

SÌ SÌ NO NO

THE ANGELUS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTICLE REPRINT

Let your speech be, "Yes, yes," "No, no"; whatever is beyond these comes from the evil one. (Mt. 5:37)

July 2006
Reprint #70

St. Pius X and the Duel Between Modern Thought and Catholic Theology

PART 2

PROFESSOR MATTEO D'AMICO

René Descartes (1596-1650), as is well known, is considered to be the founder of modern thought. This is certainly true, but it is true insofar as we think of Descartes as the first metaphysician who consciously sought to *found* science. It was clear that, even with Galileo, science depreciated sense experience, but it was not known what kind of metaphysics would be needed in order to be in conformity with this idea. Descartes was the

René Descartes
Friedrich Nietzsche
Gottfried Leibniz

Pope St. Pius X
St. Thomas Aquinas
St. Augustine

first to set off on this path, and he was to be followed by almost all the most important thinkers (or at least those considered to be such). Let us take the example of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804): his whole philosophy is an explicitly declared attempt to found Newton's physics. What makes science, this bizarre and abstruse image of the world, possible on the metaphysical level?—this is the fundamental question governing the first Kantian critique.

Thus, the thinkers begin trying to bend metaphysical discourse in order to make it coherent or in conformity with the image of the world that emerged from the magical and then scientifico-Galilean tradition. One might say that what began was a formidable torsion or wrenching of definitions and categories, with the goal of restating metaphysics in scientifically homogeneous and coherent terms. Classical thought was founded, as we have seen, on the principle according to which to think means to allow being to appear, to let something else appear by identifying oneself with the thing, such that the knowing subject becomes one, in some way, with the object known; thus there is not a nature of thought *per se* separate from the moment in which the mind allows itself, so to speak, to be filled by the signification of being. With Descartes, we watch the destruction of this principle. The idea becomes a simple *mental image* interposed between the mind or intellect and reality.

The outcome of such premises can only be *skepticism* and the methodological adoption of a principle which becomes decisive for Descartes, namely, the principle according to which outside the mind there might be nothing. This is exactly the sentence that Descartes writes in his *Discourse on the Method*: in a few lines, he puts an end to classical metaphysics:

Accordingly, seeing that our senses sometimes deceive us, I was willing to suppose that there existed nothing really such as they presented to us; and because some men err in reasoning, and fall into paralogisms, even on the simplest matters of geometry, I, convinced that I was as open to error as any other, rejected as false all the reasonings I had hitherto taken for demonstrations; and finally, when I considered that the very same thoughts (presentations) which we experience when awake may also be experienced when we are asleep, while there is at that time not one of them true, I supposed that all the objects (presentations) that had ever entered into my mind when awake, had in them no more truth than the illusions of my dreams.¹

The expression used by Descartes, “I was willing to suppose,” is interesting: “I was willing to suppose that everything that I had believed to be true was not true, and that beyond my senses, there was nothing real.” They are only a few lines, but they lay down the

foundation for this extraordinary castle—this *monstrum* [wonder or portent]—that is Cartesian thought.

Mind you, the sentences we just quoted would have made a St. Thomas or an Aristotle laugh, because if they are rigorously examined according to a classical or Thomistic metaphysics, it is almost unbelievable that someone would begin from a skeptical premise of this sort, for we know very well that every skeptical thesis, as St. Augustine clearly demonstrated, immediately gives rise to a vicious circle, so that radical skepticism is in fact impossible. Skepticism is scarcely more than a grotesque form of philosophical infantilism, and its depth is only apparent.

The skeptic should keep quiet, for if he speaks, he immediately enters into unsolvable contradictions. For when even the most radical skeptic speaks, he can not do otherwise than believe in the absolute truth of his skeptical premise. But Descartes is shameless, and has no hesitation at beginning from such a contradiction. I remind you in passing that he had a sort of disgust and hatred for Scholastic philosophy, which had been communicated to him during his years of study, and this detail explains many things. One sees at work here for the first time the *naturalist presupposition*, which is the philosophical expression which describes what we have just seen placed at the basis of Cartesian philosophy.

In other words, Descartes finds his mental strategy on a groundless presupposition, an undemonstrated and undemonstrable thesis, a totally unjustified postulate. And what is the essence of this naturalist presupposition? The naturalist presupposition says the following: Our mind does not grasp things, things as such, things in themselves, as Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas thought, but it only grasps the psychophysical modifications of our senses. For Descartes, to have a sensation means to have a relation, not with the world, but with a psychophysical modification that is produced within oneself: such is the Cartesian postulate, the “original sin” of modern thought, the source of modern metaphysical *immanentism*.

The classical postulate is also a postulate, but one postulate opposed to another postulate is not enough to refute it. And there is an even more important difference: the principles with which classical philosophy began were perfectly coherent and in continuity with common sense; their credibility was, so to speak, certified by an implicit and universal *consensus gentium*.

Thus, with this major philosopher, we are confronted with a dogmatic choice, a choice that is fideist in nature.² Descartes has confidence in his postulate. He does not behold reality with the wonder of which Aristotle spoke; rather, he has

unilaterally decided that what is real is the thing in itself understood as something physical and material, and that, consequently, I can no longer really know the exterior world in its essence, because I only know the psychophysical modifications that the thing imprints on my senses. From such a standpoint, one is moreover constrained to renounce the other key category of Greco-Christian epistemology, namely, the idea that the intellect, through the senses, reaches the form or essence of the being in itself such that the cognitive act is never just sensory, but always first and foremost intellectual. Since the materialist presupposition *a priori* only accords the title of real to material things, it is evident that it is obliged to banish from the new metaphysics any idea of *essential form*, and thus to renounce every harmonious ontology of substance.³

In these conditions, man no longer has access to being, as if he had shut himself up within himself: such is, ultimately, the discovery, so to speak, of Descartes's *cogito*. If I no longer have access to being, what is left to me as subject of knowing? I have left only the ensemble of ideas that nonetheless exist, because I see [or experience] that I have a mind that is criss-crossed by a flux of ideas that I govern, but also by which I am surpassed and possessed (Freud and Sartre are already waiting behind the door, as you see!). I only have within myself this stuff of ideas which is so easily confused with a dream, but I no longer have any possibility of thinking that my reason reaches and seizes being as such.

My mind only grasps its own thoughts, so to speak. The result is the reduction of the act of thinking to rationalism, subjectivism, and immanentism. Truth and meaning, if indeed they are to be found somewhere, do not and can not but come from man's own mind. If indeed truth is to spring from somewhere, it can only spring from thought. It is no longer being that founds and rules the mind, but it is the mind that will, by strange gyrations, refund being and refund God, and place in being all that is. All will proceed from the *cogito* enclosed within the self, forbidden an ontologically fruitful relation with the world.

Such is Descartes's fundamental act. If I can only trust the contents that I find within my *cogito*, then I must start from these contents and, by basing myself upon them, proceed to all the rest: the world, God, the absolute, the meaning of things; but it is my *cogito*, my reason, that constitutes the foundation. Such is the man-centered turn that, before it struck our poor Karl Rahner, had already stricken Descartes.⁴

Man-centeredness, or anthropocentrism, is the essence of the Renaissance, but it is also, in reality, the essence of apocryphal, Cabalistic gnosticism, and it ultimately represents a *deification* of man, a subject

to which we shall soon be obliged to return. With Descartes, we are faced with the great act of thought, the great sacrilege, that stands at the origin of modern culture and history. Indeed, with Descartes, one already has the affirmation, albeit implicitly, of this radical—and fatal—metaphysical distortion: if it is the *cogito* that founds being, being is no longer founded by God, and the mind no longer has a master to heed, namely, reality. Every modern philosophy is merely a variation on this theme.

There are other details from Descartes's history that are usually left out of accounts: In his history of the Rosicrucians⁵ Paul Arnold devotes a dense and important chapter to the relationship between Descartes and the Rosicrucians. It is a very interesting subject, even if certain aspects remain obscure: it is not known with certitude whether Descartes was a member of the "Red Cross" or not, or whether he only sympathized with this mysterious movement. But it is important to recall that the Rosicrucians had a major importance in the political and cultural history of modern Europe, and it is certain that Descartes had intense relations with the Rosicrucian tradition. The same observation may be made for Bacon (1561-1626, another philosopher of the "new science" and of the "new world"), Comenius (1592-1670), Spinoza (1632-77), and Leibniz (1646-1716). This observation about Descartes and the Rosicrucians seems to me to bring out a constant trait: when someone abandons the sure paths of Catholic doctrine, sound metaphysics, and the teaching authority of the Church (the magisterium), rarely does it fail to result, in one way or another, in the practice of magic and esotericism. This is true on every level, even the political: I am thinking of the relations between the Italian *risorgimento* and esotericism, between Nazism and magic, but also between Marxism-Bolshevism and Satanism and magic.

Basing ourselves on this understanding of the reasons for the subjectivist deviation of the Cartesian *cogito*, we are ready to look at the thinking that followed, which is nothing more than a great variation on this theme. The most immediate effect of Cartesianism was a kind of agnosticism, when it did not devolve into outright atheism. Indeed, Cartesianism—if its presuppositions are accepted—implies the radical destruction of natural theology and of the Thomistic ways leading to God, because, obviously, if knowledge is exclusively of the relation between my Ego and the stuff of its ideas, I can no longer, by starting from the world, by the contemplation of nature, ascend to God.

SI SI NO NO
THE ANGELUS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTICLE REPRINT

Modern science and Cartesian thought are based on the elimination of final causes and essential forms.⁶ If final causes are eliminated, we know that enormous difficulties of explanation result. Take, for example, the crisis of evolution, which refuses finality of Greco-Christian extraction, but which finds itself involved in extraordinary contradictions. By eliminating final causality in the wake of Galileo, Descartes denies any passage from the world to God, this passage which is so evident and so necessary that, even before Christian Revelation, it had carried the lucid, profound Greek thinkers from the world to God. This passage is no longer possible. Immanentist subjectivism (*subjectivism* because I have only the subject as metaphysical basis; *immanentist* because the true, the absolute, the foundation is located in the subject) has as a result the reduction of God to the world, or rather the reduction of God to man. God and man inevitably end by coinciding, as we shall soon see, and why this must be so. Either God is reduced to man and to the world, or God is totally excluded, which is atheism. Moreover, atheism is implicit in the refusal to acknowledge the original meaningfulness of the world, and the transcendence of truth and beauty in relation to the knowing mind: such is the veritable *hubris* that lies at the heart of modern thought.

The Enlightenment: The Right to Happiness and Barbarity

Now we must accomplish, even if by brief allusions, a decisive passage at the theoretical level to the age of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was undoubtedly the daughter of Cartesian-Galilean rationalism. I shall even say more: The Enlightenment was the conscious attempt to apply the subjectivist, rationalist critique of the physical world to every domain, including religion.

Consequently, if I may be allowed a somewhat figurative expression, the Enlightenment was the spilling over of Cartesianism into every sphere of reality until it reached its logical conclusion in the theme of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789—the right to happiness. For if indeed it is the *cogito* that ultimately establishes truth, and not truth that determines the *cogito*, that means that the *cogito* is the Absolute, that is to say, in theology, God. But if man is considered to be God, it is obvious that he can no longer be subject to duties, but can only possess rights; and that no limit can be placed, at least in principle, upon his free will, no longer considered wounded and inclined to evil because of original sin, but “good” by nature, as Rousseau maintained. It is at this historic juncture that the great modern cultural revolution occurred, which the historian Ellul has

carefully reconstructed in his book *Metamorphosis of the Bourgeois*.⁷

Ellul demonstrates that the central idea of the 18th-century Enlightenment, which surely constitutes one of the most significant ruptures in relation to the preceding tradition of Christian thought, is the appearance of the category of *the right to happiness*. Such a notion is only possible, as we have seen earlier, if I have a divinized image of man, because thinking of a man who has by nature a right to happiness—or a right to *the pursuit of happiness*, as the American Declaration of Independence puts it, and as it is implicitly affirmed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of the French Revolution—means that I think of man as of God; I think of man as an absolute, as at the basis of the very meaning of his life. And this possibility of the divinization of man is equally the fundamental aspect, moreover, that unites the modern Revolution and ancient gnosticism. In both cases, we are faced with the attempt by man to decide for himself what is good and what is evil, in a self-sufficiency as absolute as it is gravely culpable.

What this means is the end of the immemorial tradition of Christian holiness, and more specifically Catholic holiness founded on the notions of duty and sacrifice, self-sacrifice. It is the passage from a society based upon duty and sacrifice to one laying claim to rights and happiness. It means the complete destruction of the very idea of sacrifice, and, as has been shown by Daniel Mornet in a very interesting study,⁸ the birth of the hatred of the Catholic Church and the Mass, which so clearly bears witness to the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation of the world, of history, and of life: this idea was something that had to be destroyed. We know that the one thing Luther could not stand in Catholicism was the idea of the unbloody renewal and representation of Christ's sacrifice in the holy sacrifice of the Mass: this is what he desired to destroy, for he was convinced—and in a certain sense he was right—that if the Mass were destroyed, then the papacy and Catholicism would also fall.

Finally, I think that it scarcely needs mentioning that the members of the circles in which the new theology developed were very often members of a veritable spider's web of Masonic lodges that, throughout the 18th century, spread all over Europe, just as were the Jacobins and other groups of radical revolutionaries who were to seize power in France, unleashing the furious persecution of the Catholic Church during which the profanation of tabernacles, consecrated hosts, and churches was daily fare.

The *modern Revolution* (a term used in the wider sense to designate the whole process that began with the Renaissance and, through the Reformation,

the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the succeeding steps, that aimed at the dissolution of the *respublica Christiana*⁹) implies, in a way perfectly coherent with the metaphysical principles that have been set forth, the complete destruction of the Christian order, in particular the social reign of our Lord, and marches towards a conception of politics in which sovereignty comes from below, and not from God. The distortion of the basic principles of Greco-Christian metaphysics ultimately produces very serious consequences at every level, including the political domain. Indeed, politics is the arena in which the new anthropocentric philosophy that characterizes modernity, in its inhumane and anti-Christian potentialities, is most manifest.¹⁰

We better understand now the sentence with which Horkheimer and Adorno [see “Cultural Revolution: The Frankfurt School” on pp.14-16, 25-32 in this issue—*Ed.*] introduced their book *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, by saying:

The second excursus is concerned with Kant, Sade, and Nietzsche, who mercilessly elicited the implications of the Enlightenment. Here we show how the submission of everything natural to the autocratic subject finally culminates in the mastery of the blindly objective and natural.¹¹

Explaining the concept of Enlightenment, they affirm:

In the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating human beings from fear and establishing their sovereignty. Yet the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster triumphant.¹²

Moreover, these authors are the first to clearly understand that the symbol and the ultimate result of Enlightenment culture is the totalitarian, pansexual universe portrayed in the novels of the Marquis de Sade, in which it appears that the culmination of reason considered as self-determining is barbarity and violence, and this also, not to say especially, in the political sphere:

...the established civil order wholly functionalized reason, which became a purposeless purposiveness which might thus be attached to all ends. In this sense, reason is planning considered solely as planning. The totalitarian State manipulates the people. Or, as Sade’s Francavilla puts it: “The government must control the population, and must possess all the means necessary to exterminate them when afraid of them, or to increase their numbers when that seems desirable. There should never be any counterweight to the justice of government other than that of the interests or passions of those who govern, together with the passions and interests of those who, as we have said, have received from it only so much power as is requisite to reproduce their own....Take its god from the people that you wish to subjugate, and then demoralize it; so long as it worships no other god

than you, and has no other morals than your morals, you will always be its master...allow it in return the most extreme criminal license; punish it only when it turns upon you.”¹³

Behold the real program of the totalitarianism of dissoluteness, to use the famous category of Augusto Del Noce, prefigured by the fervent illuminist and revolutionary De Sade, which has been in the course of realization for 200 years.¹⁴

Idealism

The discussion to this point reaches a natural juncture with German idealism. Let us begin by noting that the German idealists are excellent specialists of ancient gnosticism: Schelling was a specialist on Marcion, Hegel was a specialist on Valentinus.¹⁵ Let us not forget either that there is a very tight link uniting Marcion to Luther by the intermediary of medieval heresies, then to the German liberal Protestant theology, a link which moreover explains a certain number of anti-Semitic deviations in the Germany of the 20th Century, for the refusal of the Old Testament and the alteration of the New inevitably culminate in a form of docetism, rendering futile the Incarnation, Passion and death of the Word and the redemption He brought, and that depreciates the belonging of Jesus Christ as man to the Jewish people.¹⁶

In idealism, God is dead. The first to clearly state this is Hegel (“The great Pan is dead”). Nietzsche was not the first to take the death of God for a certain metaphysical truth and to use it as a point of departure for a new philosophy, but Hegel, almost a century before. God is dead, and the Absolute coincides with the history of culture, with the incessant succession of historico-cultural and political moments. But then man, who produces these forms and their incessant change, is God incarnate; he is God in history, because either freedom—the *Geist*, the Spirit—is held to be created, or it can only be considered as the immanence of God in history. God no longer transcends the world, but coincides ontologically with the world and history, and thus, once again, God is man. But it is interesting to observe how, in perfect correspondence with the Gnostic conception of the original pleroma, man is conceived of as God: not man taken as an individual, but man conceived as *mankind in general*, collectively dissolved, we might say, in the whole of history and of culture, then with Marx dissolved in the whole of social class. In the idealist conception the ancient Cabalistic idea reappears according to which man, by

SI SI NO NO
THE ANGELUS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTICLE REPRINT

attaining the profound knowledge of his I, encounters God.¹⁷ In German Idealism, as in Cabala, God and the world, God and man do not have a really separate life.

God needs man to be complete, God—and with this idea one can understand numerous aspects of contemporary theological thought—God is man actualized in history. Today we would say that he is man who redeems himself in history by bringing peace, by bringing the rights of man to the whole world, by destroying capitalism, by destroying modern science, which only brings evil (obviously there is a correct understanding of science, a Christian interpretation, which shows that science in itself is not an evil, but represents what has historically, starting from the Middle Ages, given a “superabundance” to a world seeking first the kingdom of heaven), by deindustrializing, with a ridiculous ecological enthusiasm, the Western world.)

But if God is man who actualizes himself in history, who redeems himself by his own power, then a humanity redeemed, pacified, and united would represent the final actualization of God. With idealism, which is the last really great step in Western metaphysics, not only are we in the shadow of a metaphysics that conceives of man as God and history as the locus where God actualizes himself, but we are also in a philosophy that, by taking its inspiration from ancient gnosis and from particular currents of the Neoplatonic tradition as well as certain representatives of the Renaissance esotericism, thinks that *nothingness* is the essence of God, thinks of alienation as the essence of God: God is alienated because he is not complete; he must make himself world, man, anguish, in order to then become laboriously himself.¹⁸ As in Hegel’s *The Science of Logic*, Nothingness precedes and founds Being.


I think that we are now able to understand in what sense idealism is a complete gnosis: An alienated God is “inhabited” by evil, by negativity; history is the locus where man redeems God from his alienation; man helps God become God, healing him of his suffering and incomplete character, his “unhappy consciousness,” his aimless and blind *kenosis*.¹⁹ No longer is it God who heals me of the leprosy of original sin, the inclination to evil, and of concupiscence. I no longer need to be healed; rather, it is I that must “heal” God, it is even I that am God, and my cure constitutes the liberation and full realization of God himself.

If idealism considers mankind to be God, then the history of mankind is the march of God towards himself, the becoming of God himself. We are on the one hand faced with the eternal gnostico-cabalistic idea according to which, as we have seen, man is necessary to God; but on the other hand, if there is no

longer any ontological difference between man and God based upon the idea of creation, if there is no ontological leap between creature and Creator, then the worth of the individual, the irreducible value of the individual, his uniqueness, his value as a person endowed with an interior life founded upon the Christian primacy of free will, collapses.²⁰ Moreover, in Hegel’s thinking, there is already an attempt to establish the primacy of the collective by dissolving the idea of person.²¹

In his *Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel clearly affirms that there can be no I outside the totality that establishes it; what is true [or real] is the totality, but the individual man, on the contrary, is never true [or real]. This thesis is the key idea of Hegel, and even of Rousseau, a thesis that will subsequently be formalized by Marx, and that today holds sway over a certain ecclesiastical sensibility. Indeed, sentimental, participatory Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement that dominates and often penetrates Catholic movements—for the movements being propagated in Catholic circles arose in a Protestant milieu—all that is fundamentally a renunciation of the person, and opens the door to an unprecedented totalitarian domination of consciences. Eric Voegelin, one of the greatest political philosophers of the 20th century, affirms in this regard that with the modern revolution, because of the gnostic representation of the totality of individuals as but a single true moment, we find ourselves confronted with a new *passivization* of persons, which is a prelude to new forms of power.²²

People have now assimilated the idea that as individuals they are nothing, that they are worthless unless they belong to a totality, even if the whole be in ruins, or barbarous, or foolish: what matters is belonging. In such an ideological context, we see disappearing the very idea that gave birth to Christianity, namely, the very idea of *martyrdom* as an inevitably and irreducibly personal and individual witness. When Thomas More, for example, heard his accusers say that all the English bishops had signed the document acknowledging Henry VIII’s sovereignty over the Church of England, he answered that *his* conscience forbade him from signing it because it called upon him to remain faithful to the Church of Rome, and that the Roman Catholic Church linked him to 1500 years of theological and ecclesiastical tradition. It is he, a man who, though alone,²³ feels that he must remain faithful, that he must bear witness to the truth. In all of England the fall into heresy and Henry VIII’s schism was opposed by just a handful of persons (scarcely more than a dozen), plus the martyrs of the Protestant persecution that ensued (70,000 dead).

This has implications for us today, for the notion of a collectivist, communitarian ecclesiology dissolves the possibility of witness, which is always individual.²⁴ 

This lecture was presented by Prof. D'Amico at the Eleventh Congress of Catholic Studies held at Rimini, Italy (Oct. 25-26, 2003) on the theme: "The Modern World in the Light of the Magisterium of St. Pius X." *DICI* called this lecture "a masterly synthesis on the philosophic genesis of modernism."

The third and final installment of this article will appear in the September 2006 issue of *The Angelus* with a discussion of Modernism and *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* of Pope St. Pius X. This was translated exclusively for Angelus Press by Miss Anne Stinnett from *Courrier de Rome* (Dec. 2005 and Jan. 2006), the French edition of *SiSiNoNo*.

¹ René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences* (1637), Ch. 4. [English version from the Gutenberg Project on line at literature.org.]

² Fideism: *fides*, faith. A philosophical term meaning a system of philosophy or an attitude of mind, which, denying the power of unaided human reason to reach certitude, affirms that the fundamental act of human knowledge consists in an act of faith, and the supreme criterion of certitude is authority.

³ Now one can more easily understand why the fundamental weakness of Cartesian metaphysics consists specifically in this enclosing [of thought] within the unsolvable difficulties that are placed between the *res cogitans* and the *res extensa*, a philosophical problem referred to as *metaphysical dualism*. If one rejects the basic principles of classical Greco-Christian thought, one inevitably slides into either a rigid, indefensible dualism, or an equally ridiculous and hardly credible monism. Such a presupposition leads to the inexorable disappearance of the possibility of maintaining the ingenious Thomistic re-elaboration of the principle of the *analogia*, or degrees, of being.

⁴ Cf. Cornelio Fabro, *The Anthropocentric Turn of Karl Rahner* (Italian) (Milan, 1974), in which the author demolishes the false interpretation of St. Thomas made by German philosophy, profoundly influenced by its master Martin Heidegger, one of the protagonists of the 20th-century return to gnosticism.

⁵ Paul Arnold, *History of the Red Cross* (Ed. Mercure de France, 1955).

⁶ It is necessary to remark at this point, if only in passing, that from the standpoint of the faith, only a realist metaphysics makes sense for, among others, the following fundamental reason: Since everything is created by God, one cannot but think that God creates being on the basis of an idea of it, with a view to some end and of an ontological harmony linking the whole of creation into a solid unity (the contrary would imply an absurd "casual creation": a veritable *conradictio in adjecto*); being thus embodies the form that God assigns it; that is why the essential form proper to beings transcends the cognitive act of the man who seizes it by means of his intellect, since it is a property which ontologically founds the being itself. Thinking the contrary would signify, even implicitly, thinking of man's mind as creator, as a divine spirit: this is exactly the ultimate conclusion of modern immanentism with idealist thinking.

⁷ J. Ellul, *The Metamorphosis of the Bourgeois* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1967; Italian ed. Milan, 1972).

⁸ **Translator's note:** The author does not provide a reference to the study, however, in 1933 Mornet published what has become a classic study of the epoch, *The Intellectual Origins of the French Revolution*.

⁹ In a very rich, profound study, R. de Mattei very deftly shows the "tension wires" tightly linking the Protestant Reformation, and in particular its radical, sectarian developments (Anabaptism, etc.), to the development of Freemasonry, Jacobinism, and the Communist ideology (*Left of Luther* [Italian], Rome, 1999).

¹⁰ For the new conception of the relation between Church and State, with particular references to Rousseau, see J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian*

Democracy; P. Zaccone, *The Hidden Face of Democracy: The Totalitarian Rousseau*; and P. Pasqualucci, *Politics and Religion: An Essay on the Theology of History*. In the last work, the author unhesitatingly locates the heart of the modern vision of religion in Rousseau's teaching and in the fundamental thesis underlying all his thought, sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly: Happiness—the veritable great myth of the 18th century (and of our own era)—can only be attained by man if man is made "one", beyond any shade of dualism or opposition between immanence and transcendence, between secular and religious, and thus between the socio-political sphere and the personal, private sphere. That means that only a man reduced to the pure political sphere will be happy, inside a system that we could qualify as biopolitical totalitarianism, and that revealed religion must be banished as a normative authority having a foundation in the transcendence of God. From a Rousseauist perspective, religion must in other words, be relegated to the internal forum of sentiment and subjective conscience, renounce any rigorous, rational structure, and adapt itself to the exigencies of the individual, to his needs and vision of the world, within a sentimental, aesthetic Christology perfectly described in the discourse of the Savoyard vicar of the *Emile*. It is at this level that the relation between Reform and politics is placed. It was Luther, as is well known, who, before Rousseau, opened the way to a sentimental and subjectivist tendency, which gave way to a deist and rationalist (at the age of liberal Protestantism) conception of Christianity. Religion is no longer based on man's effort to be open to the Word and the call that God addresses to him, but it develops "in proportion to" our conscience, in the immanentist and naturalist sense of the word. The struggle to heal the fracture between *bourgeois* and *citizen*, and to make of man a "happy" unity, pacified beyond the unhappy Judeo-Christian conscience, is also the red line, one must not forget, which developed along the axis Rousseau-Hegel-Marx, and which tightly links the two German thinkers to their Genevan predecessor. According to this idea, the individual I, understood in its moral and spiritual existence as unreducible to the class or society of which it is a part, is always a negative element, and the subject can only aspire to the truth if he loses himself in the whole, if he accepts being dissolved into the collective moment.

Be that as it may, if, based upon the Social Contract (but the real, conscious act of giving birth to this notion is older and must be ascribed, at the very least, to the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes [1588-1679]), politics claims to be founded as something completely autonomous and source of its own sovereignty, then it inevitably follows, and this is Prof. Pasqualucci's second thesis, that an absolute ideological war must be joined between the new forms of democratic-totalitarian power (that is the formula that best conveys the notion of Jacobinism) and the Catholic Church, irreducible witness of the metaphysical primacy of Transcendence, that is to say, witness of man and of a world (even political) that, instead of discovering in themselves their own meaning and reason for being, acknowledge the primacy of God and set the eschatological problem of the last things as the center of gravity of both the public and the private spheres.

¹¹ Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (1944; New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p.xvi.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹³ Marquis de Sade, *Histoire de Juliette* (Holland, 1797), cited in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p.89.

¹⁴ The quoted passage is interesting among other reasons because it reveals a certain prophetic anticipation of the "demographic plot" put in place by the United Nations and by other globalist organizations directly or indirectly inspired by the Freemasons during the 20th century (on the role of the U.N. in the great genocides of the post WWII period, cf. F. Adessa, *UN Massacres*, Brescia, 1996). The fact that the French Revolution, in the darkest phases of the Jacobin terror, was animated by deliberately genocidal acts was proven by Gracchus Babeuf in *La guerre de Vendée et le système de dépeuplement*; cf. also R. Secher, *Le génocide vendéen*. The analogies between the genocides of the French Revolution and the worst horrors of the Nazi and Bolshevik regimes are deftly developed in the popular but well-documented work of Jean Dumont, *Les faux mythes de la Révolution française*.

¹⁵ On ancient gnosticism, cf. H. Jonas, *Gnosticism* (Turin, 1991); E. Innocenti,

Si si no no
THE ANGELUS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTICLE REPRINT

Si Si No No

THE ANGELUS ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTICLE REPRINT

- Gnostic Influences in the Church Today* (Rome, 2000) and *Apocryphal Gnosis*, Vols. I and II (Rome, 1993-1999); J. Meinvielle, *Influence of Jewish Gnosticism on the Christian Milieu* (Rome, 1995); E. Samek Lodovici, *Metamorphosis of Gnosis* (for interesting bibliographical references on gnosticism and Western philosophy, and in particular for the influences on Schelling, Heidegger, Marx, and Bloch).
- ¹⁶ On the relationship between Luther, anti-Semitism, and Nazism, cf. A. Agnoletto, *The Tragedy of Christian Europe in the 16th Century: From the Judeophobia of Luther to the Humanists Jonas and Melancthon* (Milan, 1996), though the text is weak and of modernist orientation in the chapter devoted to the relationship between Catholicism and Judaism.
- ¹⁷ Curiously, it is permissible to think that a similar idea is to be found at the basis of Freudian thought. Psychoanalysis is basically a form of gnosticism: "I am liberated by knowledge," and what matters is to be initiated into the esoteric path that leads to the knowledge that saves. This gnostic, Cabalistic matrix also appears on the scientific level: "Freud's pansexualism has antecedents in Cabala, as has been shown by David Bakan in *Sigmund Freud and the Jewish Mystical Tradition*. The gnostic heresy of Cabala, which infiltrated secret societies, envisions God himself as bisexual, Adam as androgynous, and all of us as dominated by hidden, demonic, or as Freud would later say, "unconscious" forces. Incidentally, his 'revolutionary' theories on infantile sexuality were immediately accepted by one particular Jewish association, the B'nai B'rith, founded in 1843 by Freemasons and divided into lodges [it is actually Freemasonry for Jews—*Ed.*]. The *Interpretation of Dreams* was also suggested to Freud by Cabalistic texts that see in the world of dreams nothing but sexual symbols. Bakan goes further, and sees in Freud's most famous book 'a pact with the devil.' The epigraph Freud chose was '*Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo*—If I cannot bend the higher powers, I will move the infernal regions" (that is, hell), a quote from Virgil's *Aeneid* in which Juno speaks in anger (VII, 310-12). Psychoanalysis proposes an inversion: in the place of logical, conscious thought it places the unconscious, freighted with obscure sexual complexes, blasphemous and aggressive. To do this, all means are fair, especially mystification and falsification." (C. Gatto Trocchi, "The Restless Soul of the West," *Certamen*, No. 15, 2002).
- ¹⁸ A particularly profound and lucid analysis of Hegelian dialectic, and implicitly the theme of alienation, is furnished for us by E. Berti, in *Contradiction and Dialectic in the Ancients and Moderns* (Italian), Palermo, 1988.
- ¹⁹ "A term derived from the discussion as to the real meaning of Phil. 2:6ff.: 'Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, But emptied [ekenosen] himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as man.' ...According to Catholic theology, the abasement of the Word consists in the assumption of humanity and the simultaneous occultation of the Divinity" (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Kenosis").
- ²⁰ On the primacy of free will, cf. A. Dalledonne, "Le primat thomiste de la volonté libre" in *Actes du congrès théologique de SiSiNoNo* (Condé sur Noireau, 1995), pp.56-66.
- ²¹ To investigate the lesser known aspects of Hegel's life that shed light on his relations with revolutionary circles and Freemasonry, cf. J. D'Hondt, *Hegel secret: Recherches sur les sources secrètes de la pensée hégélienne* (Milan, 1989; 2003).
- ²² Cf. Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago, 1952).
- ²³ In fact, the bishop John Fisher and a group of Chartreuse monks refused to swear the oath, but concretely, existentially, his feeling of absolute solitude, such as is conveyed in his letters from prison, was immense.
- ²⁴ With this evolution of ideas, we come up against numerous movements, even Catholic ones, in which membership in the movement counts, or at least seems to count, more than membership in the Church itself and more than personal faithfulness to Christ. When the faith reigns, then all personalism, sensationalism, or cultishness is excluded. The holier someone is, the more he makes those who approach him feel as if they are approaching Christ. A classic example of the degeneration of religious life due to membership in a sectarian movement is given by the Neocatechumenal Way, an heretical group that is spreading within the Catholic Church. The proof that we find ourselves confronted with a sect in this case is given by the ability of the group to wrest its adepts from participation in parish life by enclosing them within a parallel universe subject to significant manipulation. For an introduction to the mind-boggling theological distortions of the Neocatechumens, cf. L. Villa, *Heresies in the Neocatechumenal Doctrine* (Brescia, 2000).

\$1.95 per SiSiNoNo reprint. Please specify.

SHIPPING & HANDLING

	US/Canada	Foreign
\$0.01 to \$10.00	\$3.95	\$7.95
\$10.01 to \$25.00	\$5.95	\$9.95
\$25.01 to \$50.00	\$6.95	\$12.95
\$50.01 to \$100.00	\$8.95	\$14.95
Over \$100.00	9% of order	12% of order

AIRMAIL surcharge (in addition to above)
Canada 8% of subtotal; Foreign 21% of subtotal.

Available from:

ANGELUS PRESS

2915 Forest Avenue

Kansas City, MO 64109 USA

Phone: 1-800-966-7337

www.angeluspress.org

Society of Saint Pius X
District of the United States of America
REGINA COELI HOUSE
2918 Tracy Avenue
Kansas City, Missouri 64109

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
KANSAS CITY, MO
PERMIT NO. 6706

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED