
Metaphysics as Horizon

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Metaphysics as Horizon¹

Fr. Coreth, ordinary professor of metaphysics at the University of Innsbruck, has given us not only a text by a professor but also a work by a philosopher. The professorial hand is evident in the abundant *Zusätze* that in finer print recall historical antecedents and the contemporary setting. The philosophic mind is revealed in the sweep and subtlety of an argument that develops a unified understanding of being through a study of the being of man, the being of things, and the being of God.

The great merit of the work, in negative terms, is its clean break from the Wolffian tradition. By being is meant, not what can be, but what is. By general metaphysics is understood, not a study of some prior realm of possibilities, but an understanding of actual existents. There is analogy not only of being but also of the transcendentals, and as the being of the subject grounds the account of the being of things, so the self-realization of the subject in inquiring, knowing, and willing grounds the account of the unity, ontic truth, and ontic goodness of things. If there is no omission either of the analysis of the finite existent or of the categories of material being, still the fact that the first analogate in our analogous knowledge of being is human existence, inevitably is reflected in an account of personal being, of morality, community, historicity, and religion. In brief, the transition from being as what can be to being as what is, has been carried through in its full implications. When being is the existent, when our knowledge of being is analogous, the object of the science of being has to be the set of existents, and the unity of the science can be only analogical.

Still, however familiar are these premisses, and indeed however classical is Fr. Coreth's doctrine, the result is a new look. For Fr. Coreth is not merely breaking from the Wolffian tradition but also implementing the insights of Fr. Joseph Maréchal. In this, of course, Fr. Coreth reserves the right to go his own way. As he points out (p. 12), what has come from Fr. Maréchal is not a school but a movement, not a set of ready-made opinions repeated in unison by members of a uniform group, but a basic line of thought that already has developed in various manners and still continues to do so.

The substance of Fr. Coreth's development can best be approached through a consideration of his method. This he deduces from the assumption that metaphysics is the *Gesamt- und Grundwissenschaft*: it is total, for being includes everything; it is basic, for it accepts no presuppositions

¹ EMERICH CORETH, *Metaphysik. Eine methodisch-systematische Grundlegung*. Innsbruck-Wien-München: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1961, pp. 672.

that it itself does not justify. Its method, accordingly, will have to be a mediation of immediate knowledge (p. 68 f., 233). Though a subordinate use of synthetic-inductive and analytic-deductive procedures is granted (p. 88 ff.), still such mediate knowledge cannot meet the main issues, for it has presuppositions (p. 61 ff.). On the other hand, immediate knowledge in its immediacy will not do, for simply to assert the evidence of one's fundamental metaphysical views only provokes the answer, *quod gratis asseritur, gratis negatur* (p. 67). It remains that the main method in metaphysics is a mediation of the immediate. There exists a latent metaphysics, present and operative in all our knowing; it is the metaphysical *Ureinsicht* in its immediacy; but it has to be thematized and made explicit, to be brought out into the open in accurately defined concepts and certain judgements (p. 68 f.). The main task of the metaphysician is not to reveal or prove what is new and unknown; it is to give scientific expression to what already is implicitly acknowledged without being explicitly recognized (p. 93).

The proper tool in this mediation of the immediate is the rejection of the counterposition. Explicit judgements can contradict the latent metaphysics that they presuppose; but one has only to bring this contradiction to light, for the explicit judgement to be evident nonsense, and for its opposite to be established (p. 68). Such a procedure Fr. Coreth names transcendental method: its basis lies, not in the content of the judgement, but in the conditions of its possibility (p. 69); and he does not hesitate to assert that 'Die transzendente Methode, wie wir sie verstehen, ist nicht nur die fundamentale Methode, die vom Wesen der Metaphysik als Grundwissenschaft gefordert ist; sie ist auch, wenn wir so sagen dürfen, die integrale Methode, die alle anderen, isoliert genommen unzureichenden Methoden in ihrem berechtigten Anliegen aufnimmt und in eine höhere Einheit aufhebt' (p. 88).

Such a tool, clearly, needs a point of application, and this Fr. Coreth finds in the concrete, conscious, active reality of the subject asking a question. To doubt questioning is to involve oneself in a counterposition, and so questioning is beyond the doubter's capacity to doubt coherently. Presuppositionless metaphysics, accordingly, begins from questioning: not from the appearance of it, nor from the concept of it, nor from judgments about it, but from the performance, the *Vollzug* (p. 77 ff.). Linking such performance with conditions of possibility is the *Auslegung* in a sense carefully differentiated from that of Husserl and Heidegger (p. 76, 91 f.).

After the foregoing, merely introductory, discussion of method, the argument proper begins. No doubt, the proper place to begin is at the beginning, but some say one issue and others say another is the proper beginning. So there is a question about the beginning and, indeed, no matter where one starts, one starts from some question. For Fr. Coreth, then, questioning itself is the beginning.

What is the condition of the possibility of questioning? In other words, what is the essence of questioning, what is found in every question to constitute it, not as question about this rather than about that, but simply as questioning? It is claimed that the condition of the possibility of any and all questions is an awareness that goes beyond the already known to an unknown to be known (p. 130).

What is this awareness of? At least, it is of the questionable, for if nothing were questionable, there could be no questions. But, further, the questionable is unrestricted: to propose a limit to questioning is to raise the question of the legitimacy of asking questions beyond the limit; and raising this question is already beyond the limit. In other words, to limit questioning lands one in a counterposition. Finally, as the questionable is unrestricted, so it is somehow one. For the condition of the possibility of questioning is always the same going beyond the already known to an unknown that is to be known; it follows that the questionable, of which questioning is aware, must be as much one as the awareness that constitutes questioning.

Still, what is it that is questionable, unrestricted, one? It is being. Being is the questionable: it is the great unknown, that all our questions are about (quid *sit*? an *sit*?) and never exhaust; it is unrestricted, for apart from being there is nothing; finally, it is one for, despite all other differences, every instance of being is.

But we say «is» and «is not» in such different ways: we say there «is» a moon; but we also say there «is» a logarithm of the square root of minus one. In brief, there is a realm of absolute and unrestricted validity in which things «are» *simpliciter*, and there are other realms in which they «are» indeed but still are merely logical, merely mathematical, merely hypothetical, merely phenomenological, and so on. Which is the realm that is the condition of the possibility of asking questions? Plainly, we ask questions with respect to all realms, but the realm of being that is the condition of questioning is the one that must be presupposed for there to be the others. When one states that a statement is merely logical, one means that really and truly it is merely logical. It follows that one cannot suppose that all statements are merely logical, for then it would be merely logical that they are merely logical, and it would be impossible to say that any really and truly is merely logical. The same holds for the merely hypothetical, the merely phenomenal, and any other restricted or qualified realm. By the same stroke any and every form of idealism is excluded. The possibility of questioning is being, and this being is being in its unqualified sense, *An-sich-Sein*. 'Daraus folgt, daß es einen geschlossenen «Innenraum» der transzendentalen Subjektivität niemals gibt noch geben kann, da die Subjektivität in ihrem Vollzug immer schon «draußen» ist beim An-sich-Sein überhaupt, das sie selbst übersteigt. Der Vollzug ist in seinem Wesen und seiner Möglichkeit konstituiert durch seinen Horizont; der Horizont aber, in dem die Subjektivität sich vollzieht, ist immer schon der Horizont des An-sich-Seins überhaupt' (p. 193).

Now we might continue to follow Fr. Coreth's argument. We should learn that questioning not only is about being but also is itself being, being in its *Gelichetheit*, being in its openness to being, being that is realizing itself through inquiry to knowing that, through knowing, it may come to loving. This being of the questioning questioner is the latent metaphysics from which explicit metaphysics is derived; and in explicit metaphysics it is the primary analogue through which other being as being is understood.

However, as we cannot reproduce the book, it will be more profitable to locate it. If the more obvious location would be in the German philosophic tradition, with which Fr. Coreth has the familiarity of one born on

the spot, it will be more helpful, I think, to turn to the contemporary Scholastic milieu, to which Fr. Coreth also belongs. Accordingly, I shall select for purposes of contrast Prof. Gilson's *Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaissance* (Paris 1939). It is true, of course, that that book is not the whole of Prof. Gilson, and that Prof. Gilson is not the only opponent of Fr. Maréchal. It remains that Prof. Gilson's book is still influential (*Theol. Studies*, 22 [1961] 561) and that our purpose is not a survey of contemporary Scholasticism but an introduction to Fr. Coreth's thought. Our question is, then, in what manner do Kant, Prof. Gilson, and Fr. Coreth differ.

First, then, it is to be noted that the operative moment in Fr. Coreth's use of transcendental method cannot occur in a Kantian context. For that operative moment lies in a contradiction not between content and content but between content and performance; but a Kantian context is a context of contents that does not envisage performances. Thus, there is no explicit contradiction in the content of the statement, We are under an illusion when we claim to know what really is. On the other hand, there is an explicit contradiction in the reflective statement: I am stating what really and truly is so when I state that we are under an illusion whenever we claim to know what really and truly is so. However, the content of the explicitly contradictory statement adds to the content of the first what is found implicitly in the first, not as content, but as performance. Now to bring to light such contradictions is the operative moment in Fr. Coreth's use of transcendental method. But such an operative moment cannot occur in a Kantian context for, while Kant envisages an *Ich denke* as a formal condition of the possibility of objective contents being thought, still he cannot find room for a concrete reality intelligently asking and rationally answering questions. In brief, phenomena appear, but they do not perform; and transcendental conditions of possibility within a transcendental logic do not transcend transcendental logic.

If the point has been explained, it will be well to apply it. Kant, then, acknowledges the need of the concept of noumenon as a *Grenzbegriff*: such a concept is of no use to him in knowledge of things, for he knows no noumena; but the same concept is essential to him, if he is to state the limitations of our *Anschauung*, if he is to state that we perceive not noumena but phenomena (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [=K.R.V.] B 310 f.). Now Fr. Coreth would not claim that this passage in the *Kritik* is contradictory, for a passage is just a sequence of contents. He would claim that it is contradictory when the performer is added. For what the performer wants to assert is that really and truly our *Anschauung* is not of what really and truly is and, none the less, that we cannot know what really and truly is. This contradiction lies, not in the content uttered by the mind, but in the mind that utters the content, and not in a formal entity that merely thinks thoughts, but in a concrete intelligence that by its performance means and by its uttered contents denies that we know what really and truly is so.

Secondly, if now we turn to a comparison of Prof. Gilson's position with Kant's, the differences appear massive. Kant is a critical idealist;

Prof. Gilson is neither critical nor an idealist. But so radical an opposition does not preclude all similarity, for Prof. Gilson's door to his real world is perception, and Kant's door to his world of appearances is *Anschauung*.

For Kant, the judgement that seven and five are twelve is synthetic and *a priori*. Still it is only *a posteriori*, by an empirical *Anschauung*, that Kant knows five books in one pile on his desk, seven in another, and so necessarily twelve in all. Moreover, this function of *Anschauung* is universal. *Anschauung* is the one means by which our cognitional operations are related immediately to objects (*K.R.V.*, A 19, B 33). Judgement is only a mediate knowledge of objects, a representation of a representation (*K.R.V.*, A 68, B 93). Reason is never related right up to objects but only to understanding and, through understanding, to the empirical use of reason itself (*K.R.V.*, A 643, B 671).

Of the pivotal importance of empirical *Anschauung* in his system, Kant was fully aware. It was his refutation of Pure Reason, for concepts and, along with them, principles can refer to objects and so can possess objective validity only through *Anschauung*. Of themselves, no matter how *a priori* they may be, they are the mere play of imagination and understanding (*K.R.V.*, B 301). But what condemns pure reason, by the same stroke condemns realism. For the only *Anschauung* we enjoy is sensitive; sense does not know noumena; and so our concepts and principles have no reference to noumena. Human cognitional activity is confined to phenomena.

Prof. Gilson is equally convinced that perception is the one manner in which cognitional activity attains objectivity. He differs from Kant, not on the question of principle, but on the question of fact. He maintains an immediate realism and, as he very acutely remarks in his *Réalisme thomiste*, 'Kant lui-même... soutient un réalisme immédiat de l'existence d'un monde extérieur kantien' (p. 176). Accordingly, there are two questions. What is Prof. Gilson's fact? Does this mean that the whole issue turns upon a fact?

Prof. Gilson's fact is not the exact opposite of Kant's. Kant asserts that sense does not apprehend noumena, and Prof. Gilson is far from asserting that sense does apprehend noumena. His assertion is that over and above sensitive perceptions and intellectual abstractions there exists an intellectual vision of the concept of being in any sensible datum. Moreover, he adds, it is the concept of being, seen in this manner, that is predicated in perceptual judgements of existence. Thus, '...l'apprehension de l'être par l'intellect consiste à *voir* [his italics] directement le concept d'être dans n'importe quelle donnée sensible' (p. 215). Again, '...Lorsque le concept d'être est au contraire abstrait d'un existant concret perçu par le sens, le jugement qui prédique l'être de cet existant le lui attribue comme «vu» [his quotation marks] dans le sensible donné dont il l'abstrait' (p. 225 f.). So much for the matter of fact.

But how does it come about that Prof. Gilson differs from Kant on a question of fact and not, as Fr. Coreth, on a question of principle? The reason is very simple. Prof. Gilson does not advert to Fr. Coreth's principle and, indeed, could not admit it without changing his own principles.

For Prof. Gilson idealism does not necessarily involve a contradiction. He denies flatly that he ever held critical idealism to be contradictory (p. 160 note). He asserts that, once Berkeley's starting-point is admitted,

one cannot find a contradiction from one end of his work to another (p. 195). He maintains that, if one starts from critical premisses, then one may conclude to existence, but the concluded existence will be merely a postulate or merely a predicate (p. 183).

Now, if idealism is possible, there exists the problem of the bridge. Abstract concepts of *l'être en général* and of existence are one thing. Concrete, actual, extramental existence is another. To think the former is one thing. To know the latter is another. There has to be some ground, some principle, some evidence, if idealism is to be rejected, if it is to be claimed that we not merely think about immanent objects but also know extramental realities (cf. p. 185).

Further, the needed ground, principle, evidence cannot be reached by a deduction. If the premisses are understood in a realist sense, then realism is not proved but presupposed. If the premisses are understood in a non-realist sense, then the conclusion has to be understood in the same sense, and so realism is not concluded. Realism must be immediate truth.

Moreover, this immediate truth cannot be anything proper to intellect, any innate knowledge, any *a priori*. When Prof. Gilson adduces the axiom, *nihil in intellectu nisi prius fuerit in sensu*, he claims that it is to be taken with absolute universality and that it is to be applied with full rigour. No exception is to be admitted, not even for being and the principle of contradiction (p. 200).

If follows that realism is possible if and only if we *perceive* reality. Some ground for it is needed, for idealism is possible. That ground cannot be a deductive conclusion. It cannot be innate or *a priori* knowledge. Therefore it must be *a posteriori*. On this point Prof. Gilson is explicit in a manner calculated to leave no loop-holes. 'Ainsi, de quelque manière et à quelque profondeur de plan que nous lui posions la question: comment savoir qu'une chose existe? le réalisme répond: en la percevant' (p. 203).

However, if Prof. Gilson agrees with Kant in holding that objectivity is a matter of perception, if he differs from Kant in holding that *de facto* we have perceptions of reality, one must not think that he attempts to refute Kant by appealing to a fact that Kant overlooked. Prof. Gilson's realism is dogmatic; the course he advocates is '... la réaffirmation brute du réalisme dogmatique dont la valeur a été niée par la critique de Kant' (p. 163).

This does not mean that Prof. Gilson has no reasons for being a realist. He was a realist before he began philosophy. His study of philosophy, so far from leading him to abandon realism, has only confirmed his original convictions. For him the history of philosophy moves about an axis, and the axis is sanctioned by a Herodotean law of compensation. This axis is realism, and its sanction is that 'Lorsqu'un homme refuse de penser en réaliste où il faut, il se condamne inévitablement à penser en réaliste là où il ne faut pas' (p. 228).

Prof. Gilson's dogmatism, if I understand him, is that the whole is prior to the parts, that realism is a whole, prior to its parts, and so incapable of being assembled by starting from some part and step by step adding on the others. We have already noted the proof that realism cannot be proved deductively. But the opposite procedures of advancing inductively or constructively, if not demonstrably impossible, certainly bristle with difficulties. In any case, Prof. Gilson does not attempt them.

His fact of intellectual perception is not conceived independently of his Thomist system. It is not investigated simply in terms of psychological introspection and analysis. On the contrary, Prof. Gilson does not believe metaphysicians should attempt to do psychology (p. 125). He asserts a general osmosis between sense and understanding, but leaves it to psychologists to work out the details (p. 207). He indicates the area in which the perceptual judgement of existence is to be found, but he makes no effort to survey, explore, and work out a detailed report (p. 225). Professor Gilson's fact is not a manifest datum, accessible to anyone, and by its sheer givenness imposed on any and every philosopher. On the contrary, its givenness is vague and its accessibility is restricted. And even were its givenness precise and its accessibility universal, that would not prevent the Kantian from placing the perceived existence in the category not of noumena but of phenomena. 'C'est pourquoi, en fin de compte on ne prend rien du réalisme tant qu'on ne le prend pas tout entier' (p. 224).

Thirdly, to complete our circle of comparisons, we must now turn to Prof. Gilson and Fr. Coreth. Here we are met with massive similarities, and it is the difference that requires clarification. For both are realists: they acknowledge the real existence of minerals, plants, animals, men, and God. Both are immediate realists: though Fr. Coreth mediates this immediacy, still for him no less than for Prof. Gilson realism is immediate truth. In both immediate realisms an *a posteriori* component is recognized: neither attempts to restore the Pure Reason that Kant undertook to refute. Not only are both Thomists, but also both are quite convinced of the priority of metaphysics over everything in general and over cognitional theory most particularly. Finally, as realism for Prof. Gilson is a whole, as his thinking deals with philosophies as wholes, so too for Fr. Coreth the priority of the whole over the parts is cardinal.

The basic difference is that, while Prof. Gilson's immediate realism cannot be mediated and so is dogmatic, Fr. Coreth's immediate realism not only can be but also is mediated. For Prof. Gilson realism is a whole that one must accept or reject, and with this Fr. Coreth agrees. For Prof. Gilson realism is a whole that cannot be assembled step by step with every step guaranteed as alone rational, and with this Fr. Coreth flatly disagrees. His transcendental method is essentially the method for explicating the whole: for transcendental method ascertains conditions of possibility, and the first and foremost of all conditions of possibility is the whole itself.

Let us attempt to get clear this point about a philosophy as essentially a whole. Aristotle and Aquinas distinguish the expert and the wise man: the expert orders everything within a restricted domain; the wise man orders everything. Further, to call a congress of all experts representing all restricted domains does not secure the presence of a wise man, for none of the experts knows the relations between the restricted domains. Knowledge of the whole, then, is distinct from knowledge of the parts and it is not attained by a mere summation of the parts. The very fact that the expert restricts his domain implies that he also restricts the number of aspects under which he considers the objects within his domain; as the restrictions are removed, further aspects come to light; only when all restrictions are removed, do all aspects come to light; and once all re-

strictions are removed, there can be no ulterior and higher viewpoint from which new aspects come to light with a consequent revision and re-ordering of previous acquisition. So the unrestricted viewpoint is ultimate and basic: it is wisdom and its domain is being.

Now it is technically simpler to express the foregoing in terms of «horizon». Literally, a horizon is a maximum field of vision from a determinate standpoint. In a generalized sense, a horizon is specified by two poles, one objective and the other subjective, with each pole conditioning the other. Hence, the objective pole is taken, not materially, but like the formal object *sub ratione sub qua attingitur*; similarly the subjective pole is considered, not materially, but in its relation to the objective pole. Thus, the horizon of Pure Reason is specified when one states that its objective pole is possible being as determined by relations of possibility and necessity obtaining between concepts, and that its subjective pole is logical thinking as determining what can be and what must be. Similarly, in the horizon of critical idealism, the objective pole is the world of experience as appearance, and the subjective pole is the set of *a priori* conditions of the possibility of such a world. Again, in the horizon of the expert, the objective pole is his restricted domain as attained by accepted scientific methods, and the subjective pole is the expert practising those methods; but in the horizon of the wise man, the philosopher of the Aristotelian tradition, the objective pole is an unrestricted domain, and the subjective pole is the philosopher practising transcendental method, namely, the method that determines the ultimate and so basic whole.

Now, to connect the foregoing with a point made earlier, the fact of horizon explains why realism and, generally, a philosophy cannot be proved deductively. The reason is that horizon is prior to the meaning of statements: every statement made by a realist denotes an object in a realist's world; every statement made by an idealist denotes an object in an idealist world; the two sets of objects are disparate; and neither of the two sets of statements can prove the horizon, within which each set has its meaning, simply because the statements can have their meaning only by presupposing their proper horizon. Further, what is true of statements is equally true of the statement of problems and of the statement of solutions; problems and solutions are what they are only in virtue of the horizon in which they arise; they cannot be transported intact into a different horizon. So we arrive in general terms and on the level of principle at the type of point that was made in a specific form by Prof. Gilson when he claimed: 'Jamais je n'ai soutenu que l'idéalisme critique est contradictoire; ce qui est contradictoire, c'est le réalisme critique, ou, plus précisément encore, c'est de vouloir poser le problème de l'idéalisme critique dans la perspective du réalisme thomiste. A cela se limite ma thèse;...' (p. 160 f., note).

However, if Fr. Coreth grants that statements have a meaning only within a horizon, how can he escape the dogmatism that Prof. Gilson believes inevitable? The answer is that he begins, not from a statement, but from a performance, a *Vollzug*, asking questions. It is a performance that begins early in childhood and is continued even by an Aquinas until a higher form of knowledge supervened. No doubt, that performance will be interpreted or overlooked in different manners when assumed within different horizons; but it is given to be interpreted or overlooked whether

or not it is assumed. Nor can any doubt be entertained about the fact of the performance. To doubt questioning is to ask whether questions occur. The condition of the possibility of doubting is the occurrence of questioning. Fr. Coreth, then, begins from a clearly known, universally accessible, indubitable occurrence.

Now that occurrence is also the subjective pole in the horizon he is mediating. It determines its correlative objective pole, which like questioning is one and unrestricted. Its name is being; for being is one, since every being is; and being is unrestricted, for apart from being there is nothing.

Now the determination of the two poles is the determination of a horizon, and it is easy to see that Fr. Coreth's horizon is total and basic. It is total, for beyond being there is nothing. It is basic, for a total horizon is basic; it cannot be transcended, gone beyond, and so it cannot be revised.

But further for Fr. Coreth being is precisely what St. Thomas meant by being. For as intended in questioning, being is unrestricted. In that premiss there is already included the conclusion that *esse de se est illimitatum*, whence it will follow that finite being is a compound of essence and existence and that every *ens* is an *ens* by its relations to *esse*.

From this it would seem to follow that being for Fr. Coreth and being for Prof. Gilson must be exactly the same. For Prof. Gilson also means by being what St. Thomas meant. It remains that this identification is not without its difficulties, for if the objective pole in Fr. Coreth's horizon is the same as the objective pole in Prof. Gilson's, the subjective poles are manifestly different.

Thus, Fr. Coreth would accept the principle, *nihil in intellectu nisi prius fuerit in sensu*. But he would have to distinguish, say, between the way there is nothing in a box and the way there is nothing in a stomach. When there is nothing in a box, a box does not feel empty; when there is nothing in a stomach, the stomach does feel empty. Human intelligence is more like a stomach than like a box. Though it has no answers, and so is empty, still it can ask questions.

Further, for Prof. Gilson being (p. 225) or the concept of being (pp. 215, 226) is «seen» in the data of sense. But for Fr. Coreth being is what is asked about with respect to the data of sense. So far from being seen in data, being, for Fr. Coreth, is what is intended by going beyond the data. For questioning goes beyond an already known to an unknown that is to be known: for Fr. Coreth the already known is the datum, and the unknown to be known is being.

Again, for Prof. Gilson, our knowledge of being is *a posteriori*: abstract concepts of being and existence are had by abstracting from sense; and to reach the concrete there is added to the abstractions his intellectual vision. But, for Fr. Coreth, being is an *a priori*, i. e., the intention of being in questioning bears no resemblance to sensitive or empirical knowledge. What is perceived, is not unknown, not to be known, but already known. But being as intended in questioning is the exact opposite of the object of perception: it is not already known; it is unknown; it is to be known. In other words, the analysis of questioning forces one to conceive human intelligence, not on the analogy of sense, but properly in terms of intelligence itself.

Moreover, we have seen that Fr. Coreth rejects the idealist's acceptance

of idealism as contradictory, that Prof. Gilson regards idealism as non-contradictory, that consequently he is left with a problem of a bridge from a concept of *l'être en général* to an *existence concrète, actuelle, extramurale*, and that, inevitably enough, this bridge has to be an intellectual perception of existence. This narrative, it would seem, enables us to pick the exact point at which Prof. Gilson and Fr. Coreth part company. † Both agree that idealism is non-contradictory. But where Fr. Coreth maintains that the idealist's acceptance of idealism is contradictory, and so eliminates the problem of the bridge, Prof. Gilson acknowledges a problem of a bridge and so arrives at his need for an intellectual perception of being. Hence being can be *a priori* for Fr. Coreth, because for him the idealist is involved in self-contradiction; but being must be *a posteriori* for Prof. Gilson, because for him idealism is not self-contradictory.

Finally, there remains the question how Fr. Coreth and Prof. Gilson both arrive at the same objective pole, being in the Thomist sense, when their subjective poles are mutually exclusive. The explanation would seem to be that, if Prof. Gilson does not thematize questioning, none the less he asks questions and so intends what is intended in questioning; further, while Prof. Gilson asserts an intellectual perception of existence, still he is careful to integrate this perception within the structure of Thomist cognitional theory, and so is able to shift from a theory of being as something seen in data to a theory of being as something affirmed in perceptual judgements of existence. Hence, inasmuch as Prof. Gilson asks questions and gives rational answers, his position coincides with that of Fr. Coreth, and as the subjective poles are the same so the objective poles are the same. On the other hand, if Prof. Gilson were to operate simply and solely with a concept of being that can be «seen» in any sensible datum, not only would his subjective pole differ from Fr. Coreth's but also it would be impossible for him to reach being in the Thomist sense as his objective pole; for being as object of perception is being in which essence and existence are only notionally distinct.

Fourthly, we have been comparing Kant, Prof. Gilson, and Fr. Coreth two at a time; there remain a few questions that are best put with respect to all three at once.

First, then, despite his use of such terms as «transcendental» and «*a priori*», Fr. Coreth is completely in agreement with Prof. Gilson's contention that '...ce qui est contradictoire, ... c'est de vouloir poser le problème de l'idéalisme critique dans la perspective du réalisme thomiste' (p. 161 note). Indeed, Fr. Coreth excludes as impossible within his horizon not only critical idealism but any idealism and along with them Prof. Gilson's perceptionism. For him there can be no problem of the «extramental», of getting outside the mind, for as soon as a question is asked, being is intended, being includes everything, and so everything already is within the mind's intention: '...die Subjektivität in ihrem Vollzug immer schon "draußen" ist beim An-sich-Sein überhaupt...' (p. 193).

Secondly, does Fr. Coreth perceive being or does he not? I think his answer would be that (1) being is not known without perceptions, (2) being is not known by perceptions alone and (3) by the light of intelligence we know whether or not what we perceive is. In other words, he would not

say with Prof. Gilson that we know being by perceiving it; and he would say with St. Thomas: '...per illa verba Augustini datur intelligi quod veritas non sit totaliter a sensibus expectanda. Requiritur enim lumen intellectus agentis, per quod immutabiliter veritatem in rebus mutabilibus cognoscamus, et discernamus ipsas res a similitudinibus rerum' (*Summa theol.*, I, q. 84, a. 6 ad 1^m).

Thirdly, Fr. Coreth would agree with Prof. Gilson's statement: '...le point de vue transcendantal des conditions *a priori* de l'objet de connaissance ignore, par définition, le problème empirique de l'existence en soi des objets connus' (p. 177). He would point out, however, that Prof. Gilson is speaking of Kantian thought, and he would indicate the two essential differences between his approach and Kant's. First, his transcendental inquiry is, not into the *a priori* conditions of cognitional objects, but into the *a priori* conditions of questions. Kant wrote an *Erkenntniskritik*: the conditioned is the objective pole, the condition is the subjective pole. Fr. Coreth is writing a metaphysics: his subjective pole, questioning, is the conditioned; and his objective pole, being, is the condition. Hence, Fr. Coreth's transcendental inquiry is just the inverse of Kant's. Secondly, Kant's *a priori* is in the essentialist order and so, as we have seen, it is solely through *Anschauung* that it can have any objective reference or any objective validity; further, since this *Anschauung* is not of noumena, there cannot arise within the Kantian approach any question of the *existence en soi* of the objects known in Kant's world as appearance. But what follows from Kant's *a priori*, does not follow from Fr. Coreth's. Fr. Coreth's is being as unrestricted, the whole of all that is; within being there is already included *An-sich-Sein*. Not only does *An-sich-Sein* lie within Fr. Coreth's transcendental viewpoint, but also from that very fact it follows that Fr. Coreth's treatment of objectivity differs totally from Kant's and, indeed, from that of any perceptionist. For Kant cognitional operations can be related to objects only through *Anschauung*, so that perception has to be the constitutive principle of objectivity. For Fr. Coreth the constitutive principle of objectivity is the question: questioning immediately intends being; data are referred to being as what questions are about; answers are referred to being as answers to questions. Fr. Coreth's position on objectivity is the inverse of the Kantian position; it also is the inverse of the perceptionist position, which relates our cognitional operations to reality, not through the intention of being in the question, but through sense.

At the end of this attempt to locate Fr. Coreth's position within the Scholastic context, I must note that my operation is not altogether in accord with Fr. Coreth's exclusion of an *Erkenntniskritik*, his aim of presuppositionless metaphysics, his projected inclusion within metaphysics of an *Erkenntnismetaphysik*. The fact is, of course, that while I consider Fr. Coreth's metaphysics a sound and brilliant achievement, I should not equate metaphysics with the total and basic horizon, the *Gesamt- und Grundwissenschaft*. Metaphysics, as about being, equates with the objective pole of that horizon; but metaphysics, as science, does not equate with the subjective pole. In my opinion Fr. Coreth's subjective pole is under a measure of abstraction that is quite legitimate when one is mediating the immediacy of latent metaphysics, but is to be removed when one is concerned with the

total and basic horizon. In the concrete, the subjective pole is indeed the inquirer, but incarnate, liable to mythic consciousness, in need of a critique that reveals where the counterpositions come from. The incarnate inquirer develops in a development that is social and historical, that stamps the stages of scientific and philosophic progress with dates, that is open to a theology that Karl Rahner has described as an *Aufhebung der Philosophie*. The critique, accordingly, has to issue in a transcendental doctrine of methods with the method of metaphysics just one among many and so considered from a total viewpoint. For latent in the performance of the incarnate inquirer not only is there a metaphysics that reveals the objective pole of the total horizon but also there is the method of performing which, thematized and made explicit, reveals the subjective pole in its full and proper stature. Still, it is difficult to disagree completely with Fr. Coreth, for in my disagreement I am only agreeing with his view that, what has come from Fr. Maréchal is, not a set of fixed opinions, but a movement; indeed, I am only asking for a fuller sweep in the alternations of his dialectic of *Vollzug und Begriff*.

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