intuition has played such a fundamental role in human cognition. In other words, it becomes necessary to explain why, within such a tradition, man's mode of knowing is seen as both "ratio" and "intellectus". Consequently, it could be argued that since intuition or cognition is an act proper to man then only by an examination of the view of man which fosters this epistemological position will the Why-question be given some sort of satisfactory answer. Obviously this enquiry will also necessitate the posing of the same questions about man: What is man? How is he constituted? and Why man at all? Thus ultimately it becomes imperative that the notion of intuition be examined not only within its anthropological context but also within its metaphysical world view. This, it is hoped, will permit a more comprehensive elaboration of the nature and role played by the traditional notion of intuition as it is reformulated by Mascall. It is also

hoped that this procedure will do justice to Dr. Mascall's philosophical task, since it has been only in the light of a specific vision of man and the universe that Dr. Mascall has been able to reassure man the importance of his being human.

CHAPTER TWO

DR. MASCALL'S STARTING POINT: A CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

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A. The Uniqueness of Man.

For Dr. Mascall, as for the Christian tradition, man is a unique being.¹ Moreover, along with this same tradition, Mascall believes that man is not merely a highly developed organism which at some point in time underwent some process of subsumption by which he entered into a complex spiritual union with some so-called "soul".² Of course, this is the position which some would maintain in order to salvage the notion of man as a spiritual being and still continue to view man as having evolved from some lower form of being. Against any such radical evolutionary conception of man, Mascall asserts that:

For in the Christian view the great line of division in the created universe is not between lifeless matter and living creature, or between plants and animals, but between the realm of matter, living and lifeless alike, on the one hand, and the realm of spirit on the other. This is what gives man his unique position as a dweller in both realms.³

Mascall maintains that many of the great psychological ills which disturb man today can be traced back to the fact that he is finding it more difficult than ever before in his

¹Eric Mascall, The Importance of Being Human. Some Aspects of the Christian Doctrine of Man, London: Oxford University Press, 1959, pp. 1-3ff.

²Ibid.

³Eric Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science, London: Longmans, 1956, p. 265.

history to convince himself that he occupies a special role in the universe; that he does have a special status in the order of things.⁴ He is constantly beset by uncertainty and anxiety. Furthermore, this uncertainty and anxiety are compounded by the additional difficulty he experiences in believing that he possesses a particular nature, that he is something or someone. In other words, man is suffering from alienation, alienation from things, from himself and from God. Thus, he lacks that awareness of self, that self-identity which is a pre-requisite for meaningful activity.

Mascall points out that for Greek philosophy the question concerning natures was simple enough since every being in the universe was assigned to some species and, in turn, every species had a clearly defined nature, i.e., "homo rationalis" for man.⁵ Thus, the Greeks could then go on to explain growth in terms of a transition from an incomplete to a complete unfolding of this nature.⁶ In the process of its transformation through its fusion with an existentialist Christian Philosophy, Greek teaching concerning the nature of man remained relatively unchanged except that now this nature was not only accessible through reason but was affirmed by divine revelation.⁷

⁴Eric Mascall, Importance of Being Human, p. 19.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

However, today the situation is quite different and much more complex. Early evolutionary theory introduced the notion that it is possible for a species to undergo innumerable mutations.⁸ In order to make the evolutionary process less fluid, contemporary biologists have substituted "mutations" for "variations".⁹ Nonetheless, evolutionary theory is here to stay and must thus be integrated within a sound conception of man.

Mascall feels that two points should be abstracted from the contemporary discussion on the evolutionary process of the species. First of all, the general impression of most people concerning man's evolution is that it is bound to terminate in a more powerful and in a more intelligent human being.¹⁰ Secondly, assuming, as some evolutionary theoreticians would maintain, that natural evolution has ceased with man (man being the supreme example of this natural process), then, Mascall believes, if man is to continue to evolve it will have to occur through a completely different type of process - one "which will be consciously and deliberately planned by the rational species itself."¹¹ If that is so, then:

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 20-21.

¹¹Ibid., p. 11.

If the Christian religion is true, we have quite solid reasons for holding that, whatever developments man is meant to undergo - ... man is meant to remain man; for if God himself has become man in the Incarnation, he has sealed human nature with a certificate of value whose validity cannot be disputed ... At the moment I wish to stress that, whatever may have been the case in the ancient world, with its belief in fixed and determinate natures, we are hardly likely in the modern world to retain our belief in the inalienable value of man unless we hold that, in some way or another, that value has been supernaturally certified.¹²

Therefore, for Mascall man is unique having a nature which is certified by God, and as such having importance in itself. It is a uniqueness whose nobility consists in a nature which is characterized by elements which must be "respected, preserved and developed".¹³ Some of these elements man can discover by himself through reason. Others are revealed to him through revelation and the Christian tradition. However, human reason is weakened by sin so that even those elements which are accessible to reason in principle are most often not so in practise.¹⁴ For this reason, man's strive to attain self-awareness, self-identity is a constant struggle against alienating powers. For wisdom is attained only at the cost of great hardships. The very act of knowledge is traditionally defined in terms of a

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 24.

¹⁴Ibid.

transition from potentiality to act, that is, the knower is moved into act by that which is potentially known which, in turn, brings about a real transformation in the knower. Thus knowledge is an activity, an activity which involves change in the knower. However, being an intentional act, knowledge or the quest for knowledge requires will-power and effort directing the act to completion. This is not to imply that will and intellect are essentially distinct for they are both powers of the same intellectual principle, the soul. What is implied is that these powers must be coordinated in a unified act of the whole person in his strive to know things, persons and God as they really are. However, contemporary man has very little will-power. This should not surprise anyone since lack of will-power is usually symptomatic of a physically ill or psychologically weak individual. Having, thus, lost belief in things, in himself as possessing a nature certified by God, and in God as the source and preserver of his very being, contemporary man cannot help but be his weak, alienated self. For if he cannot even realize that he is capable of having that intellectual vision of himself as a person and all that personhood implies, how, then, can he be expected to be that person.

B. Man a Composite Being.

One of the most fundamental differences between a Christian conception of man and that of other religions is that the Christian tradition has always maintained an "integral" not an accidental relationship between body and soul.¹⁵ Mascall believes that this Christian conviction about man's constitution may be traced partly to the Jewish belief that when God created, He created both body and spirit.¹⁶ Moreover, this conviction acquires its full import only after the Christian community had reflected upon the great mysteries of the Incarnation and the Resurrection. The reason for this is that through these two events it is shown that God in becoming man took to Himself a human nature in its fulness, that is, both body and soul; and that in the resurrection of the Son of God from the dead both the body and soul are equally resurrected and transformed indicating the integral and substantial union of the two.¹⁷ Thus both the Judaeo and Christian traditions strongly emphasize the fact that man is a composite being, but a composition which is integral and

¹⁵Ibid., p. 25. It is interesting to note that Mascall prefers to use the word "integral" rather than "essential" to describe the relation between body and soul. The latter is the traditionally acceptable formula.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

real. Thus for the Judaistic tradition man was referred to as an "ensouled body" rather than an embodied soul.¹⁸ For this reason the notion of the immortality of the soul was completely lacking in Jewish thought, though not a notion of the immortality of the body. This apparent importance placed on the body by the Jewish tradition made itself manifest also in the early Christian community's belief that the soul ceased to exist between death and the resurrection.¹⁹ For this Mascall relies on Etienne Gilson's account in the latter's work The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy.

It would probably surprise a good many modern Christians to learn that in certain of the earliest Fathers the belief in the immortality of the soul is vague almost to non-existence.²⁰

Gilson goes on to point out that this fact plays an important role in the course of the development of a Christian Anthropology. Gilson maintains that a Christianity without the immortality of the soul is quite conceivable, as this was done by the early Church Fathers.²¹ On the other hand, a Christianity without the "resurrection of man" is quite inconceivable.²² Although both the soul and body may

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Eric Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science, p. 210.

²⁰Etienne Gilson, The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy, p. 172.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

disintegrate or dissipate into non-existence, Christianity still guarantees the resurrection of this same soul and body to enjoy eternal glory with God on the last day. In this sense, it is easy to understand why it was possible for the early Church Fathers to maintain such a position, since in the end the message of the Good News would still be fulfilled. However, this was only meant to be a passing moment in the development of a Christian Anthropology.²³

For gradually the thought of Plato began to exert its influence on Christian doctrine, thus, compelling Christian thinkers to rethink their position concerning the immortality of the soul and at the same time to safeguard the future destiny of the body.²⁴ Of course, Plato's psychology was not the only one which was possible for the Christian Church.

The Greek philosophic tradition offered a choice between two, and only two, possible solutions of the problem, namely, that of Plato and that of Aristotle; the Christian thinkers tried first one and then the other, and it was only after twelve centuries of hesitation that the question was settled, when passing quite beyond both Plato and Aristotle, mediaeval philosophy revealed all its creative originality in the system of St. Thomas Aquinas.²⁵

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

It is interesting to note with both Gilson and Mascall that, regardless of the two philosophical views that were employed by the Church in her development of a Christian Anthropology, neither Platonic or Aristotelian psychology could explain the Church's belief that the whole man did not continue to exist as wholly himself after death until the Last Judgment Day when both body and soul would be reunited.²⁶ Both Mascall and Gilson believe that it was not until St. Thomas Aquinas that a synthesis was achieved to reconcile and explain the immortality of the soul conceived through a Christianized Plato and Aristotle's conception of man as composed of body and soul (with these constituent principles bearing the same relation to each other respectively as form is related to matter), to the Church's doctrine concerning the resurrection of the whole, both body and soul, on the Last Day.²⁷

In the Summa Theologiae, in his consideration of the question "Whether the soul is man?" (1a, Q. 75, a. 4), Saint Thomas argues that the soul is not alone man but that man is composed of body and soul. One of the arguments to

²⁶ Eric Mascall, The Importance of Being Human, pp. 26-27; Cf. Christian Theology and Natural Science, pp. 174ff.

²⁷ Eric Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science, p. 211.

be found in this article is intended to show that since sensations are not properly operations of the soul apart from the body, but belong to both, that is, the whole man, Saint Thomas concludes "that man is not a soul only, but something composed of soul and body."²⁸

Cum igitur sentire sit quaedam operatio hominis licet non propria, manifestum est quod homo non est anima tantum, sed ali-quid compositum ex anima et corpore.²⁹

For the very same reason Saint Thomas goes on to state, in article seven of the same question, that man does not belong to the same species as the angel.³⁰ It would be well to devote a few paragraphs to discuss this assertion since, as it will become clearer later on, Mascall's position is but a reformulation of St. Thomas' own doctrine. For an elucidation of this doctrine, however brief, will certainly deepen any understanding possible of Mascall's restatement of a Christian Anthropology and, in particular, of a Thomistic epistemology. The need for such an examination is further required since Saint Thomas' epistemological

²⁸ Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, 1st complete American ed., lit. trans. by the Fathers of English Dominican Prov., New York: Benziger Bros., 1947, 1a, Q. 75, a.4 (All translations of quoted texts in this thesis will be taken from this edition.).

²⁹ Ibid., "Since, then, sensation is an operation of man, but not proper to him, it is clear that man is not a soul only, but something composed of soul and body."

³⁰ S.T., 1a, Q. 75, a. 7.

position is only explicable in the light of his understanding of man, both in regard to his hylemorphic constitution and in regard to the place he holds in the hierarchy of Being. Thus an examination of the reason given by Saint Thomas as to why man's soul is not of same species as the angel will unfold a more precise understanding as to the reason why man's cognitive act is characterized by the two-fold operation of "ratio" and "intellectus".

In this article³¹ St. Thomas argues that man's soul is not of the same species as the angel simply because the angels, as incorporeal substances, are subsistent forms.³² Since in incorporeal substances there cannot be diversity of species, it follows that each angel is a species in itself.³³ In other words, since the angels are pure spirits having no composition of matter and form (matter being the principle of individuation), it follows that each angel is its own form and, thus, subsistent in itself as regard to its form. (However, like man, the angel is a created being and as such its form bears a relation to its existence as potentiality to act.)³⁴

³¹Cf. Summa Theologiae, 1a, Q. 50, a. 2.

³²Ibid., 1a, Q. 75, a. 7.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., 1a, Q. 50, a. 2, r. 3.

On the other hand, man is composed of matter and form, the soul being the form of the composite being called man. Saint Thomas argues that it could be asserted, that if the angels were composed of matter and form, and it could be speculated that if the matter of one angel be distinct from another, it would have to follow that either the form or the matter is the principle of distinction.³⁵ If the form were the principle of distinction, a difference of species in nature would result.³⁶ However if matter were the principle of distinction, then, since no one matter is different from another except by its quantity, and since no angel possesses any quantity, Saint Thomas concludes that the soul could not be of the same species as the angel.³⁷

Thus since man's soul is not of the same species as the angel, it will follow that they both have different natures. However, although they do have different natures, this does not mean that men and angels are completely different, for they both share in a spiritual nature which relates them. What constitutes the fundamental difference between man and the angel is the fact that in man this spiritual nature, which is the soul, exists in a substantial

³⁵ Ibid., 1a, Q. 75, a. 7, r.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Summa Theologica, 1a, Q. 75, a. 7; Cf. Q. 50, a. 2.

union with a material body resulting in the species Man; whereas in the angel this spiritual nature subsists in itself remaining an undivided, an unspecified spiritual form resulting in being itself one species.

Furthermore, the very existence of the angels is posited by Saint Thomas on the basis that through a discernment of the composite nature of man, having in his possession a cognitive faculty which is both sensitive and intellectual and as such transcending the sensitive, he could infer that there was no reason why the existence of an incorporeal substance such as the angel could not be posited.³⁸ Moreover such a postulate would be quite in accord with that which is required for the "perfection of the Universe."³⁹ Consequently for Saint Thomas, since the intellect is above sense and matter, these incorporeal substances could only be comprehensible through the intellect.

Unde ad perfectum universi requiritur quod sint aliquae intellectuales. Intelligere autem non potest esse actus corporis, nec alicujus virtutis corporeae; quia omne corpus determinatur ad hic et nunc. Unde necesse est ponere, ad hoc quod universum sit perfectum, quod sit aliqua incorporea creatura.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid., 1a, Q. 50, a. 1.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1a, Q. 50, a. 1, r: "Hence the perfection of the universe requires that there should be intellectual creatures. Now intelligence cannot be the action of a body, nor of any corporeal faculty; for every body is limited to 'here' and 'now'. Hence the perfection of the universe requires the existence of an incorporeal creature."

In order to continue on with Dr. Mascall's own treatment of this doctrine the above exposition will be terminated at this point. However, additional points will be inserted in course of this present anthropological consideration. This will be done in order to indicate that Mascall's philosophical task has been simply an attempt to revive and employ Thomistic principles to confront contemporary problems and issues. Of course, this effort on his part has been strengthened by his firm conviction of the truth-value of these principles.

Mascall, thus, admits that the Christian view of man finds its explicit formulation in the Thomistic synthesis of both of the Greek solutions to the problem of the dual composition of man.⁴¹ And he reiterates that this view of man is a unique and, yet, complicated view.⁴²

It is the view that man is a unique and highly complicated being composed of a body which is more elaborate than, though not necessarily different from, that of any other primates, and a soul which, although it is in itself a purely spiritual entity, not the kind of spirit that can function fully and freely on its own, since it is made for the express purpose of animating a material body and in fact of animating that particular human body with which it is united.⁴³

⁴¹Eric Mascall, The Importance of Being Human, p. 29.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

and in Christian Theology and Natural Science:

... this helps to bring out the fact that a human being, as Christianity understands him, is neither brute nor angel, but a highly complicated creature, consisting of a body and soul, of matter and spirit, interpenetrating each other in an almost unbelievably intimate and complicated way.⁴⁴

Mascall feels that from this doctrine about man numerous consequences follow, consequences which bear upon man's capacity to self-understanding.

First of all, once one adopts the Christian view of man, he cannot simultaneously adopt the view that matter is evil or that religion is primarily concerned with the soul and not the body, as the Manicheans once held.⁴⁵ At various times throughout history, this type of thinking has led to the view that since the body bears only an accidental relation to the soul and since the soul is what is essentially man, then the soul can do anything it likes no matter how evil it may be since it will not in any way affect the body.⁴⁶ Thus, trends of gross sensuality or sensory-orientated societies manifesting deep needs for pure experiences and some form of experience of the transcendent, are just as easily

⁴⁴Eric Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science, p. 211.

⁴⁵Eric Mascall, The Importance of Being Human, p. 29.

⁴⁶Ibid.

to emerge from a Manichean conception of man, which regards matter as evil, as from an overly materialistic conception of man.⁴⁷

The second consequence which follows from a Christian conception of man is that such a view of man as a union of soul and body "makes it very hazardous to theorize 'a priori' about the sort of being that man is - to try, for example, to draw detailed conclusions about his physiology or psychology from the definition of man as a 'rational animal'."⁴⁸ More simply stated, no reductions of any sort are possible. Thus man must remain content with these fundamental truths and from what can be validly derived from these basic truths. Also, he must be content with what he is given to him through revelation. Furthermore, he must remain content with what contemporary physiology and psychology can offer as far as empirical data is concerned. However, the danger has been in the past, and still exists today, that fundamental truths about man reached through philosophical questioning and received through revelation, have been submitted and are submitted to the most invalid forms of reductions.⁴⁹ And today, scientifically-minded man gives these reductions his

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 31.

⁴⁹Ibid.

most gracious approval. This is not to imply that scientific procedure does not lead to truths about man, for science as a true pursuit of knowledge should lead to truth. However, "science" is employed very restrictively by contemporary man to mean only 'that which is empirically verifiable' - and that which is empirically verifiable is that which is an object of the faculty of knowledge viewed as itself reducible to a neuro-physiological mechanism which is equipped to co-ordinate in meaningful relations data received through the organism called man. Thus Mascall remarks:

A very large amount of human suffering and frustration is caused by the fact that many men and women are not content to be the sort of beings God has made them, but try to persuade themselves that they are really beings of some different kind. They may act upon the assumption that they are simply a superior grade of mammal and that their spiritual powers and aspirations are a mere epiphenomenon of an organism essentially describable in terms of biology and nothing more. They may, on the other hand, act upon the assumption that they are pure spirits temporally equipped with a physical organism which may be viewed as either a nuisance or a tool or a plaything but is in any case something that the human being 'has', not part of what he 'is'.⁵⁰

The acceptance of either of these two hypotheses will certainly lead to a non-Christian conception of man, and, moreover, to a dangerous, distorted view. Jokingly,

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 32.

Mascall remarks that "Living like a gorilla is a very good thing to do if you are a gorilla, and living like an angel is a very good thing to do if you are an angel."⁵¹ However, man is neither a gorilla nor an angel. Therefore what is necessary is that man, if he wishes to fulfill himself and thus achieve happiness, must act according to his nature and thus be fulfilled in his nature. He must act as a unity of body and soul. This is his task, if he is to be human and thus be himself.

It is ... a task which has great compensations, and to be a human being is to be a being who has a unique and extremely exciting status in the universe; for it is to be a dweller in both the great realms of creation, the realm of matter and the realm of spirit.⁵²

However, as a task it must be known and comprehended as such. It must be understood, for just like act follows upon being, movement depends upon the end as known. If man cannot clearly understand this as his task, if he cannot attain the vision necessary to allow him to posit for himself an end toward which to strive, then this task becomes meaningless.

Man should not be ashamed that he is a being composed of body and soul since this is his glory, to be truly human.⁵³ If this tremendous fact is well understood and accepted then

⁵¹Ibid., p. 33.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., p. 33.

man will be able to marvel at the intimate psycho-physical unity that he is: how the exercise of spiritual activities depends very much on the proper functioning of the body; how the proper functioning of any level of his being depends on the integral effort of the whole man. Thus, for example, the philosopher who is constantly using his mental powers in his pursuit of truth, let him attempt his task without attending to his other needs on all his other levels of being - the physical, the psychological, etc. "For it is the whole human being as a psycho-physical entity that philosophizes or prays, and not merely his spirit, even though it is a virtue of his spirituality that he is able to do it."⁵⁴

Mascall contends that it is only in the light of man's constitution as a psycho-physical unity that it becomes possible to understand "the peculiarly fallible and discursive character of human knowledge and reasoning."⁵⁵ For as a spiritual being man is able to indulge in reflective thought but as a corporeal entity man must proceed in knowing by constantly referring to sensory images and by comparison and contrast. In other words, "mens convertit se ad phantasmata", and in knowing man proceeds "per compositionem

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 34.

⁵⁵Ibid.

et divisionem."⁵⁶ Thus in a review of the Blackfriars edition of Saint Thomas' Summa Theologiae, Vol. XII: "Human Intelligence" (1a, lxxxiv - lxxxix)⁵⁷ Mascall states:

It is the special glory of St. Thomas that he holds fast to the essentially and spiritual nature of the act of knowledge as such ('Intellectus in actu est intelligibile in actu; mens quodammodo fit omnia'), while at the same time insisting that the embodied human mind, or rather the human being who consists of body and mind functioning as a unity, acquires its knowledge through the medium of the senses and expresses that knowledge in terms of sensible images ('mens convertit se ad phantasmata').⁵⁸

Thus in the Summa . . ., 1a, Q. 85, a. 1, St. Thomas insists that it is only because the angelic cognitive act is not the act of a corporeal organ that the object of this act, which is purely intellectual, is only the form existing apart from matter.⁵⁹ However, since man is human, that is, a psychophysical unity, his intellectual act is an act of a corporeal organ.⁶⁰ Therefore, Saint Thomas argues that since man's intellectual act is also the very form of the body, it is,

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Eric Mascall, a review of the Blackfriars edition of Summa Theologiae Vol. XII: "Human Intelligence" (1a, lxxxiv - lxxxix) in New Blackfriars 50 (1968-1969), p. 380.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, 1a, Q. 85, a. 1, r.

⁶⁰Ibid.

then, proper to it to know a form existing individually in corporeal matter.⁶¹ However, this form is known not as existing in such matter. What is known is the abstracted form from individual matter which, in turn, is represented by the phantasm or the image. Therefore, it is necessary that the human intellect understand material things only by abstracting from the phantasm. It is for the same reason that Saint Thomas argues that in knowing man's intellect must proceed by way of "composition" and "division".⁶²

What is the nature, then, of this psycho-somatic unity which is man and of which the body is an essential constituent? Also, does this conception of man succeed in explaining how the immortality of the soul is possible? For ultimately, a Christian philosophical conception of man attempts to provide a point of junction between the Church's doctrine of the resurrection of the body and the philosophical position maintaining the immortality of the soul, thus, establishing a basis for the immortality of the whole man.

First of all, the physical constitution of man provides more evidence in favor of the contrary supposition, that is, that man does not survive death, than in favor of the Christian doctrine of man. Every day is a reminder that

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

the body is constantly undergoing change; and death is the startling and fearful indication that life is but a "being unto death"; and, of course, the lifeless, inorganic chemical substance to which man returns seems to dissipate all hopes in a life beyond the grave. Moreover, any philosophical demonstration for the immortality of the soul, if it is to be rational, cannot be found on Christian revelation, even though it may solicit the stirrings of revelation.⁶³

Therefore, if there is any basis at all it would have to be on the basis of man's higher operations of the human mind.⁶⁴ For no contemporary findings in physiology or neurophysiology could validly posit a conclusion concerning the immortality of the soul.⁶⁵

Along with Saint Thomas,⁶⁶ Mascall maintains that the human soul, even though it shares a psycho-physical unity with the body, it is, nonetheless, a subsistent entity which, as Christian tradition teaches, survives the death of the body.⁶⁷ Saint Thomas, himself, would hold, and does hold in the Summa that it is possible to show that the soul as a spiritual principle of the body survives the dissolution of

⁶³Eric Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science, p. 251.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Cf. Saint Thomas, Summa Theologica, 1a, Q. 75, a. 6, r.

⁶⁷Eric Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science, p. 251.

the body on the basis that man possesses psychical powers and does, thus, exercise psychical activities which are not intrinsically dependent upon any corporeal organ.⁶⁸ He argues that since the form, namely the soul, of the whole man is the principle of these psychical activities (viz. thinking, willing) and is itself subsistent, it follows that as a subsistent form the soul cannot cease to exist:

Manifestum est enim quod id quod secundum se convenit alicui, est inseparabile ab ipso. Esse autem per se convenit formae, quae est actus. Unde materia secundum hoc acquirit esse in actu, quod acquirit formam; secundum hoc autem accidit in ea corruptio, quod separatur forma ab ea. Impossibile est quod forma subsistens desinat esse.⁶⁹

On the other hand, Mascall, prefers to console himself with Cajetan whom he quotes as having said that "no philosopher has yet demonstrated that the soul of man is immortal; there does not appear to be a demonstrative argument; but we believe it by faith, and it is in agreement with probable arguments."⁷⁰

⁶⁸Saint Thomas, Summa Theologica, 1a, Q. 75, a. 6, r.

⁶⁹Ibid.: "For it is clear that what belongs to a thing by virtue of itself is inseparable from it; but existence belongs to a form, which is an act, by virtue of itself. Wherefore matter acquires actual existence as it acquires the form; while it is corrupted so far as the form is separated from it. But it is impossible for a form to be separated from itself; and therefore it is impossible for a subsistent form to cease to exist."

⁷⁰Eric Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science, p. 271.

Nonetheless, Mascall believes that there are two characteristics of the human mind which indicate a difference of kind, not merely one of degree from other living beings, which indicate a life in man which seems to transcend the very life of the body.⁷¹

The first of these characteristics is man's capacity for rational and abstract thought, "for standing as it were outside the deliverances of the senses and comparing them, classifying them, and making them the starting point of discursive ratiocination."⁷²

The second characteristic, which Mascall notes, is the "virtually universal institution of religion, with the witness that it bears to a fundamental human intuition, that the ultimate reality with which man has to reckon and the ultimate realm to which he belongs lie behind and beyond the fragile and transient world of sense-phenomenon."⁷³ He goes on to remark that the lack of such an intuition in contemporary culture is a rarity rather than a common occurrence.⁷⁴ What is common is an intense secularist outlook which is very unique to this epoch. The latter is attested

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 271-272.

⁷³Ibid., p. 272.

⁷⁴Ibid.

by history's constant manifestation of this intuitive grasp of some ultimate reality. To those who wish to contend that such a secularist outlook reflects man's final emancipation from myth and superstition, Mascall would reply that a different interpretation is also possible, that is, that this secularist outlook could also be viewed as a regression since it was this "myth" or "superstition" which gave man a status above other living creatures.⁷⁵ Of course, numerous objections could be brought forward here at this point contesting Mascall's argument for the immortality of the soul. Nevertheless, the point that he wishes to stress in putting forward this particular type of intuition or religious consciousness as a possible indication for the immortality of the soul is not that he feels that it is full-proof, but that "rather than deny the possibility for the immortality of the soul, it confirms it."⁷⁶

Furthermore, the bearing of the fact that on the physical level there are fundamental differences between man and his closest relatives of the animal kingdom may have on the question pertaining to the immortality of the soul cannot be, nor will ever be conclusive. Nonetheless, Mascall would

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

seem to be open to suggestions with regard to the question concerning the development of man's brain.⁷⁷ The evolutionary view that man's brain evolved, reaching a point of complexification higher than that of other primates and thus possessing a higher intellectual capacity would seem to pose no problem to the traditional approach in demonstrating the immortality of the soul. It does not even, according to Mascall, go counter to the traditional position maintaining the existence of the mind; and since the mind exists in a substantial union with the physical aspect of the whole man, it would not seem inconceivable that a highly complex brain would not be necessary for the proper functioning of the mind.⁷⁸ In other words, an evolutionary view of man's brain is not incompatible with the position maintaining the subsistent existence of an intellectual principle of intellectual operations.

Mascall's arguments for the immortality of the soul (this is not to say that they differ greatly from the traditional Thomistic demonstrations) seem to be based not on the soul's capacity to perform complicated reasoning but on its capacity to achieve an "intuition of a trans-sensible

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 274.

⁷⁸Ibid.

realm."⁷⁹ He believes that this position is reinforced by the Christian tradition's persistent emphasis on the fact that the reason why the greater part of man's intellectual activity consists in discursive thought (or ratiocination) is due to the fact that man is not a bodiless spirit like the angels.⁸⁰ Man is a composite being, made of body and soul, of matter and spirit, in a mysterious intricate unity. However, Mascall feels that insofar as the soul, as the intellectual principle of this psycho-physical unity, is able to transcend and thus go beyond its unity with the body ...

... it is able to engage in simple contemplative undiscursive intellectual enjoyment of supra-sensuous and trans-sensible realities, and in particular, of the supreme reality which is God; this is its character as 'intellectus'. (Furthermore) In so far as the soul is operating on the level of the senses, it proceeds by a discursive process of ratiocination, 'per divisionem et compositionem'; and this is its character as 'ratio'.⁸¹

Therefore, for this reason Mascall believes that "ratiocination" or discursive thought is not purely an intellectual process but involves the whole psycho-physical unity which man is.⁸² Moreover, it is for this very same

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

reason that he feels that the Christian tradition welcomes the tremendous strides made in physiology and neurophysiology, since they contribute in confirming and verifying this integral unity of the physical with the psychical.⁸³ In the process, what these sciences are doing is nothing more than confirming the teaching of Christian Anthropology. However, too often, these very sciences have tended to reduce or eliminate a Christian Philosophical Anthropology as mere speculation. This they have done in the name of a pernicious scientific methodology which gives man access to only one aspect of reality.

At this point it could be pointed out that, although Mascall does not always refer directly to Saint Thomas but refers constantly to the Christian tradition, it could be inferred from his acceptance, with Gilson,⁸⁴ that this tradition finds the most explicit formulation in the works of Saint Thomas, that what Mascall is actually doing is reformulating Thomistic psychology as he understands it in the light of contemporary thought. In the light of the last statement, it must be said that, again, Mascall in his attempt to maintain his status as a "second-class Thomist" denies himself

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴See He Who Is, chapt. I, pp. xi-xii.

the opportunity to do a scholarly and comprehensive consideration of Thomistic psychology (hoping to appear as saying something relevant to the contemporary psychologists, physiologists and neurophysiologists). This is not to deny the value of his approach, for some form of inter-disciplinary dialogue is of the utmost importance today, a dialogue for which Mascall tries to provide a basis in his reformulation of the notion of "intuition". However, this is no excuse or substitute for a sound, comprehensive study of Saint Thomas' conception of man.

In summary of the latter part of this Chapter, it could be reiterated that for Mascall there are two characteristics which indicate a possible confirmation of the immortality of the soul, viz., man's capacity for rational and abstract thought and man's universal intuition of some trans-sensible reality, of some ultimate realm. However, the soul as a spiritual subsistent entity does need the body for the normal functioning of the whole man who exists in a hylemorpically-composed universe. Nevertheless, while in this union with the body it is capable of a certain undiscursive contemplation of spiritual realities and ...

... even when it is performing discursive ratiocination in reciprocal partnership with the body, it infuses into that discursive ratiocination a certain supra-sensory contemplative character.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Eric Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science, p. 275.

Thus, for the Christian tradition man is an immortal being, composed of body and soul whose destiny includes separation at death and reunion on the Last Day. Man's existence is an existence which has been and is constantly certified by God who created him and Who preserves him daily in this same existence. Furthermore He created him in his own image and likeness and as such He "didst make him for a little while lower than the angels ... crowned him with the glory and honour, putting everything in subjection under his feet."⁸⁶ All these characteristics which define him in his nature, man manifests in his daily behavioural activities. Thus some days man may be as rational as he can be reflecting that which is spiritual in him. Other days he may be driven by the most passionate desires to fulfill himself in his bodily being. However, being free through knowledge, man (the normal human being, if such a being exists) can choose to respond to himself as composite and strive to achieve an integral level of existing for the psycho-physical unity which he is. For the latter is an ideal to be fulfilled and as an ideal it is a task to be accomplished. This implies the making actual of what is potential in his essence.⁸⁷ This,

⁸⁶ Saint Paul, Letter to the Hebrews, 11, 6-8.

⁸⁷ Cf. Saint Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, 1a., Q. 77, r. and reply to Obj. 1.

in turn, presupposes a clear vision on the part of man of what this essence is. Thus, it implies a strive to exercise oneself as a knowing being, one whose cognitive act is both "ratio" and "intellectus". For it is in the attainment of this vision that man's hope may be restored, since in attaining this vision his very being as an act will be unified, possessing a teleological character which will fill all his acts of being with a richness of intelligibility.

Ultimately, for Mascall this vision consists in a metaphysical intuition of being as finite and contingent coercing the intellect to posit the existence of a Transcendent Being Who is the cause and source of all Being. In other words, this vision consists in a contemplative apprehension of being as contingent and as such requiring a Being Who is Himself necessary in Himself as the cause and source of all Being. For if man is true to his intellectual movement or strive to know things and persons in their very essence, he cannot help but be confronted with the metaphysical question "Propter quid sint?", "Why are things rather than nothing?", "Why is man rather than not?", "Why am I rather than not?".

Consequently, the natural question which should proceed any discussion about the nature of man is "Why man?". Why should man exist rather than not? Moreover, why should things exist, why the universe? In other words, man's natural strive to comprehend leads him to pose these

metaphysical questions and, if it is true, as Mascall and the whole Christian tradition believes, that man's intelligence as both "ratio" and "intellectus", and in particular as "intellectus", is capable of a certain knowledge of spiritual realities which pertain more to that aspect of man that is spiritual, then any such metaphysical enquiry is valid and proper for the fulfillment of man as a knowing being. As it will be seen in the next Chapter, the Anglo-Saxon School of Philosophy contends just the opposite, that is, that such an enquiry is impossible. However, as it will also become apparent, the epistemological position of this school of thought does not arise out of a hylemorphic view of man but out of a refined materialistic conception of man's constitution. It is in reaction to the Anglo-Saxon School of Philosophy that Mascall has attempted to restate and reformulate the traditional view of man and the Universe which, he feels, can provide contemporary man with a solid unified basis for the good life and more. Thus the next Chapter will concern itself with a consideration of Mascall's attempt in grounding his whole philosophical enterprise within a traditional metaphysics.

CHAPTER THREE

THE METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS OF DR. MASCALL'S
EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITION

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A. Refutation of the positivistic and the phenomenistic positions concerning a metaphysics

The context within which Mascall's refutation of the positivistic and phenomenistic positions will be discussed will be the context which he himself provides in his book Words and Images where he is examining the possibility of religious or theological discourse, that is, the possibility of any properly metaphysical discourse, since any religious or theological discourse is by its very nature meta-physical. In this context, Mascall is careful to distinguish between discourse and knowledge and at the same time to assert the essential relation one bears to the other.

Talking about God and knowing God are not necessarily identical or even co-extensive; there may be such a thing as wordless knowledge. Nevertheless we cannot talk about even wordless knowledge without using words to discuss it; and our discussion of it is likely to be very unprofitable if at the same time we make no attempt to discuss its object.¹

As it was mentioned earlier, Words and Images was Mascall's contribution to the discussion precipitated by A.J. Ayer's book Language, Truth and Logic (1st ed. in 1936; 2nd ed. rev. in 1946). In this work, Ayer maintains that theological or metaphysical assertions are meaningless

¹Eric Mascall, Words and Images, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1957, p. 1-2.

because, in principle, they cannot be translated into a language of sense experience. In other words, these types of assertion are not verifiable, that is, these assertions claim to be about entities which are not objects of sense experience. Ayer writes:

We are often told that the nature of God is a mystery which transcends the human understanding. But to say that something transcends the human understanding is to say that it is unintelligible. And what is unintelligible cannot significantly be described.²

At the beginning of Words and Images, Mascall examines the discussion which took place at Oxford in 1950 and 1951, a discussion which centered around the thought of John Wisdom, A.G. Flew, A.M. Hare and B.G. Mitchell. The basic complaint in this discussion was that theological assertions were formulated in such a way that any sense-experience could be made compatible with them. Essentially, both complaints, that of Ayer and that of the Oxford group, consisted in the fundamental objection that theological or metaphysical assertions were framed in such a way that to the empiricist they were meaningless and without content.³

²A.J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, London: Gollancz, 2nd. ed., 1946, p. 118.

³The following example will illustrate the empiricist's procedure in eliminating religious or metaphysical discourse as unintelligible: It is a parable by John Wisdom called 'The Invisible Gardener'. "Once upon a time two explorers came upon a clearing in the jungle. In the clearing were growing many flowers and many weeds. One

The above two attitudes toward a theological or metaphysical discourse can be traced back to that particular philosophical school of thought called the Anglo-Saxon School of Philosophy. For this School of thought there are only two types of knowledge, a knowledge of sense objects and a knowledge of logical truths. Consequently, there are only two types of truth, empirically testable propositions and tautologies. It follows that there are only two types of significant and intelligible statements. Obviously the thought of David Hume is at the source of this philosophical trend of thought. For David Hume perception is pure sensation. And it is this Humean assumption that Dr. Mascall questions. He forwards three criticisms which are worth noting. The first is that sense-experience in itself may consist of something

explorer says, 'Some gardener must tend this plot.' The other disagrees, 'There is no gardener.' So they pitch their tents and set a watch. No gardener is ever seen. 'But perhaps he is an invisible gardener.' So they set up a barbed-wire fence. They electrify it. They patrol with bloodhounds. (For they remember how H.G. Wells' The Invisible Man could be both smelt and touched though he could not be seen.) But no shrieks ever suggest that some intruder has received a shock. No movements of wire ever betray an invisible climber. The bloodhounds never give cry. Yet still the Believer is not convinced. 'But there is a gardener, invisible, intangible, insensible to electric shocks ... who comes secretly to look after the garden which he loves.' At last the Sceptic despairs, 'But what remains of your original assertion? Just how does what you call an invisible, intangible, eternally elusive gardener differ from an imaginary gardener or even from no gardener at all?' (Words and Images, pp. 16-17).

more than pure experience of sense objects.⁴ Secondly, experience may consist of something more than mere sense-experience.⁵ In other words, experience itself is not necessarily limited to experience had through the senses. Thirdly, there may be certain kinds of experience which may not be expressible in sentences at all or which may be expressible or formulated only in sentences of a special type.⁶

According to Mascall this empirical assumption consists in two parts. First of all, the empiricist assumes that in sense-experience "the perceptive element consists simply of sensation, of the registration of a sensible particular, whether that be known as a sense-datum, as a sense-object, as a phenomenon, or by some other term."⁷ The second assumption made by the empiricist is that any intellectual activity which occurs can only consist in a process of inference "(which may or may not be valid), and which taking the sensible particular as its starting point, either deduces from it the existence of some inapprehensible substance as its cause, or interprets it as one of the components of a physical object."⁸

⁴Ibid., p. 31.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 33.

⁸Ibid.

In other words, perception is equated with sensation in the sense that there is direct awareness of a real object. Thus for the empiricist the intellect merely infers; it does not apprehend. It is in reaction to this epistemological view that Mascall puts forward a reformulation of the traditional position which does recognize, as it was evident in the last Chapter, the inferential nature of the intellect as it proceeds from an imperfect knowledge of something to a more complete knowledge, but which also holds primarily that the intellect does not only infer but also and fundamentally apprehends.

According to this view, there is ... no perception without sensation, but the sensible particular ... is not the terminus of perception, not the 'objectum quod', ... but the 'objectum quo' through which the intellect grasps, in a direct but mediate activity, the intelligible extramental reality, which is the real thing.⁹

Kantian transcendental philosophizing is also very far from the above position. For even in Kant perception is also reduced to sensation. Kant's whole Copernican Revolution may be described as an attempt to limit all knowledge to the empirical realm. However, Kant does give recognition to the intelligible real, but no cognition of it is possible for him. Thus, by postulating the doctrine of the "noumenon",

⁹Ibid., p. 10.

Mascall believes that Kant was trying to go beyond the mere sense-object. In this case, Mascall's interpretation of Kant's intentions is questionable since Kant could not help but postulate such an object on which to ground that "real of sensation" of which he speaks in the Critique of Pure Reason.¹⁰ Perhaps Mascall does allude to the latter when he remarks that Kant does seem to approach a realist epistemology in his positing of the distinction between the "phenomenon" and the "noumenon".¹¹ It could be said in support of Mascall's contention that Kant was a realist at heart but not in his philosophizing. In reference to Kant's experiment, Mascall states:

He (Kant) has recognized that there is nothing contrary to logic in things existing which we cannot perceive ..., and he admits that it's at least likely that, if the mind works up its objects into an intelligible form in order to be able to understand them, it has to have something to work up. But because, in his view, it is only the worked-up object that the mind can understand, the unworked-up object is unintelligible. So he is forced into quite remarkable gymnastics in his attempt to understand what cannot be understood and ... what cannot be understood not because it is unfamiliar or too august for our finite intelligences but because not having been worked up, it is inherently unintelligible.¹²

¹⁰Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. by N.K. Smith, unabridged ed., New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965, pp. 201ff; B 207-208ff (letter B refers to the second ed. of the German edition of the Critique).

¹¹Eric Mascall, Words and Images, pp. 37-38.

¹²Ibid.

Mascall maintains that Kant's noumenon, seen as representing reality as mysterious, is intelligible in itself even though it is apprehended in a limited way by a finite knower.¹³ On the other hand, the phenomenon, is not intelligible in itself until it is made the object of a reflective act. Therefore, for Mascall the "noumenon" would correspond to the real - that which is known, while the "phenomenon" of Kant corresponds or may be equated to the "objectum quo" - the medium through which the real as intelligible in itself is apprehended by the intellect. This is a very fundamental distinction made by the moderate realist tradition, for, then, if it is of the very essence of the real to be intelligible and not simply sensible, although vast areas of the real are only known through sense-experience, it becomes possible to proceed to know it in its intelligibility and thus in its fundamentality, imperfectly but yet as knowable in itself. As it has already been stated in Chapter One, this is Mascall's very presupposition for the founding of a valid metaphysical enquiry, namely, that the human mind can, in its consideration of finite beings, arrive at knowledge of finite beings as finite and as such requiring the existence of God Whose primary character is that of self-existent being.¹⁴ Moreover, contrary to the sensationalist

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Eric Mascall, He Who Is, p. ix.

and the conceptualist theories of knowledge, Mascall, along with Thomistic epistemology, would maintain "that impressions produced upon the senses and the concepts formed in the mind are not the objects of perception but are the media through which the external objects are perceived; not the 'quod' but the 'quo' of the cognitive act."¹⁵ In this way, the mind is able to achieve some kind of intuition of the essence of the beings which it experiences thus forming the basis for a metaphysics and a philosophical theology.

In rising to a conviction of God's existence from finite beings, we do not ... merely perceive the existence of these things by the senses and then, by the subsequent process of purely logical deduction arrive at an intellectual acceptance of the proposition 'God exists'. On the contrary, if our mind is in a healthy and vigorous state and is able to fulfill freely its proper function of apprehending finite beings as they really are, it will, in the very act by which it apprehends them, be capable of penetrating to the ontological depths of their nature so as to know them as creatures of God.¹⁶

In the above passage Mascall wishes to stress the Thomistic conviction that the proper function of the intellect is not merely discursive ratiocination about the deliverances of the senses but the penetration of the inner essence of things. Both Mascall and Martin D'Arcy, in his work The

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 65.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 85.

Nature of Belief (1931), refer to this aspect of the cognitive act as a kind of "intuition" or "interpenetration".¹⁷ D'Arcy, whose work is used by Mascall in He Who Is, states:

Just as the object of sense presents itself to us as one whole, so too we grasp the full meaning or tale of the premises 'by a sort of instinctive perception of the legitimate conclusion in and through the premises, not by a formal juxtaposition of propositions.'¹⁸

and

There comes a point when the truth shines out, when the fact or object or meaning is manifested in its unity through the signs.¹⁹

Thus, according to Mascall, the notion of "induction" becomes a problem only for that type of philosopher holding onto a positivistic conception of the cognitive act.²⁰ Since such a philosopher will not accept any higher function of the mind as the basis for induction, and since any conclusions drawn inductively (i.e., by the enumeration of instances from sense-experience) are always subject to future verification, induction for him does become problematic. Of course, Kant tried to solve the empiricist's dilemma by postulating that the strictest universality and necessity in knowledge is

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Martin D'Arcy, The Nature of Belief, London: Sheed & Ward, 1931, p. 137.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 187.

²⁰Eric Mascall, He Who Is, p. 87.

possible only if the mind or reason is made the source of intelligibility. However, in the process of demonstrating how this was possible, Kant was forced to deny the human intellect any true knowledge of the real in itself. However, it is the contention of Mascall and of the whole Thomistic tradition that a true knowledge of the real is possible, that the real is intelligible in itself.

I do not think that the main stress should fall on the activity of the mind in working up for itself an intelligible object, but upon the activity of the intelligible object, the extra-subjective being in its existential reality, in impinging upon the percipient ...²¹

Thus the question of induction does become a real problem for the positivist for whom reality is but a stream of sense impressions which can only result in a relatively comparative universality. Furthermore, for him "existence" is a mere occurrence from which nothing can be actually deduced about anything else. Therefore, for the positivist the mind is but a passive participant in the cognitive act. It is not allowed to get involved with its object. It merely receives impressions of sense objects and records them. Knowledge terminates at the sense-object. It stands to reason that induction as a method of enquiry could not remain viable in such fluctuating conditions. On the other

²¹Eric Mascall, "Theism and Thomism: Some Answers to Professor Emmet", p. 135.

hand, with D'Arcy, Mascall contends that the validity of the inductive method could only be maintained within an epistemology which views the cognitive act as going beyond sense data and in which the mind is not only a passive participant but also an active one as well - the "validity of the inductive method depends on an inherent power in the human mind to recognize the element of causality in nature when it receives an adequate stimulus to do so."²² This follows since for the Christian Philosopher of the Thomistic school reality is intelligible in itself.

B. Dr. Mascall's Gilsonian Existentialism.

In his chapter on "The Nature of Christian Theism" in Existence and Analogy,²³ Mascall considers the thesis put forward by M.B. Foster in an article entitled "The Christian Doctrine of Creation and the Rise of Modern Natural Science."²⁴ The gist of Foster's argument in this article suggests that modern science could commence only when the modern presuppositions about nature had displaced the Greek.²⁵ Foster argues

²²Eric Mascall, He Who Is, p. 90.

²³Eric Mascall, Existence and Analogy, pp. 1-17.

²⁴M.B. Foster, "The Christian Doctrine of Creation and the Rise of Modern Natural Science", in Mind 43 (1934), pp. 446f.

²⁵Ibid., p. 465, n. 1.

that this latter displacement could only have taken place when the Christian conception of God had displaced that of the pagan.²⁶ He claims that the doctrine of the Christian God is a blending of Jewish sources and the displaced Greek notions, a synthesis which was the work of Mediaeval Theology which, in turn, laid the foundations of modern natural science.²⁷ The latter was done by attributing to the Universe rationality and contingency. In other words, with the explicit formulation of the doctrine of the Christian God as source of all Being, Creation or the Universe could then be characterized as contingent and at the same time as intelligible in itself. Thus Mascall remarks:

The type of universe whose investigation requires methods of modern science must, I would suggest, have two characteristics: contingency and rationality. If rationality were absent, there would be no laws for science to discover; if contingency were absent, there would be no need for empirical observation and experiment, for every truth about the world could be deduced from first principles.²⁸

Naturally, through the positing of rationality and contingency of finite existence, Philosophy underwent a corresponding transformation, a transformation which also

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Eric Mascall, Existence and Analogy, p. 9.

finds its initial explicitation in the works of the Mediaeval theologians. But how is this transformation which Philosophy underwent at the hands of Christianity to be characterized? In order to answer this question Mascall resorts to Etienne Gilson, and in particular, to Gilson's work Le Thomisme (The Christian Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas) where it is Gilson's thesis to maintain (as it was also asserted in the first chapter) that the "fundamental characteristic of Christian Philosophy embodied in the system of St. Thomas is its radical emphasis upon the fact of existence, in contrast to the primacy held in pre-Christian thought by the notion of essence."²⁹

The basic fact about God is the fact that he, and he alone, supremely and perfectly exists and that the basic problem with which the world confronts us is the problem of its existence.³⁰

Furthermore, Gilson contends that this notion with its emphasis on the primacy of existence was not known in pre-Thomistic thought. It is only with Saint Thomas that existentialism becomes a deliberate and conscious adoption as the basis for a Christian Philosophy.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

³⁰ Ibid.

Gilson's thesis concerning the metaphysical problem of God as elaborated by him in God and Philosophy appears in the very beginning of He Who Is where Mascall introduces and considers the meaning of "God".³¹ In God and Philosophy Gilson reiterates the theme found in Le Thomisme, namely, that Christian theism with its two main sources of Judaeo-Christian and Graeco-Roman origin, received a coherent and normative formulation through a radical transformation which Aristotelianism underwent in the hands of Saint Thomas. With Saint Thomas the Aristotelian arguments for the existence of God were transformed into the Five Ways which served to demonstrate the existence of a living and loving Creator, the God of Moses, who wished to be called YAHWEH. He was the God whose name is "I AM WHO AM" - He Who Is. Mascall's own discussion in He Who Is centers around the same theme. His starting point is also the Exodus passage where God does reveal Himself as "He Who Is", contrasting this Thomistic nominal definition with that of St. Anselm, who defines God as "that which no greater can be thought". Having established St. Thomas' metaphysics as fundamental within a Christian tradition, Mascall goes on to work out his own Philosophical Theology.

³¹Eric Mascall, He Who Is, pp. 8-13.

It is not until Existence and Analogy which was written as a sequel to He Who Is so as to present separate elaborations of the doctrines of "existence" and "analogy", that it is possible to discover a more defined existentialism along the same lines as Gilson's. Once again, "la métaphysique de l'Exode" is at the very heart of this work. In his consideration of the notion of "existence" Mascall strongly upholds Gilson's thesis of Le Thomisme that "the fundamental characteristic of Christian Philosophy embodied in the system of Saint Thomas is its radical emphasis upon the fact of existence, in contrast to the primacy held in pre-Christian thought by the notion of essence."³² Moreover, Mascall agrees with Gilson's contention that this emphasis on the primacy of existence was not known in pre-Thomistic thought.³³

In Existence and Analogy Mascall, like Gilson, poses the question concerning this existential character in Christian theism. Referring back to his work He Who Is and to the Exodus passage, Mascall comments that for Saint Thomas the name "He Who Is" is the most proper name for God, a name whose meaning interpenetrates his Five Ways. For "He Who Is" signifies "ipsum esse", a term which expresses that element of complete and absolute self-existence.

³²Eric Mascall, Existence and Analogy, p. 10.

³³Ibid.

Against the protests forwarded by the biblical scholars concerning the exact meaning of the Exodus passage, Mascall argues that the real question is not whether the Hebrew text of the Exodus revelation means what Saint Thomas and many Christian writers before him thought it meant but whether what they took it to mean is what is meant by the Bible as a whole. For Mascall believes, contrary to Gilson's view, that there is a metaphysics of the Old Testament and that it is substantially expressed by the Exodus text as Saint Thomas interprets it.³⁴ On the other hand, Gilson holds in The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy that there is no metaphysics in Exodus but there is a metaphysics of Exodus.³⁵ Mascall feels that Gilson is putting the whole question on too narrow a basis.³⁶

Dr. Mascall devotes a complete chapter in Existence and Analogy to "The Existentialism of St. Thomas". It is in this particular chapter that one is able to see more precisely the underlying themes of Gilson in Mascall's own

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

³⁵ Etienne Gilson, The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, ch. iii, iv, passim.

³⁶ Eric Mascall, Existence and Analogy, p. 12.

interpretation of the existentialism of the Angelic Doctor. What Mascall does is to take three instances from Saint Thomas' system where his existentialism is reflected most clearly.

i. "Essence" and "Existence"

The first instance which Dr. Mascall examines is St. Thomas' general metaphysical theory and, in particular, his notion of "essence" and "existence". He claims that in the past the mistake was made of supposing that Saint Thomas' fundamental ontological doctrine was to be found in what he says about matter and form. Matter and form only explain how there can be more than one thing of the same kind. Thus, any such interpretation of St. Thomas would necessarily reduce St. Thomas' thought to pure essentialism. The same would follow if the notion of "substance" was taken as a starting point.

His basic theme is not that essence or substances are composed of matter and form, but that actual beings (what he calls 'entia') are composed of essence and existing ('essentia' and 'esse') ... If we start with essence instead of with 'entia' we shall fall into a doctrine of essences queuing up in some non-existent realm.³⁷

³⁷ Ibid., p. 48.

Mascall claims that Saint Thomas' starting point is 'ens', the actual concrete existent, with 'antia' (diversified finite beings) which are apprehended by our senses. Saint Thomas, according to Mascall, sees each of the finite beings as the subject of an existential act.³⁸

Now every finite existential act must be an act of a determinate kind, it must be the existential act of a particular essence, but the essence arises from the existential act and does not precede it. What is given to us in the finite world is not a realm of essences, some of which exist, but a realm of existent acts, each of which, in a view of its determinate character, gives rise to a particular essence. To ask what a being is, therefore, is simply to ask how it exists, for its essence is nothing but the mode of its existence.³⁹

Concerning the same, Gilson says:

... 'to be' is the primitive and fundamental act by virtue of which a certain being actually is, or exists.⁴⁰

and

... the act of existing is primary, the essence arises simply because any finite act of existing must be an act of existing of a determinate character.⁴¹

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., p. 48.

⁴⁰Etienne Gilson, God and Philosophy, p. 63.

⁴¹Eric Mascall, Existence and Analogy, p. 49.

Moreover, both Gilson and Mascall argue that since this existential act is not an essence it cannot be grasped by the intellect in its first operation, that is, in simple apprehension. Thus, they propose that since existence is an act it can only be expressed and grasped by an act, through the second act or operation of the intellect, the judgment. At this point it will not be necessary to comment on this interpretation of Saint Thomas' noetics. It will suffice to state that Dr. Mascall's acceptance of Gilson's interpretation does certainly place him within the same controversial situation in which Gilson finds himself. However, on this point some constructive criticisms will be offered in the last chapter. For now, the task at hand is to attain, as far as possible, a precise understanding of Dr. Mascall's interpretation of these three Thomistic instances. To continue on, Gilson says:

To exist is an act, it needs therefore an act to express it. To the staticism of the essence corresponds that of the definition, which offers itself as motionless to the intuition of the intellect; to the dynamism of existing corresponds that of judgment, whose discursive movement imitates the circulation of an existential energy whose act engenders the substance and assures its unity.⁴²

⁴²Ibid., p. 50.

Thus, according to Mascall, Saint Thomas, purging Philosophy of all traces of Platonic essentialism, interprets the Exodus text in the most existentialist terms of "Qui est" as signifying not a static perfection, but the absolutely unlimited Act and Energy.

ii. Perception

The second instance which Mascall considers is Saint Thomas' doctrine of perception. For Saint Thomas, knowledge of the external world is had via the senses ("nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu," in II De Anima, lect. 5). He holds that the sensible species (the sense datum) is not the "objectum quod" (the terminus of the perceptive act, as most modern philosophers thought it was), but the "objectum quo" of the cognitive act. It is an impression received by the senses through which the intellect grasps the actually existing extrasubjective being.⁴³ Also, in the act of perception there are not two successive acts, sensation and then intellection, but the two are intricately combined, the former having as its object the "ens particulare" (which acts as the "objectum quo") and the latter having as its object "ens universale"

⁴³Ibid., p. 53.

by which the mind knows the particular existent not "in its individual particularity but only under the universal form of a specific essence in the concept, which it abstracts from it; and no amount of concept-forming or concept-analysis does anything to tell us whether what is conceived exists outside the mind or not."⁴⁴ In other words, "the sense can receive particulars but cannot know them; while the intellect can know but can only know the universals."⁴⁵

However, the question with which both Mascall and Gilson are primarily interested in is how can man know that particulars exist, not how man can know that they are particulars, a knowledge of which the concept will readily provide(?).

Dr. Mascall proposes that it is through the senses that the particularity and the existence of things are manifested. He feels that since the act of perception is an act in which the intellect is also involved, the danger of falling into some form of nominalism is avoided. For the intellect, through its first operation, abstracts the universal from the sensible species and in its second

⁴⁴Ibid.; Cf. Etienne Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, pp. 224-227.

⁴⁵Eric Mascall, Existence and Analogy, p. 54.

operation affirms the embodiment of the sensible species in an extrasubjective existent. Thus in the second operation of the intellect the existence of the particular existent is affirmed in the judgment.⁴⁶

... The concept, and the judgment which expresses it, are thus for us the substitutes for an intellectual intuition of the singular which is lacking to us, but what we cannot apprehend as a pure spirit would apprehend it, since we are men, we can apprehend as men and approach it as closely as possible at the junction of our intellect and our sensibility.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Etienne Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 226: "... the being of the object itself is imposed on the being of the knowing subject. If to know a thing is to become it, it is absolutely necessary that at the moment the act of knowing takes place, a new being is constituted, a fuller being than the first, because it envelopes into a richer unity the knowing being as it was before the act of knowing and as it has become since enlarged by the accretion of the object known. The synthesis thus produced involves, therefore, the fusion of two beings which fall together at the moment of their union. The sense differs from the sensible, and the intellect differs from the intelligible; but the sense is not different from the object sensed, nor the intellect from the object which it has actually come to know. Thus it is literally true that the sense, taken in its act of sensing, becomes one with the sensible taken in the act by which it is sensed, and that the intellect taken in its act of knowing is one with the intelligible taken in the act by which it is known; 'the sensible in act is the sense in act, and the intelligible in act is the intellect in act'.

⁴⁷ Eric Mascall, Existence and Analogy, p. 57.

and

To think as a realist is to think that what is expressed in our definition of man, namely, 'rational animal', is the essence of man, and that what establishes our knowledge as real is, in the essence itself, the existential act which makes it both be and also be what it is.⁴⁸

Thus Mascall draws the existential conclusion with Saint Thomas, "veritas in esse rei magis quam in ipsa quidditate" (In I Sent., d. 19. q. 5, a. 1, sol.): "It is not the essence, but the act of existing of a thing that is the ultimate foundation of anything true that we know about it."⁴⁹

iii. Human individuation.

Human individuation is the third instance from Saint Thomas which Mascall examines. Briefly, he points out that within an existentialist metaphysics, human individuation is

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid. This is a favorite text which seems to have been exploited to its fullest by the Gilsonian school. They interpret "esse" in this context to mean the act of existence whereas it is clear to some that for Saint Thomas of the Sentences, "esse" refers to the being of things. See Benoît Garceau, Judicium. Vocabulaire, Sources, Doctrine de Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Montréal: Institut d'Etudes médiévales, 1968, pp. 119ff.: "Deux positions paraissent certaines aux yeux de saint Thomas. Tout d'abord, la deuxième 'opération' a pour objet l'esse' des choses. Il s'agit d'une thèse qui semble ne soulever aucun doute chez ses auditeurs et qu'il ne pense

founded on individual acts of existing, each of which constitutes a concrete particular, an actually existing being, an "ens". Of course, each of these existential acts is the act of a different individual essence, for every finite act must

pas nécessaire de justifier: il lui suffit de l'énoncer, en présentant la technique des 'opérations'. Puis, la vérité a pour fondement l'esse' des choses: 'quia ratio veritatis fundatur in esse, et non in quidditate, ut dictum esse, ideo veritas et falsitas proprie invenitur in secunda operatione'. C'est à la lumière de ces deux propositions, pense l'Aquinat, que l'on peut comprendre la justesse de la thèse aristotélicienne d'après laquelle la vérité appartient à la deuxième 'opération' de l'intellect.

"Dans le corps même de l'article, saint Thomas s'est efforcé d'expliquer la deuxième de ces propositions, à savoir que la vérité a pour fondement l'esse' des choses, et c'est à cette explication que renvoie l'ut dictum est du texte. Le procédé dont il s'est servi est fort révélateur. Pour montrer que la vérité a pour cause l'esse' et non la quiddité des choses, il souligne que par vérité il faut entendre une relation qui est fondée sur le réel mais qui ne s'achève que dans l'opération de l'intellect qui reçoit l'esse d'une chose, en l'imitant ou en le reproduisant d'une certaine façon ...

"Il n'est pas dit par quelle opération l'esprit s'adresse ainsi à l'esse': le long passage de la septième réponse se charge de la préciser. Ce qui se ressort de l'ensemble de l'article, c'est l'importance que saint Thomas accorde à la thèse de la correspondance entre la deuxième 'opération' et l'esse'. Il s'en sert comme d'un axiome pour montrer que c'est dans l'esse' que la vérité trouve son fondement et que c'est à la deuxième 'opération' qu'elle appartient de façon formelle.

"Nous sommes conscients des redoutables problèmes d'interprétation doctrinale posés par cette conception de la deuxième 'opération' comme connaissance de l'esse' des choses. Nous serons plus à l'aise pour les affronter, après la présentation des textes. Mais il est permis, dès

be an act of a determinate type. The existentialist act comes first in the metaphysical order and essences arise from it. In turn, the essence is structured not only with its individual characteristics but also with specific characteristics, both having the same ontological basis - the existential act.

iv. An Existentialist Theism.

This ultimate grounding of all being, of the act of perception and of human individuation on the existential act is very crucial to the attempts made by contemporary neo-Thomists in establishing a valid demonstration for the existence of God. Thus Mascall emphasizes in Existence and Analogy that any attempt to prove the existence of God from a consideration of his essence is bound to terminate in failure precisely because essences are grasped by the mind in the formation of concepts, while existence is affirmed

maintenant, d'observer qu'en montrant que la vérité se trouve seulement dans la deuxième 'opération', saint Thomas n'assimile jamais celle-ci au jugement; bien plus, la seule fois où il mentionne 'judicium', c'est pour lui faire désigner la première 'opération' de l'intellect: intellectus habet verum judicium de proprio objecto, in quod naturaliter tendit, quod est quidditas rei, sicut et visus de colore', et ce jugement ne signifie rien d'autre que le 'discernement' par l'intellect de son objet propre. Il ne vient pas encore à l'esprit du saint Docteur de faire appel, pour démontrer la justesse de la thèse aristotélicienne, au procédé qu'il utilisera plus tard et qui consistera à identifier deuxième 'opération' et jugement."

through the judgment. Starting with the essence of God, which is grasped in the mind in the concept, will only give an idea of an existing God but will never affirm his existence extramentally. It is held that this process will necessarily lead to some form of essentialism, i.e., anthropomorphism, pantheism, agnosticism, etc. However, it could be said that one can also find himself within the same essentialist pitfall while maintaining an existentialist interpretation of Saint Thomas (with due justice to Saint Thomas, this would be a misinterpretation of his thought). The danger lies in positing that existence is affirmed and known through the judgment. What is claimed here is that through the concept (and through sensibility) judgment as an intellectual act makes contact with the pure existence of an extrasubjective thing. Thus, Mascall will say "... the concept, and the judgment ... are thus for us the substitutes for an intellectual intuition of the singular which is lacking to us."⁵⁰ But to say that it is possible to attain existence in itself in the judgment is to say that it is possible to have knowledge of existence in

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 57.

itself.⁵¹ However, this would seem to be impossible because existence is always given to the intellect as the existence of a particular being. Therefore to claim that existence in itself is attainable is to conceptualize existence, thus falling into an essentialist framework. Moreover, Mascall is saying that judgment and the concept are substitutes for an intellectual intuition. But for Saint Thomas, as it will be evident in the next chapter, intuition is that simple vision, that implicit, non-abstract content of knowledge of

⁵¹Cf. L.M. Regis, Epistemology, New York: Macmillan Co., 1959, pp. 327ff; also Benoît Garceau, Judicium, op. cit., pp. 127ff. Concerning the controversial interpretation of the Sentences, d. 19, q. 5, a. 1 to 7, Dr. Garceau draws the following conclusions: "Au début de son enseignement, la certitude la plus élémentaire de saint Thomas concernant la deuxième 'opération' de l'esprit, c'est qu'elle a pour objet, comme on le répétait depuis Avicenne, l''esse' des choses, et pour fonction de répondre à la question 'est-ce que?'. A certains endroits de son commentaire sur les Sentences, notamment dans son traité de la foi, lorsqu'il met en rapport deuxième 'opération' et 'esse', il ne veut rien dire de plus que ceci: l'intellect en composant ou divisant affirme la réalité extramentale d'un objet conçu. Dans la plupart des textes cependant, il soutient que par la deuxième 'opération' l'intellect appréhende l''esse' des choses. Cette position, qui ne reparaitra plus dans ses oeuvres ultérieures, nous semble être liée au fait que par 'esse' il entend, comme le lui avait enseigné son maître Albert le Grand, une perfection intelligible: l'acte résultant de l'essence spécifique et constituant la forme concrète du tout composé. Une fois saisie la quiddité d'une chose, l'intellect, dans une deuxième 'opération', appréhende l''esse' parce que la composition d'une proposition dérive de la saisie de la quiddité comme l''esse' résulte de l'essence et reproduit dès lors cet esse. Telle nous paraît, en gros, la façon la plus habituelle de saint Thomas, commentateur des Sentences, de comprendre la deuxième 'opération'."

a real world - a world made up of things which exist in a particular way; and it is through judgment, through ratiocination that the intellect struggles to comprehend more deeply the secrets of being. Yes, judgment is very much involved in this movement of the intellect; but it is to give assent to that which the intellect strives to know, and what it knows and strives to comprehend is being in all its richness. Mascall would seem to be tending toward the latter exposition of Saint Thomas' noetics, especially in He Who Is and Words and Images. In the latter work this fact is exemplified by the little use he makes of Gilson and by his intense interest in man's capacity as "intellectus". But, unfortunately, in Existence and Analogy, because he is having so much fun in the Gilsonian band-wagon, he misinterprets Saint Thomas' noetics. However, when he is not viewing or examining the metaphysical act through Gilsonian optics, Mascall is able to recapture his intellectual autonomy and goes on to stress the intuitive or interpretative role of the intellect in positing the existence of God.

Thus, as in He Who Is, Mascall holds that the Five Ways of Saint Thomas are refinements of the one Cosmological Argument whose basis is the recognition, through an intuitive or interpretative act of the intellect, that in finite beings, essence and existence are really distinct, that is,

that there is nothing in their essence that necessitates their existence."⁵² Of course, some would dispute Mascall's reduction of the Five Ways to one. However, the latter is not pertinent to this present discussion. What is interesting in the last quotation from Existence and Analogy is Mascall's emphasis on the intuitive role of the intellect. Thus, through a recognition that man's essence, or the essence of things does not offer an adequate explanation for existence, God is posited as the ground for finite being. A definite transition is made from the order of finite being to the order of self-existent Being. "The transition is made in the recognition that being whose essence is really distinct from its existence declares by its very existence the creative activity of God."⁵³

Therefore, for Mascall, the Five Ways' ultimate function is to make plain, by pointing to five fundamental features of finite being, what the basic character of finite being is, namely, its inability to account for its own existence.

⁵²Eric Mascall, Existence and Analogy, p. 69.

⁵³Ibid., p. 78.

The Five Ways are not really five different methods of proving the existence of God, but five different aids to the apprehension of God and the creature in the cosmological relation under five different aspects.⁵⁴

For example, the Fifth Way from "Finality" indicates to Mascall that to exist is not just to lie about in space, but it is to do something, to be exercising some kind of activity, to be tending toward some end. Consequently, "to be" or "to exist" is to be exercising this activity (to be in act) without simultaneously being the ultimate ground for the possibility for acting.⁵⁵ However, it is here, at this point, that Mascall puts on Gilsonian blinkers and remarks that no amount of examination or concepts could ever help us to arrive at God in this way, since existence can only be arrived at through grasping the existent in its existential act.⁵⁶ And this is done, of course, through the judgment.

Consequently, when Dr. Mascall treats the doctrine of analogy he is forced by his very epistemological position he previously adopted, to posit a combination of analogy of attribution and analogy of proper proportionality as the most proper form of analogy when speaking about

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 79.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

God. This position is most definitely demanded by his Gilsonian metaphysics. He argues that in affirming God as Supreme Existent, whose existence can only be affirmed in a prior recognition of the existence of finite beings, analogical discourse "can hardly exclude all reference to the relation in which he stands to his creatures in existential fact."⁵⁷ He agrees with Gilson that the primary purpose of the doctrine of analogy is not to enable one to formulate concepts of the essence of God, but to enable one to affirm God's existence; "not to compare God's features with those of finite beings, but to allow us to assert that he exists when we can identify him only by describing him in terms derived from the finite order."⁵⁸ According to Gilson "on the level of the concept there is no way between the univocal and the equivocal."⁵⁹ He continues:

We must observe, in fact, that in the case of God, every judgment, even if it has the appearance of a judgment of attribution, is in reality a judgment of existence. When we speak, in reference to him, of essence or substance or goodness or wisdom, we are doing nothing more than repeating about him: he is 'esse'. That is why his name 'par excellence' is 'Qui est'.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 116.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 117.

⁵⁹ Etienne Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 153f.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

Thus Mascall maintains with Gilson that it is only in virtue of the existential element in all affirmations about God that analogical knowledge and analogical discourse can be maintained.⁶¹ He claims that statements made about God on the essential or conceptual order are doomed to failure since they would collapse into mere equivocity and agnosticism because no finite intellect can form a concept of the essence of God. However, Mascall argues that because God's essence is identical with his existence, statements made about Him pass immediately into an existential order and thus in the order of judgment.⁶² Thus he says that "what begins as an attempt to conceive God's goodness - an attempt which is doomed to failure - issues in an affirmation that self-existent goodness exists ..."⁶³ "Goodness" becomes identical not only with God's essence but with the very act by which God is "He Who Is".⁶⁴

It is within this Gilsonian metaphysics that Mascall situates himself. And as such he becomes subject to the same criticism which Gilson and his followers have received and are receiving from "fellow" Thomists who, while admitting

⁶¹Eric Mascall, Existence and Analogy, p. 119.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 119-120.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

the ontological primacy of existence in Saint Thomas' metaphysics, would maintain that the proper object of metaphysics is being not 'esse'. The Gilsonian school can only maintain the latter because of their misinterpretation of the role of judgment. However, as it will be evident in the next chapter, Mascall does avoid this controversy in Words and Images where he reformulates the traditional notion that knowledge consists in both "ratio" and "intellectus". This he does to his advantage.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NOTION OF INTUITION

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A. Introductory Comments.

Ultimately, Dr. Mascall's concern is primarily one of a Christian theologian and secondarily that of a philosopher. As a Christian theologian he feels that one of the most imperative duties which confronts the theologian today is that of relating the revealed datum of Christian truth, "final, absolute and fundamentally permanent ... to the essentially incomplete relative and constantly changing intellectual framework of the world in which he lives."¹ However, as a philosopher who happens to be Christian his concern cannot but be also directed to the same ends, since the very notion of a "Christian philosopher" implies the philosophizing about Christian truths. And, moreover, to philosophize as a Christian eventually involves the philosopher into the philosophizing about truths which are theological if not in their initial conception, they become in their comprehensive unfolding.

The above points must be constantly kept in mind in the following consideration of Mascall's reformulation of the traditional notion of "intuition". As it has been alluded in the previous chapters, Mascall's intention in

¹Eric Mascall, The Secularization of Christianity, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965, p. 1.

carrying out such a restatement has not been purely philosophical but also theological. For by re-emphasizing the intuitive aspect of the cognitive act, Mascall hoped to provide a basis for discourse in general and, in particular, for metaphysical and theological discourse. Furthermore, by grounding the cognitive act in that which elevates and relates man to a spiritual realm, he hoped to provide a similar basis upon which contemporary man could have a clearer vision of things, of himself and of others. On the very same basis could man then posit a reply to that fundamental question which from the beginning of time has both delighted and haunted man, the Why-question. Simply stated, Mascall has attempted to provide for man a basis by which to live a good life. For by exercising himself not only as a rational being but also and primarily as an intellectual being, man may proceed to preserve and develop himself in his nature and in accordance with his nature.

As it was stated in Chapter Two, according to the Christian tradition, the nature of man consists in his being the psycho-physical unity that he is, having a spiritual, subsistent soul which escapes the corruption of death and a body which, although disintegrates after death, is, nevertheless, promised restoration at the resurrection on the Last Day, to be reunited with the soul. It is this psycho-physical union which explains why man's knowledge is

characterized by "ratio" and "intellectus". But at the same time it is this same psycho-physical unity which is at the base of all kinds of conflicts and fears in which "homo sapiens" finds himself. For the psycho-physical unity posited of man is that by which man is defined in his essence. Thus in itself it constitutes that by which the being "man" is understood. In other words, man as a perfect psycho-physical unity constitutes nothing but a universal whole, an intelligibility of the essence of man. Man's intelligibility of himself as a psycho-physical unity provides the basis for his "can" or "potentiality" of becoming this unity. Therefore, this unity is man's conception of himself in his essence as psycho-physically constituted. The latter provides or constitutes man as potentially becoming this psycho-physical unity, exercising all his powers for the integration of the whole. Thus the integral or the fully integrated man can only be posited in the light of a universal conception of man which in itself constitutes the basis for itself becoming actual in the individual man striving to be that which he is in his very essence, that is, a psycho-physical being. However, this, in turn, implies the exercise of one's self in the light of one's understanding of self as psycho-physically constituted. Of course, this is not to imply that virtue is necessarily equated with knowledge. What is

implied in this case is that any act of man directed toward the fulfillment of his nature presupposes a knowledge of that nature. Thus Saint Thomas asserts in the Summa:

Illud enim quo primo aliquid operatur, est forma ejus cui operatio attribuitur ... Et hujus ratio est, quia nihil agit nisi secundum quod est actu. Unde quo aliquid est actu, eo agit. Manifestum est autem quod primum quo corpus vivit, est anima. Et cum vita manifestetur secundum diversas operationes in diversis gradibus viventium, id quo primo operamur unum quodque horum operum vitae, est anima. Anima enim est primum nutrimur, et sentimus, et movemur ... et similiter quo primo intelligimus. Hoc ergo principium quo primo intelligimus, sive dicatur intellectus, sive anima intellectiva, est forma corporis.²

Thus, in the light of his knowledge of self, man can then choose either to strive to actualize himself in accordance with this knowledge or else he may choose otherwise. However, it must be emphasized that any choice which is truly

²Saint Thomas, Summa Theologiae, 1a, Q, 76, a. 1, r.: "For that whereby primarily anything acts is a form of the thing to which the act is to be attributed ... The reason is because nothing acts except so far as it is in act; wherefore a thing acts by that whereby it is in act. Now it is clear that the first thing by which the body lives is the soul. And as life appears through various operations in different degrees of living things, that whereby we primarily perform each of these vital actions is the soul. For the soul is the primary principle of our nourishment, sensation, and movement; and likewise our understanding. Therefore this principle by which we primarily understand, whether it be called the intellect or the intellectual soul, is the form of the body."

free presupposes the healthy functioning of this intellectual principle, the soul, of which Saint Thomas speaks in the above passage. Thus, a free act is one which is deliberated by man exercising himself in accordance with his being. Consequently, this act presupposes knowledge of all the dimensions of man's being and the power of will directing the agent towards the making actual that which is potential in his being. Therefore, man's strive to achieve himself in his nature is proportionate to the degree of intellectual vision he has of himself as that nature to be achieved; or of his nature as end of an activity to be performed and deliberated by him. Saint Thomas remarks in the Summa that unity of movement requires that its end or terminating point be also unified, that is, be clear and simple.³ In other

³Saint Thomas, Summa Theologiae, Ia, Q. 58, a. 2, r: "Respondeo dicendum quod sicut ad unitatem motus requiritur unitas termini, ita ad unitatem operationis requiritur unitas objecti. Contingit autem aliqua accipi 'ut plura' et 'ut unum', sicut partes alicujus continui; si enim unaquaeque per se accipiatur, plures sunt; unde non una operatione nec simul accipiuntur per sensum et intellectum. Alio modo accipiuntur, secundum quod sunt unum in toto: et sic simul et una operatione cognoscuntur tam per sensum quam per intellectum, dum totum continuum consideratur ... Et sic etiam intellectus noster simul intelligit subjectum et praedicatum, prout sunt partes unius propositionis, et duo comparata, secundum quod conveniunt in una comparatione. Ex quo patet quod multa secundum quod sunt distincta, non possunt simul intelligi; sed secundum quod uniuntur in uno intelligibili, sic simul intelliguntur; unumquodque autem est intelligibile in actu, secundum quod ejus similitudo est in intellectu. Quaecumque igitur per unam speciem intelligibilem cognosci possunt, cognoscuntur et unum intelligibile, et ideo simul cognoscuntur; quae vero per diversas species intelligibiles cognoscuntur, ut diversa intelligibilia capiuntur."

words, a clear and simple vision of the object of the operation is a fundamental pre-requisite to any undertaking or activity which is characterized by a real sense of direction. Thus, to the extent that man strives to comprehend himself as that nature that he is and that he is capable of becoming, will he be able to respond to this knowledge and become that which he knows himself potentially to be. It must be pointed out that both Saint Thomas and Mascall will say that man's vision of himself, of things and of others, is an imperfect vision; nonetheless, it is a genuine vision which in its imperfection can lead man to a more refined and more authentic view of things, persons and God.

The aim of these brief introductory comments has been simply to emphasize and to locate once again Mascall's own objective in his re-statement of the traditional notion of "intuition". For once man begins to desire and refine his vision of things, persons and God, then, perhaps, he will be able to begin to talk to himself in a meaningful way. For in the process he will be doing nothing but exercise himself in his very being, a being that is both physical and psychical.

B. Knowledge as both "ratio" and "intellectus"

As it was pointed out in the second Chapter, for Mascall and for the whole Christian tradition ratiocination

is not purely an intellectual process, but is the activity of the whole man who is a psycho-physical unity. Thus, man's knowledge is characterized by both "ratio" and "intellectus". However, this epistemological position faded completely into the background as a result of the dominant influence that was exerted in Modern Philosophy by the rationalism of Descartes and by the transcendental philosophizing of Kant. Perhaps, it could be said that this was a tragic and, yet, an unavoidable occurrence. It was an age during which man became intensely pre-occupied with the practical order. Great strides were being made in the natural sciences. Man was demonstrating that he truly had dominion over the forces of nature. However, in the process of his apparent conquest of the physical world, man was gradually becoming grossly involved with the physical and the sensuous. Thus man was slowly becoming alienated from his whole self, as a psycho-physical entity, identifying himself only with that which is physical in him. Consequently, knowledge was also reduced to a physical process, comprehensible in terms of physiological and neurophysiological processes. Kantian epistemology could be described as an attempt to go beyond the latter reduction and yet remain within an empiricism. However, Kant bowed too low to his epoch and

as a result failed in his experiment, at least, in the eyes of a moderate realist. On the other hand, by reflecting his age, his experiment could be said to have been quite successful.

Twentieth Century Man represents the apex of the modern scientific revolution. In his fears, anxiety, conflicts, etc., contemporary man reflects the divided self that he is. At the same time from the depths of his being he yearns for unity of self. It is in response to this calling of contemporary man that Mascall offers a vision, a vision which Christian Anthropology and a Christian Metaphysics have preserved for him.

Mascall calls for a return to that unified view of man which the Christian tradition has upheld for centuries. He calls for that unity of man which the great masters of the Middle Ages maintained and constantly recognized as being fundamental for the well-being of man. It is that view which sees man's knowing act as both "ratio" and "intellectus". It is that view which restores to man that capacity to clearly see himself as he truly is and what he is capable of becoming.

In Words and Images, Mascall quotes an interesting passage from Josef Pieper's book Leisure the Basis of Culture (1952) where Pieper is posing the question as to whether or not there is a "purely receptive attitude of mind in which

we become aware of immaterial reality and invisible relationships?"⁴ In other words, whether or not a purely intellectual contemplation is possible? In considering this question, Pieper outlines two responses which have been given to it, the one given by the men of antiquity such as the Greeks (a response which was later adopted and Christianized by the Mediaevals) and that of the moderns, as represented by Immanuel Kant.

Kant, for example, held knowledge to be exclusively 'discursive': that is to say, the opposite of receptive and contemplative; and his opinion on this point has quite recently been called 'the most momentous dogmatic assumption of Kantian epistemology.' According to Kant man's knowledge is realized in the act of comparing, examining, relating, distinguishing, abstracting, deducing, demonstrating - all of which are forms of active intellectual effort ...

The philosophers of antiquity thought otherwise on the matter - though of course their view is very far from offering grounds for justification for those who take the easy path. The Greeks, Aristotle no less than Plato, as well as the great medieval thinkers, held that not only physical, sensuous perception, but equally man's spiritual and intellectual knowledge, included an element of pure, receptive contemplation, or as Heraclitus says, of 'listening to the essence of things'. "The Middle Ages drew a distinction, between the understanding of 'ratio' and the understanding as 'intellectus'. 'Ratio' is the power of discursive, logical thought, of searching and of examination, of abstraction, of definition and of drawing conclusions. 'Intellectus' on the other hand, is the name for the understanding in so far as it is the capacity of 'simplex intuitus' of that simple vision to which truth offers itself like a landscape to the eye. The faculty of mind, man's knowledge, is both these things in one, according to antiquity and the Middle

⁴ Josef Pieper, Leisure the Basis of Culture, London: Faber, 1952, p. 31.

Ages, simultaneously 'ratio' and 'intellectus'; the process of knowing is the action of the two together. The mode of discursive thought is accompanied and impregnated by an effortless awareness, the contemplative vision of the 'intellectus', which is not active but passive, or rather receptive, the activity of the soul in which it conceives that which it sees."⁵

Mascall introduces his own consideration of the notion of intuition with the above passage. With this vast tradition which Pieper concisely summarizes in the above passage, Mascall maintains that the intellect not only reasons but also apprehends and that it has as its object not only truths but things.⁶ He argues that what the modern philosophers have done is to relegate apprehension merely to the senses and reasoning to the intellect, depriving the intellect of any contact with things.⁷

Mascall's own re-statement of this doctrine is but a general exposition, leaving much to be desired. Therefore, in order to illuminate and make more explicit Mascall's reformulation, the latter will be preceded by a brief examination of Saint Thomas' own exposition of this doctrine.

⁵Ibid., pp. 31-34.

⁶Eric Mascall, Words and Images, p. 63.

⁷Ibid.

C. Saint Thomas Aquinas' notion of intelligence.

Man is a psycho-physical unity of body and soul with the soul being the form of this unity and as such the principle of all its operations.⁸ It follows that the nature of these operations or acts is determined and specified by man as he is psycho-physically constituted. Consequently, the act of knowledge will also take place in accordance with the nature of man, the knower.⁹ For this reason Saint Thomas argues that God cannot be known in His essence because He transcends the nature of the knower.¹⁰ However, in the hierarchy of Being, being is exercised in various modes. Thus, man has his body in individual matter; the angels have their natures subsisting in themselves, having no matter whatsoever; and, of course, God is subsistent in Himself. Saint Thomas, thus, draws the conclusion that since man's form is always the form of some particular matter, man can only know what exists only in individual matter.¹¹ Moreover, man possesses two cognitive powers, one which is the act of that which is

⁸Saint Thomas, Summa Theologiae, Ia., Q. 76, a. 1, r.

⁹Ibid., Ia, Q. 12, a. 4. r.

¹⁰Ibid., Ia, Q. 12, a. 4. r.

¹¹Ibid.

corporeal in him, which knows things existing only in individual matter - the senses; and the other the intellect which naturally knows the natures which exist in individual matter, but it knows them not as such but in so far as they are abstracted by the intellect. On the other hand, because the angels have no composition of matter and form, they know natures not as they are in matter but in their form by a simple act of intelligence. However, because man's intellectual act is specified by its object in as much as it is the principle of the intellectual operation, the very act of intelligence is specified by an intelligible form which moves the intellect from potentiality to act.¹²

Nam intelligere, aliquid in communi, et non in speciali, est imperfecte aliquid cognoscere. Unde intellectus noster, dum de potentia in actum educitur, pertingit prius ad cognitionem universalem et confusam de rebus quam ad propriam rerum cognitionem, sicut de imperfecto ad perfectum procedens ...¹³

It is because of man's composite nature, a nature which is potentially actualizable; and, subsequently, because man's intellectual act is characterized by a

¹²Ibid., Ia, Q. 14, a. 6, r.

¹³Ibid.: "For to know a thing in general, and not in particular, is to have an imperfect knowledge of it. Hence our intellect, when it is reduced from potentiality to act, acquires first a universal and confused knowledge of things, before it knows them in particular; as proceeding from the imperfect to the perfect."

movement from potentiality to actuality, that Saint Thomas interprets the cognitive act as both "ratio" and "intellectus". He sees them as one. They are not distinct powers but one power which resides in the intellect. This is evident, according to Saint Thomas, from a consideration of mental activities. Saint Thomas argues that to understand, which belongs to the intellect, is simply to apprehend intelligible truth.¹⁴ On the other hand, to reason is simply a process by which the intellect advances progressively from one thing understood to another for the same end, namely, to know intelligible truth.¹⁵ However, because angels have no composition in them, they have no reason, since they know by possessing perfect knowledge of intelligible truth.¹⁶ Their understanding is simple, without any mental discursion.

Intelligere enim est simpliciter veritatem intelligibilem apprehendere; ratiocinari autem est procedere de uno intellecto ad aliud, ad veritatem intelligibilem cognoscendam. Et ideo angeli, qui perfecte possident, secundum modum suae naturae,

¹⁴Ibid., Ia, Q. 79, a. 8, r.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

cognitionem intelligibilis veritatis non habent necesse procedere de uno ad aliud; sed simpliciter et absque discursu veritatem rerum apprehendunt.¹⁷

Thus in the case of man, he must proceed from one thing known to another in order to possess intelligible truth, and as such he is properly referred to as "rational". Thus Thomas compares the process of reasoning and understanding to movement and rest, to acquisition and possession.

Homines autem ad intelligibilem veritatem cognoscendam perveniunt procedendo de uno ad aliud, ut ibidem dicitur; et ideo rationales dicuntur. Patet ergo quod ratiocinari comparatur ad intelligere sicut moveri ad quiescere, vel acquirere ad habere; quorum unum est perfecti, aliud autem imperfecti.¹⁸

Thus, like movement which always proceeds from something immovable to something at rest, reasoning proceeds by way of enquiry and discovery and advances from certain things simply understood, that is, first principles, and by way of judgment it returns by analysis to first principles, in the light of which it examines what it has found.¹⁹

¹⁷Ibid.: "For to understand is simply to apprehend intelligible truth; and to reason is to advance from one thing understood to another, so as to know an intelligible truth. And, therefore, angels, who, according to their nature, possess perfect knowledge of intelligible truth, have no need to advance from one thing to another; but apprehend the truth simply and without mental discursion."

¹⁸Ibid.: "But man arrives at the knowledge of intelligible truth by advancing from one thing to another; and therefore he is called rational. Reasoning, therefore, is compared to understanding, as movement is to rest, as acquisition to possession; of which one belongs to the perfect, the other to the imperfect."

¹⁹Ibid.

Et quia motus semper ad immobile procedit, et ad aliquid quietum terminatur, inde est quod ratiocinatio humana secundum viam inquisitionis vel inventionis procedit ab quibusdam simpliciter intellectis, quae sunt prima principia; et rursus in via iudicii resolvendo redit ad prima principia, ad quae inventa examinat.²⁰

The phrase "simpliciter intellectis" has been underlined in order to emphasize that for Saint Thomas the intellectual act as intuition is operative both in the simple apprehension of intelligible truth and also (and this fact is not brought out or realized in many epistemological discussions), in its essential simplicity and dynamism, behind every discursive movement by which the mind proceeds from one thing simply understood to another. D.M. Petter in an article entitled "L'Intuitif implicite dans l'acte de connaissance" (1949)²¹ points out that in the cognitive act intuition is "entièrément et essentiellement 'implicite'," that the intuitive act is wholly and essentially an implicit act of the intellect in its discursive movement.²² He continues by saying that:

²⁰ Ibid.: "And since movement always proceeds from something immovable, and ends in something at rest; hence it is that human reasoning, by way of enquiry and discovery advances from certain things simply understood - namely, the first principles; and again by way of judgment return by analysis to first principles, in the light of which it examines what it has found."

²¹ D.M. Petter, "L'Intuitif implicite dans l'acte de connaissance" in Actes du Xème Congrès International de Philosophie, Amsterdam, 1949, fasc. 1, pp. 384-387.

²² Ibid., p. 387.

Cela veut dire qu'à aucun moment l'esprit ne parvient à le poser en quelque sorte devant soi, en lui donnant une expression adéquate, mais qu'il est en lui comme un trésor illimité mais insaisissable, dont chacun de nos actes de connaissance explicite s'efforce de prendre possession, sans arriver pourtant à épuiser sa richesse originale.²³

Earlier in this same article Petter argues that in all the abstract content of knowledge there is also a non-abstract element. However, this abstract element can only be expressed in a confused way. Thus, in the process of trying to furnish for itself a distinct but inadequate expression, the abstract content founds the validity for the concrete object. In other words, the intuitive element which is not abstract reveals itself only as implicated in the very abstract content of the act of knowledge, yet, remaining in itself unsusceptible except in a confused way. This will also become apparent in the consideration of Mascal's own reformulation, although, as it was stated before, the latter certainly falls short of precision and explicitness.

Petter remarks that what can obstruct man from recognizing this essentially implicit element in knowledge is the fact that man only knows it or becomes susceptible

²³Ibid., p. 386: "This means that at no moment at all does the mind succeed in positing it the (content of the intuition) in front of itself in giving it an adequate expression; but it is for it an unlimited source of treasure which is ungraspable, of which each of our explicit acts of knowledge strive to take possession without ever truly succeeding in exhausting its original richness."

to it in its improper, confused and abstract form.²⁴ This explicit, abstract form is its verbal formulation in the word "being". However, Petter issues the warning that this inadequate abstraction of the content of "being" is not and should not be taken as the property of the content in itself, but it should be taken to be only its imperfect and confused expression.²⁵ Thus, he concludes:

Il faudra donc dire que ce contenu, 'en tant que tel', n'est abstrait d'aucune manière, mais qu'il n'est 'comme tel' aucunement explicité ou exprimé, ou qu'il demeure entièrement et essentiellement implicite.²⁶

In another question (Q. 85, a. 3) Saint Thomas argues that in both sense and intellect, knowledge of the more common ("cognitio magis communis") precedes knowledge of the less common ("cognitio minus communis").²⁷ His argument runs thus: In regard to its object, the intellect is always in a state of potentiality to act. This follows from the fact that every power is always in a state of incompleteness, the point which Saint Thomas refers to as the "medius

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.: "It will be necessary to say that this content, inasmuch as it is not abstract in any way, but that it is as such in no way explicit or expressed that it lives wholly and essentially implicit."

²⁷Saint Thomas, Summa Theologiae, 1a, Q. 85, a. 3, r.

inter potentiam et actum."²⁸ It is the point before the power achieves completeness. Therefore, a complete or perfect act for the intellect is achieved when its object is distinctly and determinately known. An incomplete act is one in which the object is known partly in act and partly in potentiality. This state of being occurs in the initial moments of when a thing is first known. This explains why a thing first known is apprehended in a vague and confused fashion. Borrowing Petter's mode of expression, it could be said that this confused and uncertain kind of knowledge consists in an abstract and non-abstract content; the former being determinate and explicitated in some image or concept, the latter being indeterminate and implicit. Moreover, the former is only an inadequate expression of the latter on which the former grounds the objective validity of the concrete real which it expresses. At this stage, then, the object is known partly in act and partly in potentiality.

Quod enim sic cognoscitur, secundum quid cognoscitur in actu, et quodam modo in potentia; unde Philosophus dicit, in Physic., text. 3, quod 'sunt primo nobis manifesta et certa confusa magis; posterius autem cognoscimus distinguendo principia et elementa.'²⁹

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.: "A thing thus imperfectly known, is known partly in act and partly in potentiality, and hence the Philosopher says (Physics 1, text. 3) that 'what is manifest and certain is known to us at first confusedly; afterwards we know it by distinguishing its principles and elements.'"

Consequently, knowledge of a complex thing without proper knowledge of its parts can only but be confused and uncertain. Saint Thomas contends that despite the fact that this initial act of knowledge is vague and confused, through it man is given access to the universal whole which contains its parts potentially, thus providing the basis for knowledge of the integral whole.³⁰ As Mascall will say with Saint Thomas, this knowledge is, admittedly, confused and uncertain but it is, all the same, a knowledge. Even so, this initial knowledge provides the required stimulus to the intellect to move from this state of incompleteness to completeness. According to Saint Thomas, this movement should not be referred to two distinct powers but to one and the same power.³¹ He maintains that it is by the same power that man understands and rationalizes. "Muldo ergo magis per eandem potentiam intelligimus et ratiocinamur. Et sic patet quod in homine eadem potentia est ratio et intellectus."³²

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 1a, Q. 79, a. 8, r.

³² Ibid.: "Much more, therefore, by the same power do we understand and reason: and so it is clear that in man reason and intellect are the same power."

In fine, then, because of the psycho-physical constitution of man his understanding of things is an imperfect understanding. This is evident from the fact that man does not understand everything and also in those things which he does understand he proceeds from potentiality to act. In other words, the intellect does not achieve completeness in its first act of apprehension ("Et similiter intellectus humanus non statim in prima apprehensione capit perfectam rei cognitionem ...").³³ Thus, it proceeds to understand the properties, the accidents and the multifarious elements of the whole essence of the object known. In the process, the intellect compares the thing known with another by composition and division and through this process it proceeds to a fuller comprehension of the thing. That is what Saint Thomas understands by reason.

... et deinde intelligit proprietates et accidentia, et habitudines circumstantes rei essentiam. Et secundum hoc necesse habet unum apprehensum alii componere, et dividere, ex una compositione et divisione ad aliam procedere; quod est ratiocinari.³⁴

³³Ibid., Ia, Q. 85, a. 5, r: "So likewise the human intellect does not acquire perfect knowledge by the first act of apprehension ..."

³⁴Ibid., Ia, Q. 79, a. 3, r: "... (after it apprehends something about its object, such as its quiddity which is its first and proper object, the intellect) then it understands the properties, accidents and the various relations of the essence. Thus it necessarily compares one thing with another by composition and division, and from composition and division it proceeds to another, which is the process of reasoning."

But, more importantly, underlying this procession of the intellect in striving to achieve completeness in comprehension is the implicit element of intuition, providing the vision necessary for the intellect to proceed by way of reason to achieve its end. Thus the very cognitive act itself reflects the constitutive nature of man. As a mode of being, knowledge could be defined in terms of a movement from incomplete being to a more complete state of being. Therefore, through knowledge man is capable of discovering the exigencies and richnesses of his being, in this way, establishing the basis for the integration of this knowledge and thus becoming it. However, being free, man has the ultimate say with regard to the response required by his being.

D. Mascall's restatement of the notion of "intuition".

As it was asserted earlier in Chapter Two, Mascall believes that to the extent that man's soul was able to transcend its union with the body it could engage in "simple, contemplative, undiscursive intellectual enjoyment of supra-sensuous and trans-sensible realities" and, in particular, God.³⁵ And when doing such, the soul, as the intellectual principle, exercises its function as

³⁵Eric Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science, p. 274.

"intellectus". On the other hand, to the extent that the soul is operating on the level of the senses, in accordance with its psycho-physical unity with the body, it must proceed discursively, "per divisionem et compositionem."³⁶ In other words, it operates as "ratio".

In Words and Images, although Mascall still, and more than ever, wishes to ground a philosophical theology on a sound epistemology, his concern encompasses a wider gamut and is inclusive of all the intellectual disciplines. More precisely, his objective consists in the establishment of a solid epistemological basis for inter-disciplinary discourse. He feels that traditional epistemology with its view that knowledge consists in both "ratio" and "intellectus" can provide this basis which is desperately needed today. He reminds the moderns that this twofold operation of the intellect does not necessarily concern itself simply in the apprehension of a purely spiritual realm, but is equally concerned with its perception of the material world.³⁷ He empathizes with the moderns, since the tradition which he represents admits that almost all knowledge is mediated by the senses; but this same tradition also maintains that knowledge does not terminate with sense perception.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Eric Mascall, Words and Images, p. 64; Cf. Saint Thomas, Summa Theologiae, 1a, Q. 86, a. 1 and 3.

He reiterates the familiar warning that the neglect of this two-fold functioning of the intellect has "impoverished the mental life of the modern world and has produced the glacial and spectral character of much modern philosophy."³⁸ He derives two ideals of knowledge from the disengagement of this two-fold functioning of the mind. On the one hand, there is the "modern view" which holds that "in order to arrive at truth and avoid error the mind must, so far as it is possible, detach itself from its object, attend only to the object's sensible characteristics, and confine itself to observation and ratiocination."³⁹ The other ideal of knowledge is the traditional view which, according to Mascall, would look at the modern view as legitimate for certain purposes (i.e., physics and mathematics) but which maintains that the highest activity of the human mind is one which consists in involvement with the object not detachment, "not the restriction of attention to the sensible surface but penetration beneath it to the intelligible metaphysical being, not ratiocination but contemplation."⁴⁰ Ultimately, for Mascall, intuition is a contemplative act both in its implicit participation

³⁸ Ibid., p. 65.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

in the discursive process but also in its transcendence of the psycho-physical unity that is man, to penetrate beneath the surfaces of sensible realities.

Dr. Mascall's fundamental epistemological assertions of his position as expressed in Words and Images are three:

1. "... although conception normally takes place through the medium of sensation, its essence is not sense-awareness but intellectual apprehension; the intellect uses the sensible phenomenon as an 'objectum quo' through which it passes to the apprehension of the 'objectum quod' which is the intelligible trans-sensible being.
2. "... the intelligible object is not something whose existence is deduced from that of the sensible phenomena ... nor is it something mentally constructed out of the sensible phenomena as many modern empiricists have held, but something grasped through them.
3. "... in order to penetrate beneath the sensible phenomenon to the real intelligible things that support them, we need, not an attitude of detachment, ratiocination and attention to the phenomenal surface of things ... but an attitude of involvement, contemplation and penetration into their intelligible depths."⁴¹

Mascall feels that within this epistemological context it, then, becomes possible to grasp that unique but universal characteristic of the contingency of finite being - being totally dependent upon the creative activity of a transcendent God.⁴² But more importantly, at stake here is

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 70-71.

⁴²Ibid.

not only the existence of a transcendent cause of Being but also and, primarily, the existence of things and persons, since the existence of God can only be posited through a clear vision of the nature of the existence of things and persons. Moreover, this vision is of the utmost importance and bears its most direct influence in the realm of human relations. This is so true since meaningful human activity is consequent upon a unified grasp of the end of the activity. And contrarywise, unintelligible activity is consequent upon a fragmented vision of the end. Thus if man cannot see himself, others and things in their true natures, he will also not be able to establish any type of authentic relation with himself, others and things. Hence, the epistemological position one adopts will certainly affect his relation towards himself, others, things and supra-sensible realities. Consequently, if the Cartesian hypothesis is adopted that knowledge, to be genuine knowledge, must be "clear" and "distinct", then, things, persons and God will either be eliminated as such or else they will have to be redefined in terms of phenomena so as to meet the standard of "clear" and "distinct" or any other criteria. It is Mascall's contention that there is a whole range of knowledge - a knowledge not of but through sensible phenomena - which is essentially obscure and opaque.⁴³

⁴³ Ibid.; Cf. Saint Thomas, Summa Theologica, 1a, Q. 85, a. 3, r.

It naturally follows that if Dr. Mascall's second ideal of knowledge is accepted, then, there is no problem in establishing a basis for a true knowledge of God, persons and things. As Mascall stresses, this knowledge may be obscure and opaque but it is, nonetheless, a knowledge.

Furthermore, reality for Mascall is mysterious and, yet, not alien to the human intellect which is capable of obtaining this obscure and opaque knowledge of it. "... it is a world into which we can penetrate in part and which we can know in part, but only if we approach it in an attitude of contemplation and humility."⁴⁴

In clarification of his notion of "mystery", Mascall compares the notions of "puzzles" and "problems" to see how they both differ from his notion of "mystery". He defines a "puzzle" as "something which purports to be a genuine question which vanishes into thin air when the terms into which it is stated are examined."⁴⁵ On the other hand, a "problem is a question which does not evaporate on linguistic analysis and which we cease to ask only when we have discovered the answer."⁴⁶ The

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 76.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 77.

⁴⁶Ibid.

comparison indicates that the notion of "mystery" which Mascall has in mind is quite different from the latter two notions. A mystery for Mascall is not a question nor does it demand an answer.⁴⁷ The latter point may be disputed since the very notion of a question implies the unfolding of some response, thus, temporarily satisfying the intellect's drive to know and at the same time luring it to go on to achieve a more comprehensive knowledge of the object of which the question is asked. It is, for Mascall, "an object inviting contemplation."⁴⁸ The mystery invites the subject to penetrate it, to penetrate beneath its surface in an attitude of humble and wondering contemplation. His description of the notion of "mystery" in such mystical terms as "an object demanding contemplation" etc., candidly betrays his mystical orientation which can be easily traced to his early work with the mystical theology of Saint John of the Cross.⁴⁹ This mystical element is certainly evident in his understanding of "intuition", or simply the cognitive act in general. This fact will certainly have a bearing on the question of theological

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 78.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹See Eric Mascall, Grace and Glory, London: Faith Press, 1961, pp. 43-44; A Guide to Mount Carmel. Being a Summary and Analysis of "The Ascent of Carmel by Saint John of the Cross, With Some Introductory Notes, Westminster: Dacre Press, 1939, pp. 17-21.

discourse. However, it will also have a bearing on the question concerning the possibility of using such an epistemology as the basis for discourse in general. Eventually the question has to be asked whether such a highly mystical interpretation of the cognitive act may be used as a workable basis for inter-disciplinary discourse (?). This question will be given more consideration in the last chapter.

Mascall characterizes his notion of mystery by three distinct features:

1. "... on being confronted with a mystery we are conscious that the small central area of which we have a relatively clear vision shades into a vast background which is obscure and as yet unpenetrated.
2. "... as we attempt to penetrate this background ... the range and clarity of this vision progressively increase but that at the same time the background which is obscure and unpenetrated is seen to be far greater than we had recognized before.
3. "... a mystery, while it remains obscure in itself, has a remarkable capacity of illuminating other things."⁵⁰

It follows from this very nature of reality as mysterious that man must, in order to penetrate beneath the perceptual world through the sensible phenomena to apprehend things, persons and God, learn how to contemplate them with an attitude of humility and wonder.⁵¹

⁵⁰Eric Mascall, Words and Images, p. 79.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 81-82.

He must open himself up to the whole of the real with an attitude of wonderment and not merely record its sensible qualities and analyse their relationships. This attitude stems from the tenet which both Mascall and the Thomistic tradition uphold that "our perception of the world need not and, unless it is deliberately inhibited, will not terminate in the sensible phenomena."⁵²

... the mind uses the phenomena as a stepping stone to higher things, for in these matters, as in mystical theology, the images of height, depth seem equally appropriate. In Thomist language, the intellect abstracts the intelligible essence from the sensible species and is united to it in the concept. In Whitehead's jargon, perception in the mode of presentational immediacy is supplemented by perception in the mode of causal efficacy.⁵³

In his epistemological exposition in Words and Images, Mascall wishes to stress the essentially obscure nature of man's grasp of trans-sensible realities in the act which he refers to as "contemplative penetration."⁵⁴ Ultimately, for Mascall intuition is a contemplative penetration of reality. This applies whether man is able to penetrate as far as the physical object or to the human person "whose body the physical object may be, or to the God whose creative

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., p. 82.

⁵⁴Ibid.

efficacy is at the root of physical objects and human persons alike."⁵⁵ In each case the object of this contemplative penetration is a mystery. Thus:

As we penetrate into it this mystery both our knowledge of it and our recognition of the extent to which it transcends our knowledge of it will remain obscure and partial, it will bring with it an increasing understanding of other things.⁵⁶

It is on this epistemological basis that Mascall contends that a valid philosophical theology is possible. It is possible, first of all, through a recognition of the existence of the contingency of being and then by an affirmation of a Necessary Being. Of course, the crucial question is whether the transition made from the finite order to a transcendent order is legitimate(?). However, Mascall believes that it is possible to have a direct and mediate apprehension of God by and in the apprehension of finite beings.⁵⁷ He claims that in the apprehension of finite beings what is apprehended is "neither the creature-without-God nor God-without-the-creature, but the creature-deriving-being-from-God-as-the-creative-ground-of-the-creature."⁵⁸ He borrows an old Augustinian and

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 82-83.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 83.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 87.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 85.

scholastic term, which he finds in a work on Saint John of the Cross,⁵⁹ to denote this metaphysical experience. The word is "contuition" and it is defined as the "apprehending of the presence of the cause in a perceived effect."⁶⁰ Like "contemplative penetration", "contuition" requires development and growth. Both are forms of intuitive knowledge and as such they are intellectual powers which have to be developed, in order to be effective, to the level of "habitus".⁶¹

By this re-statement in Words and Images of the above notion of "intuition" as the simple act of the mind by which the intellect is able to penetrate beneath the sensible surface of things, and persons, Mascall is returning to the noetics he adopted in He Who Is where "intuition" is defined in terms of "interpretation" or "penetration" and in the process avoids the controversial noetics of Gilson. Surprisingly, in Words and Images, Mascall makes very little reference to Gilson, thus avoiding possible interpretative accusations which could have been levelled against him. His thesis as a whole is in very general terms and as such

⁵⁹Benedictine of Stanbrook, A., Mediaeval Mystical Tradition and Saint John of the Cross, London: Burns & Oates, 1959, p. 70ff.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 70.

⁶¹Eric Mascall, Words and Images, p. 86.

it is more original than any of his previous philosophical attempts. However, it is hoped that some day he will expound more deeply on his thesis in Words and Images, which is truly an "intuition", but as such it is "obscure and opaque." More will be said in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

A. Reiteration of Dr. Mascall's Thesis.

Dr. Mascall's re-statement of the traditional notion of intuition as "simplex intuitus" is his attempt to found a valid metaphysical and theological discourse on a sound epistemological basis. Furthermore, he endorses this same basis for all types of discourse.

Along with the Greeks and the Medievals, Dr. Mascall maintains that knowing consists in both "ratio" and "intellectus"; the former being that power of discursive logical thought and the latter being that simple vision or "simplex intuitus" by which the intellect grasps the real and through which it penetrates beneath its surface thus acquiring access to the mystery of being.

He claims that from this two-fold functioning of the mind are derived what he calls "two ideals of knowledge". On the one hand there is the "modern view" which holds that "in order to arrive at truth and avoid error, the mind must, so far as it is possible, detach itself from its object, attend only to the sensible characteristics, and confine its activity to observation and ratiocination."¹ The other ideal of knowledge is the traditional view which maintains that the highest activity of the human mind is

¹Eric Mascall, Words and Images, p. 65.

one which consists in involvement with the object, not a detachment, "not the restriction of attention to the sensible surface but penetration beneath it to the intelligible metaphysical being, not ratiocination but contemplation."² The latter view follows naturally from Mascall's Christian Anthropology which views man as a composite being, made of body and soul, of matter and spirit, in a mysterious intricate unity. Thus Mascall believes that to the extent that the soul, as the intellectual principle of this psycho-physical unity, is able to transcend and thus go beyond its unity with the body ...

... it is able to engage in simple contemplative undiscursive intellectual enjoyment of supra-sensuous and trans-sensible realities ... (However) In so far as the soul is operating on the level of the senses, it proceeds by a discursive process of ratiocination 'per divisionem et compositionem'; and this is its character as 'ratio'.³

At stake, depending on the ideal of knowledge one accepts, is not only the existence of God whose existence would necessarily be eliminated if one chooses the first ideal of knowledge, but also the very existence of things and persons.

²Ibid.

³Eric Mascall, Christian Theology and Natural Science, p. 274.

Dr. Mascall does admit the fact that our knowledge had through the second ideal is limited and obscure. But he also maintains that what man grasps at first in a limited and obscure way is, nonetheless, a knowledge. This would follow from his view of reality as being essentially mysterious. Reality for him is a mystery which he defines as "an object inviting contemplation".⁴ It invites the subject to penetrate it, to get involved, to penetrate beneath its surface in an attitude of humble and wondering contemplation.⁵ Because of this very nature of reality as mysterious it follows that if man wishes to penetrate it he must first learn how to contemplate it with this attitude of humility and wonder. He must open himself up to the whole of the real with an attitude of wonderment. Thus, he says:

... as we penetrate into it both our knowledge of it and our recognition of the extent to which it transcends our knowledge will increase, and although our knowledge of it will remain obscure, it will bring with it an increasing understanding of other things.⁶

In brief, then, for Mascall intuition is this "wondering contemplation" of the mind in its encounter with the whole of the real. It is man transcending himself as a

⁴Ibid., p. 78.

⁵Ibid., p. 29.

⁶Ibid., p. 83.

psycho-physical unity through the exercising of himself as an intellectual spiritual being and thus acquiring access to another intelligible dimension of being.

B. Critical Reflections.

Dr. Eric Mascall's fingers are certainly on the pulse of the times. He is "in tune" with the times. In other words, he has an intuition as to the nature of man's ills and as to the nature of their causes. He realizes the tremendous, deep-rooted anxiety from which contemporary man is suffering. And as a Christian he empathizes with man. But as a Christian and as a Philosopher-Theologian Mascall sees that the source of man's frustration is a lack of meaning, a lack created by contemporary man's inability to realize himself for what he truly is and the corresponding inability to exercise himself and thus develop himself in that nature which he is. Dr. Mascall's life-long contention has been that Christianity or a Christian view of man and the Universe can provide contemporary man with that necessary vision which he urgently needs to restore himself to his true self and thus fill his being with intelligibility. This theme is reflected in all of his major philosophical and theological works. And an attempt on his part to explicitate this vision of man, man as Christianity conceives him to be, is made in his works Christian Theology and Natural Science and The

Importance of Being Human. Cognizant of the fact that these two works are not intended by Mascall to be treatises on Christian Anthropology, it must be stated, nevertheless, that they are characteristic of all of his works - they lack an in-depth reflection on their subject matter. This comment is not intended to degrade the contribution Dr. Mascall has made to this field of studies. Nor is it intended to imply that he is not capable of carrying out such an intensive study in Christian Anthropology. On the contrary, these comments are intended, first of all, to point out that both of Mascall's works fall short of what could be considered an in-depth reflection on the Christian and, in particular, Thomistic conception of man and that such a work does not yet exist. Secondly, the comments are intended to indicate that Dr. Mascall is capable and seems to possess at his disposal the required paraphernalia to carry out such an in-depth study.

The same remarks equally apply to his work Words and Images where it is his thesis to postulate that man can have a vision of things, persons and God and thus making it possible for him to have a valid discourse about these realities. D.M. Mackinnon, a reviewer of Words and Images makes the following observation:

It may well be that Dr. Mascall would have achieved much more, if he had restricted his canvas and confined himself to a really serious attempt to face Schlick's sustained and searching criticisms⁷ of the kind of knowledge which Mascall clearly believes to be possible and of which he offers us (often by way of quotation, e.g., from G.K. Chesterton) a tantalizing outline.⁸

MacKinnon goes on to apologize in seeming to suggest that Mascall should have taken a different approach in writing the book. But at the same time he remarks, and justifiably so, that "a reviewer is perhaps justified in suggesting how the book's central insight could have been developed and possibly rendered more secure."⁹

As it was stated earlier in this thesis, Words and Images may be compared to man's initial intuition of being, it is vague and confused. The thesis therein is certainly a great insight and Dr. Mascall should be credited in having at least shared it with the intellectual community. However, it is hoped that he will elucidate on this important subject in the good ol' Thomistic fashion by striving to achieve fuller comprehension.

⁷See D.M. Mackinnon, a review of Dr. Mascall's Words and Images in Church Quarterly Review, 159 (1958), pp. 114-117. In this particular statement concerning Schlick's criticisms of the traditional epistemological position adopted by Mascall, McKinnon is referring to Moritz Schlick's major early work Allgemeine Erkenntnislehre.

⁸Ibid., p. 115.

⁹Ibid.

One point concerning the notion of intuition itself as Dr. Mascall has defined it. Obviously, as it was pointed out in the fourth chapter, this notion of intuition as "contemplative penetration" is a highly mystical conception. While it is perfectly consistent with his Christian conception of man and the Universe, it becomes a highly illusive notion to grasp especially for one who is outside the tradition. Of course, this is not to say that intuitive knowledge is particular to the Christian tradition, for from the very beginning man has always experienced intuition in his knowing process. But since this intuitive power seems to be stemming from the very dynamic structures of man's spiritual being, a dimension of man which is not so easily accessible except in a very mediate way through the observation of activities which cannot be explained in terms of his physical dimension, it becomes very difficult to posit it as the basis for human discourse in general. Furthermore, it is also very dangerous to define it merely in relationship to man's spiritual dimension without showing and indicating its relation to man as an integral unity. Mascall does do the latter in Christian Theology and Natural Science, but in Words and Images his emphasis is more on the spiritual dimension of man. Perhaps the reason for this is due to his concern in Words and Images with the grounding of theological discourse on a sound epistemological basis.

However, by defining intuition only in relation to its spiritual nature without relating it to man as an integral unity, that Mascall believes him to be, weakens this basis which he is trying to establish for discourse since this epistemological conception would not involve, and thus would not take into account, the whole man. Again, the reason for this apparent imbalanced presentation of intuition in Words and Images is due to the lack of precision and elucidation of the complete epistemology which Mascall is popularizing. In other words, to remedy this imbalance would require an in-depth scholarly enquiry into the notion of intuition in the Thomistic tradition and, in particular, in Saint Thomas with whom the Greek and the Christian-Mediaeval philosophical traditions converge. This would be a great contribution to contemporary epistemology. Thus by achieving this balance, that is, by situating intuition within the integral processes of human cognition, would more easily facilitate the positing of intuition not only as the basis for theological discourse but would also facilitate its employment in the founding of some common basis for all kinds of inter-disciplinary discourse. With confidence, it can be said that Dr. Mascall can make this contribution. With Dr. H.D. Lewis, a

reviewer of Words and Images, it can be said that "Readers of Dr. Mascall's work will look forward to the fuller development of ... these notions."¹⁰

Before concluding these reflections, a few additional comments are in order on the notion of judgment which Dr. Mascall adopts in Existence and Analogy, a work that is based on Gilson's existentialist interpretation of St. Thomas. As it was seen earlier, both Mascall and Gilson maintain that "existence" or "esse" can only be grasped in the act of judgment. But if this is possible, then judgment would be reduced, as Louis-Marie Regis maintains, to simple apprehension.¹¹ Moreover, this would certainly imply the conceptualization of "esse". If this is so then the presumed existential metaphysics of Gilson and his followers would be reduced to pure essentialism. This is certainly a serious area of concern in contemporary Thomistic philosophy. At stake here is not only a correct interpretation of the function and operation of the cognitive faculty and consequently of reality, but also of the thought of Saint Thomas. The Gilsonian school boldly posits the claim that their interpretation of Saint Thomas is the

¹⁰H. D. Lewis, a review of Dr. Mascall's Words and Images in Journal of Theological Studies 9 (1958), p. 413.

¹¹Louis-Marie Regis, Epistemology, pp. 327ff.

most loyal. Thus in the 1965 edition of Le Thomisme, Gilson will continue to state the same thesis concerning the two operations of the mind.

Ces deux opérations distinctes visent l'une et l'autre le réel, mais elles ne le pénétrèrent pas jusqu'à la même profondeur: l'intellection atteint l'essence, que la définition formule, le jugement atteint l'acte même d'exister: 'prima operatio respicit quidditatem rei, secunda respicit esse ipsius.'¹²

Moreover, Gilson will continue to rely on the same text in Saint Thomas' Commentary on the Sentences (1 Sentences, lib. 1, dit. 19, q. 5, art. 1 to 7). In the same edition of Le Thomisme, Gilson argues that because of the composite nature of objects, knowing them requires a corresponding composite act.¹³ Thus to express "the activity of the determining principles of these (composite) substances, it is necessary that the thought duplicate the exterior act of the form by the interior act of the word."¹⁴ Therefore, Gilson concludes, "because the act is the very root of the

¹²Etienne Gilson, Le Thomisme, Introduction à la philosophie de Saint Thomas d'Aquin, 6th ed., Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1965, pp. 184ff: "These two distinct operations both grasp the real, but they do not penetrate it to the same depth. Intellection attains the essence, formulated in the definition; and the judgment attains the very act of existing: (and, of course, here he quotes from the Commentary on the Sentences, lib. 1, dit. 19, q. 5, art. 1 to 7^m) 'prima operatio respicit quidditatem rei, secunda respicit esse ipsius.'"

¹³Ibid., p. 185.

¹⁴Ibid.

real, only the act of judgment can attain the real in its root."¹⁵ He continues to argue that it is for this reason that the verb "is" is at first used as a copula to enunciate that such and such a substance "exists with such a determination."¹⁶ Gilson holds that inasmuch as this verb is used in a proposition only as a copula, it does not express anything more than "la communauté d'acte du sujet et de la détermination."¹⁷ Thus for this unity thus formed to have its total being posited outside thought, it is necessary, Gilson argues, that it be determined by an existential act.¹⁸ Of course, he would maintain that it is only in the judgment that this is possible. Otherwise, he claims, one could not validly speak about existence. However, what is really implied when existence is affirmed or predicated of a thing? Does it mean that "existence" or "esse" in itself is first separated by the act of judgment and then attributed to the essence of the thing attained in the "so-called" first act of the mind, that is, simple apprehension? Or does it mean, as some would maintain, that in and through the concept of the being of a thing the intellect, besides affirming the composite

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

unity of the thing, emphasizes that existential nature of the thing given in and through the concept? It would seem natural and logical that if one wishes to remain or to carry out any metaphysical enquiry within a realist framework, he would have to do so on the level of first intention. Thus it would be only by maintaining oneself in a first-intention-relation with that which is given in and through the concept that one would constantly be truly striving to understand reality and, thus, be capable of speaking in a valid way about, not only "existence" but of the "existent", the "quid". For this reason, it would follow that the second of the two alternatives above is much more correct. Ultimately, however, one's experience of oneself as knowing, and knowing things, will either confirm or deny whichever alternative one chooses.

Concerning the above consideration Joseph de Finance says the following in his work Connaissance de l'être:

En réalité, que pensons-nous, quand nous pensons déterminément l'exister d'un être, d'un homme par exemple? Nous avons dans l'esprit un 'quid', un certain contenu intelligible - ici, l'ensemble des caractères qui définissent l'homme - mais avec une certaine attention ou intention de l'esprit sur l'acte par lequel cet ensemble est posé dans l'être. Et si nous pensons l''esse', l'exister en général, nous avons dans l'esprit l'être, l''ens' en général,

avec l'accent mis sur l'acte par lequel l'être, en général, est. Autrement dit, nous ne pensons l'exister qu'à travers l'existant, l'esse' qu'à travers l'ens'. Les deux concepts sont identiques quant au contenu représentatif; ils ne diffèrent que par l'éclairage, la visée de l'intention.¹⁹

De Finance goes on to point out that it is not possible to grasp existence per se without simultaneously essentializing it.²⁰ Existence cannot be represented as a thing, "à la façon d'un 'quelque chose'."²¹ However, he believes that existence can be attained by way of the very act which affirms it since this act is from the existential order.²² But it must be constantly kept in mind that this

¹⁹ Joseph de Finance, Connaissance de l'être. Traité d'Ontologie. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966, p. 47: "In reality, what do we think, when we determinately think the existence (l'exister) of a being, of a man for example? We have in our mind a 'quid', a certain intelligible content - in this case, the totality of the characteristics which define man -, but with a certain attention or intention of the mind on the act by which this totality is posited in being. And if we think the 'esse', existence (l'exister) in general, we have being in the mind, 'ens' in general, with the emphasis put on the act by which being, in general, is. In other words, we can only think of existence by way of the existent, the 'esse' by way of 'ens'. The two concepts are identical in regard to the representative content; they only differ by the illumination, the end of the intention."

²⁰ Ibid., p. 47.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

is only possible if one remains on the level of first intention. Therefore, there certainly is on this level a judgmental affirmation of existence, but it is the affirmation of the existence of "ens habens esse" which is given to the intellect in and through the concept. Thus in this case the judgment expresses the intellect's realization of itself as intellect in relationship to its proper object as known. For this reason, according to Dr. Benoît Garceau in his work Judicium, St. Thomas views judgment as being essentially a "discernment" and in some specific cases, an "appreciation of the value of things."²³ Consequently, in the above case, judgment would consist in an intellectual "assent" to and "discernment of" the thing as being both "esse" and "essentia". In other words, judgment would consist in the intellect's realization of itself as intellect in relationship to the thing known in its inexhaustive intelligibility.

Dr. Garceau gives the following résumé of his thesis:

Sans doute, par jugement on peut désigner diverses attitudes de l'esprit, notamment la simple constatation d'un fait et l'appréciation de la valeur des choses. Mais quel que soit le genre de connaissance auquel on l'applique, il conserve toujours, aux yeux de l'Aquinate, une note essentielle, qui se réalise différemment, selon les procédés que l'âme emprunte pour exercer son acte judiciaire. Cette note essentielle, ou ce noyau de signification, c'est le discernement par une vertu cognitive de son objet

propre. Dans l'activité complexe du connaître, les espèces, les concepts, les énoncés, les discours sont, pour nous, des facteurs indispensables; mais ils n'ont de sens que parce qu'ils sont soit l'expression soit la condition de l'acte par lequel l'âme reconnaît ce pour quoi elle est faite: le réel dans sa valeur de vérité et de bien.²⁴

Thus, it would seem that judgment for Aquinas could be described as both the realization of the intellect as intellect and the explicit expression of the intellect's realization of an intuition of the real. In other words, it is the intellect's realization of itself as intellect in relationship to the real as known by it.

Obviously, this is no place to get involved in an exhaustive consideration of judgment in Saint Thomas. An exhaustive and scholarly treatment may be found in Dr. Garceau's work. However, the above comments have been made in order to, first of all, offer some critical reflections

²⁴Ibid.: "Without doubt, judgment can designate diverse attitudes of the mind, notably the simple verification of a fact and the appreciation of the value of things. But whatever be the kind of knowledge to which it is applied, it (judgment) always conserves, in the eyes of Aquinas, an essential note, which is realized differently according to the modes which the soul employs to exercise its judicative act. This essential note, or this core of meaning, is a discernment of its proper object by a cognitive virtue. In this complex activity of knowing, the species, the concepts, the enunciations, discourse are, for us, indispensable factors; but they only have meaning because they are either the expression or the condition of the act by which the soul recognizes the reason for its being: the value of the real as truth and goodness." (pp. 253-254).

on Dr. Mascall's epistemological position he adopts in Existence and Analogy; and secondly, to indicate the seriousness and scholarliness under which any future study in this area should be undertaken. Popularization of traditional truths is a worth-while endeavour so long as they are presented in their richness and intelligibility. Slogan-philosophizing is a very common tendency in contemporary philosophic circles. "To be relevant" is for some philosophers more important than to be in search for truth. Perhaps this may be due to the highly commercial and professional status which cultural, social and economic conditions have ascribed to the "lover of wisdom". If this is the case, the philosopher is certainly not being faithful to his vocation.

The latter remarks are certainly not intended to refer to Dr. Mascall, even though his philosophic writings thus far could be described as popularized versions of traditional Thomistic thought. Moreover, all of his writings are motivated by an apparent deep-rooted intuition, an intuition which as yet has not been fully and comprehensively explicitated. On the negative side, it would seem that in his attempt to be relevant to the Anglo-Saxon School of Philosophy Dr. Mascall may

have succumbed to the tendency which he himself accuses this same school, that is, of attaining a vast superficial knowledge of the real, but a knowledge lacking both insight and depth.

However, in conclusion, it is hoped that intensely motivated by his Christian intuition of man, Dr. Mascall may give to contemporary man and posterity a more lucid expression of this insight.

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ABSTRACT

ERIC MASCALL'S NOTION OF INTUITION

This thesis has been a critical examination of Dr. Eric Mascall's reformulation of the traditional thomistic notion of intuition. This notion is very fundamental to all of Mascall's philosophical writings. Its importance in his thought is not explicitly and more fully realized until one of his later works Words and Images (1957) where he posits this notion as the basis for all meaningful human discourse, a basis which could also become the very source of unity for all of man's intellectual endeavours.

The First Chapter of this thesis is an introductory chapter. The primary objective in this introduction is to situate the emergence and development of Dr. Mascall's philosophic position. The latter treatment, in turn, provided a context within which to introduce the problematic of the thesis which would consist of a critical consideration of Dr. Mascall's epistemological position and, in particular, of his notion of intuition.

The Second Chapter is an attempt at situating Dr. Mascall's epistemological position within a Christian Anthropology and to show how his epistemological position is consequent upon a pre-understanding of man, an understanding which Christian Anthropology offers. For this reason the Chapter was entitled "Dr. Mascall's Starting Point: A Christian Anthropology."

The Third Chapter examines the metaphysical foundations of Mascall's epistemological position. In this chapter, it is maintained that Mascall's metaphysics is an adoption of Gilson's existential metaphysics of the Exodus. As a result, Mascall involves himself in the controversial position common to most of Gilson's followers, for with Gilson he posits that it is possible to grasp "esse" in the act of judgment. The latter is given some brief comments.

In the Fourth Chapter, Dr. Mascall's notion of intuition is examined. It is pointed out that his understanding of intuition as "contemplative penetration" is, perhaps, too mystical. This would tend to undermine any discourse which would be based on it. This follows from the simple fact that man is psychophysically constituted and as such his cognitive act is both "ratio" and "intellectus". Moreover, in this same chapter, St. Thomas' understanding of the cognitive act as both "ratio" and "intellectus" is given a separate examination so as to supplement and elucidate more precisely Mascall's own reformulation and understanding of this philosophic doctrine.

The Fifth Chapter consists simply of a reiteration of Dr. Mascall's thesis and of some critical reflections on his whole epistemological position.