



**The Educational  
Philosophy of  
Saint Thomas Aquinas**

by **John F. Carr**

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**TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER**



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## INTRODUCTION

This study is occasioned by the confusion that exists in American educational theory today concerning the role of the efficient causes of learning in the teaching-learning situation.

For example, some modern educational theorists, in stressing the need for self-activity on the part of the pupil, have tended to minimize the role of the teacher as a communicator of knowledge and a true efficient cause of learning. They give the impression in their writings that the part played by the teacher is that of a mere guide in the classroom while the pupils discover for themselves whatever is to be learned. Indeed, in some circles it is not considered proper to use the expression "to teach." The traditional role of the teacher has been changed to that of one who merely presides and guides the learning activities of the pupil. For the teacher to teach would be authoritarianism. There must be no indoctrination. Let the children learn through experience with various projects and learning activities. One prominent progressive educator expressed it this way: "We never interfere with the natural urges and impulses of the child in any way, because you never can tell where the child will lead you." <sup>1</sup> In such

1. Quoted by John D. Redden and Francis X. Ryan, *A Catholic Philosophy of Education* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1949), p. 495.



an uncontrolled environment, learning is assumed to take place solely in response to the child's interest and "felt needs."

Much of this may be attributed to the influence of John Dewey and other enthusiasts for progressive education. Although the importance of self-activity on the part of the pupil was recognized by St. Thomas and by many other educators prior to Dewey no one can dispute the fact that Dewey did much to bring to the attention of teachers in our time the importance of self-activity on the part of the pupil. The difficulty seems to be that he performed this task so well that many have lost sight today of the complementary doctrine of the causality of the teacher. It is all very well to talk about a "child-centered" school if the function of the school is to learn only through discovery. But if there is another mode of learning as St. Thomas suggests, namely, by being taught then there are two foci within the school: a teacher who teaches and who is a true efficient cause, though partial cause of learning and the pupil who is also a cause of his own learning and unquestionably a very important and self-active individual.

One writer has summed up Dewey's position in these words, "The teachers watch their pupils mentally starve to death from lack of proper insights and values." <sup>2</sup> The breakdown of teacher authority and classroom discipline has resulted from this over-emphasis on the self-active pupil. The teacher is merely an onlooker as the child involves himself in the process of growth. The teacher's part in the "enterprise of education is to furnish the environ-

2. John Halbert, M.M., "John Dewey's Concept of Democracy in Relation to Education," (Unpublished thesis, Department of Philosophy, Maryknoll Seminary, Glen Ellyn, 1954), p. 8.

ment which stimulates responses and directs the learner's course."<sup>3</sup> When the conditions which stimulate learning have been provided "all has been done which a second party can do to instigate learning. The rest lies with the one directly concerned."<sup>4</sup> According to Dewey education is based upon experience and therefore "the teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities."<sup>5</sup>

Learning by discovery has replaced, according to this philosopher and his followers, learning by instruction. The name "teacher" loses all significance in education. It would be more appropriate to use a term such as "guidance director" or "group leader." This man who has influenced modern education so much becomes even more radical when he reduces the teacher to the status of learner.

The alternative to furnishing ready-made subject matter and listening to the accuracy with which it is reproduced is not quiescence, but participation, sharing, in an activity. In such shared activity, the teacher is a learner, and the learner is, without knowing it, a teacher.<sup>6</sup>

Carried to their logical conclusions, then, the fundamental premises of Dewey's philosophy of education would all but annihilate the position of the teacher in the learning situation. One of his most ardent disciples, William H. Kilpatrick, indicates this when he writes that, "As teachers we must make ourselves progressively unnecessary;

3. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), p. 212.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

5. John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 66. (By permission of Kappa Delta Pi)

6. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 188.

The present must honestly intend to yield sovereignty of control to the rising generation.” ’

I Thus we see in the educational philosophy of John Dewey a complete overthrow of the teacher's position and authority to the point of utter exclusion. The scepticism, chaos and confusion which has resulted since the birth of the “new education” attests to the fact that something must be done to salvage the remnants of our educational system in the United States and to protect future generations from a philosophy which says that “Even the child is to be privileged to put a huge question mark over his knowledge and to say he knows, not on the authority of the wisest teacher, but on the basis of his own experimental thought.”<sup>8</sup>

The practical consequences flowing from the philosophy of experimentalism are nowhere more evident than in the *Activity School*. Starting with the false premise that the child is naturally good we have education defined in terms of free and uninhibited activity. The child should be allowed to follow his own inclinations without “coercive discipline and dogmatic instruction, on the teacher's side, mechanical obedience and passive reception of what is taught, on the part of the child.”<sup>9</sup>

The traditional concept of the school and education is replaced by a free, undirected and unauthoritative environment. Learning is viewed in terms of interest and playful activity instead of hard work. The teacher who

7. William H. Kilpatrick, *Education for A Changing Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), p. 123-24.

8. Isaac Doughton, *Modern Public Education: Its Philosophy and Background* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1935), p. 238.

9. M. J. Demiashkevich, *The Activity School* (New York: Little, Ives\* & Co., 1926), p. 9.

would insist on a well-disciplined classroom is labeled as one who is dictatorial and undemocratic.

The teacher is not to exercise supreme authority or a direct and firm disciplinary influence over the pupil, rather, she is to serve as guide, adviser, listener and observer. . . . Learning is assumed to take place solely in response to the child's interests and "felt needs."<sup>10</sup>

The dissolution of the teacher's place in the classroom can readily be seen. Under the guise of "giving a truer understanding of her (teacher's) work as guide and expert helper"<sup>11</sup> these theorists have all but destroyed the dignity and eminence of the teaching profession. As a result of this revolution in education the learner becomes the sole authority in the classroom and it is his interests and inclinations which take precedence over the knowledge of the "incessantly talking dictator."<sup>12</sup> The role of the teacher in education is discussed by the activists only insofar as they point out that he is there "to listen and aid rather than to contract laryngitis and command . . . to provide a setting or, at least a directive environment where the free creative spirit of children would operate."<sup>13</sup>

This concerted effort to overthrow the teacher's position of authority and traditional role of honor has been strengthened by the overemphasis on method instead of matter.

Besides, the what of school work is much less important than

10. Redden & Ryan, *op. cit.*, p. 495.

11. Sister Joseph Mary Raby, *A Critical Study of the New Education* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1932), p. 8.

12. Demiashevich, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

.... the how, since the main basis of the school is to afford the means of developing a complete or all round personality, rather than impart knowledge that can be memorized.it

According to this new way of thinking on the relationship between the teacher and the pupil the child has now come into the light of a new day. The "traditional school" has been replaced by the "child-centered school."15 After years of passive subjection the child is able now to awake from the slumber imposed on him by the stultified atmosphere of the traditional classroom. The school boy of yesterday was driven by a task-master called "teacher" but the school boy of today can rightly take his place as leader in the classroom with an adult present to guide him and to be led by him.

• ' One of the sharp contrasts afforded between the traditional  
' class and the laboratory class is that the teacher is a guide  
. rather than a mariner, a driver, an infallible planner and  
.... final authority.16

; One further consideration prompts us to examine the efficient causes of learning according to St. Thomas. The modern secular educator seldom, if ever, adverts to the Divine Causality insofar as it pertains to learning. He discusses the learning situation solely in terms of what we would call secondary causes, leaving God, the First Cause, out of the picture entirely. For Catholic thinkers, on the other hand., the teaching-learning situation involved not *two* as a minimum but always *three*, God, pupil and\*

. 14. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

15. Harold Rugg & Ann Shumaker, *The Child-Centered School* (Yonkers: World Book Co., 1928).

16. Lawrence S. Flaum, *The Activity High School* (New York: Harper Bros., 1953), p. 36.

teacher. Any realistic inquiry into the causes of learning must necessarily be concerned with all three causes. Otherwise, the picture is incomplete and ridiculously distorted.

During his lifetime St. Thomas was not confronted with the problem of the respective roles of the efficient causes of learning as we have it above. But he dealt, nevertheless, with the nature of teaching and learning and in doing so he came to grips with the issues which underlie the very, problems with which we must deal in our time. Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Studiorum Ducem* points to the value of the wisdom of St. Thomas in aiding us "to avoid the errors which are the source and fountainhead of all the miseries of our time" 17 and therefore it is important that "the teaching of St. Thomas be adhered, to more religiously than ever. For St. Thomas refutes the theories propounded by Modernists in every sphere...." 18

For this reason it may be helpful to discuss very briefly the erroneous views with which St. Thomas contended in his time and to indicate his position with respect to the nature of teaching.

For many centuries men have speculated about the nature of knowledge and how it is communicated to others. As might well be expected, given the difficulties which introspection presents and the fact of human error, there has been considerable difference of opinion on this subject. St. Thomas was confronted by some of these opinions in his day, chiefly those of Plato, Avicenna and Averrhoes.

*Plato:*

Plato taught that learning was merely the rediscovery

17. Pope Pius XI, *Studiorum Ducem*

18. *Ibid.*

of knowledge. Knowledge is something that is connatural with the soul. "The process we call learning (is) a recovering of the knowledge which is natural to us." 19 According to this theory each of us possessed in the world of ideas, before we were born, all of the knowledge which we later acquire. Therefore what is called learning is only the recollection of ideas which were possessed by us in a previous state;20 This doctrine would logically reduce in importance the role of the teacher in the classroom. The activity of the teacher would be that of an accidental cause.

For, since a thing which removes an obstruction is a mover only accidentally, as is said in the Physics, if lower agents do nothing but bring things from concealment into the open, taking away the obstructions which concealed the forms and habits of the virtues and the sciences, it follows that all lower agents act only accidentally.®!

The teacher according to the Platonist is one who merely removes the obstacles of knowledge. The action of the teacher is accidental to the learner's acquiring of knowledge.

*Avicenna and William of Auvergne*

The greatest Moslem philosopher of the eastern group is without doubt Avicenna or Ibn Sina. He has been called the real creator of the Scholastic system in the Islamic world. He devoted special attention to metaphysics and

19. B. Jowett (trans.). *The Dialogues of Plato* (New York: Random House, 1937), I, 460.

20. This doctrine of Plato can be found in *Meno*, 82B; *Timaeus*, 44A; *Phaedo*, 67D, 92A.

21. *De Perit.*, XI, 1, c.

taught the existence of a Sovereign Intelligence as the highest reality. The first emanation from the Supreme Intelligence is the active intellect. This active intellect is the source of all heavenly and earthly intellects, and it is the principle by which the potentially intelligible becomes actually intelligible to the human mind. As St Thomas has put it: "the intelligible forms flow into the mind from the active intelligence." 22 In other words, there is no need, within each individual soul, for an active intellect. One suffices for all men. This separated active intellect is the cause of knowledge in the knower not the activity of the teacher.

William of Auvergne had preceded St. Thomas at the University of Paris. In him one can discern the first stage in the transition from the Scholasticism of the twelfth century to that of the thirteenth century. As one author has written, "he is the embodiment of the meeting of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries." 23 A definite Avicennic influence is evident in his writings. He rejects, on the one hand, the Platonic Doctrine of pre-existent knowledge, and on the other hand, the Aristotelian doctrine of the active intellect. 24 According to his teaching, God impresses on the intellect not only first principles, but also abstract ideas of the sensible world. 25 And therefore, he concludes, that no knowledge is caused in us except by God.,

22. *Ibid.*, also *Cont. Gen.*, II, 42.

23. F. Copleston, S. J., *A History of Philosophy* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1950), II, 218.

24. W. Turner, *History of Philosophy* (Boston\*. Ginn & Co., 1957), p. 325. (Courtesy of Blaisdell Publishing Company)

25. Copleston, *op. cit.*, II, 225.



*Averrhoes and Siger of Brabant*

While Avicenna taught that there was one active intellect for all men, Averrhoes, on the other hand, taught that all men have one passive intellect and the same intelligible species. Hence, he holds that one man does not cause another to have a knowledge distinct from that which he himself has. This opinion, according to St. Thomas, is true insofar as knowledge is the same in the pupil and the teacher if the identity of the thing known is considered. For the same objective truth is known by both of them. But it is false to say that all men have but one passive intellect and the same intelligible species differing only as to the phantasms.<sup>26</sup> Such a doctrine would logically imply that teaching is the communication of identical knowledge and that it is not concerned with bringing to full flower what already exists in seminal principles. It would further imply that the teacher must be concerned with the ordering of the teacher himself.

The leading follower of Averrhoes at the time of St. Thomas was Siger of Brabant. Siger taught that the intellect was "unique for the whole human species. It 'transcends' the individual souls, to which it is united for the accomplishing of the act of thought."<sup>27</sup> For one to teach, therefore, meant to him that there was a communication of identical knowledge.

In the light of this historical context one can readily understand why St. Thomas paid attention to these errors.

26. *S. T.*, I, 117, i, c.

27. M. DeWulf, *History of Medieval Philosophy* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1926), II, 105. (Courtesy of David McKay Company)

His refutations of Plato, Avicenna and Averrhoes were in accord with the needs of the moment as that period of history clearly shows.

If St. Thomas were living today he would be faced with errors of a different kind. There has been a complete revolution against the spiritual order. The nature of man is looked upon as wholly material with a material end. God and angels do not exist. Man is set up as god of universe yet a man who is different only in degree from the brute.

The realm of the supernatural, authority and tradition must finally yield to the new order of the natural and free. Man is sufficient. Subjection is out of the question. As we have seen above the result has been in the field of education, the activity of the teacher has been submitted to a double test, that of experiment and that of self-sufficiency.

### *Review of Related Literature*

It is quite evident that St. Thomas did not leave behind a complete treatise on educational theory. However, many scholars have attempted to present a Thomistic view of education based upon his writings in general and in particular the *De Magistro*. Thanks to their efforts considerable literature which is pertinent to our topic is now available. In reviewing this literature we shall include for the sake of completeness some general references that are related to our subject as well as the more specific research on the causality involved in the teaching-learning situation.

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In an article which appeared in *The New Scholasticism* in July 1960, Guzie reviewed what scholars have written on this question of the learning theory and St. Thomas?<sup>8</sup> We must acknowledge our indebtedness to Guzie, therefore, for several references though we have added others which are not included in his article.

Among the general references we might mention the works of the following: Kocourek,<sup>29</sup> McCormick,<sup>80</sup> Woroniecki,<sup>81</sup> Reinert,<sup>82</sup> a comparison of Dufault<sup>83</sup> and Slavin.<sup>84</sup> There are nine other articles on education in general according to Saint Thomas.<sup>85</sup>

The following have also written on this: J. Engert,<sup>85</sup>

28. Tad Guzie, S.J. "St. Thomas and the Learning Theory," *The New Scholasticism* XXXIV (July, 1960) 275-296.

29. R. A. Kocourek, "St. Thomas on Study," *Thomistic Principles in a Catholic School* (St. Louis: Herder, 1942), pp. 14-38.

30. John F. McCormick, *Saint Thomas and the Life of Learning* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1937).

31. H. Woroniecki, "Saint Thomas and Modern Pedagogy." *The Catholic Educational Review* XXVIII (1930) 170-80.

32. Paul C. Reinert, "Herbert and Aquinas-Educators," *The Modern Schoolman* X (Mar. 1933) 67-69; J. Kunivcic, "Principia didacta S. Thomae," *Divus Thomas* LVIII (1955) 398 or "Principi pedagogic! di s. tommaso," *Sapienza* VIII (1955) 316-36.

33. L. Dufault, "The Aristotelian-Thomistic Concept of Education," *The New Scholasticism* XX (1946) 239-57; G. Cola-Uloa, "Il concetto della pedagogia alia luce dell' aristotelismo tomistico," *Sapienza* III (1950) 2845.

34. Robert Slavin, "The Essential Features of the Philosophy of Education of Saint Thomas," *Proceedings, of Catholic Philosophical Association* XIII (1937) 22-38.

35. A. L. Barthemy, O.O. *L'éducation: Les basses d'une pédagogie Thomiste* (Bruxelles, 1925).

36. J. Engert, "Die Padagogik des hl. Thomas vpn Aquin," *Pharus* VI (1925), 321-31.

Novarro,<sup>37</sup> Devy,<sup>38</sup> Boullay,<sup>39</sup> Alver de Siqueira,<sup>40</sup> Alberto Garcia Vieyra,<sup>41</sup> Rosa T. di Sisto.<sup>42,43</sup>

Among these one which has been widely read in the United States is Mayer's *The Philosophy of Teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas*.\*\* For many years this was the only

37. B. Novarro, *Commentario filosofico-teologico a la carta deq s. Tomas sobre el modo de estudiar fructuosamanta* (Almagro: Dominicos de Andulicia, 1925).

38. V. Devy, "La pedagogie de s. Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue de l'Universite d'ottawa*. II (1932), 139\*-62\*.

39. P. Boullay, O.P., *Thomisme et education* (Bruxelles, 1933). S. Tazuin, O.P. "S. Tomas e la pedagogia moderna," *Revista Brasileira de Pedagogia*, XXXVIII-IX (1937), 118-29.

40. A. Alves de Siqueira, *Filosofia da educacao* (Petropolis: Vozes, 1942).

41. Alberto Garcia Vieyra, *Ensayos sobre pedagogia segun la mente de s. Tomas de Aquino* (Buenos Aires: Desclae, 1949).

42. Rosa T. di Sisto, "El concepto de pedagogia segun s. Tomas," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Pedagogicas* (San Luis, Argentina), II (1952-53), 234.

43. Besides Mayer's book there were other commentaries which appeared in Italian:

R. Rung, "Studio sulla Quaestio disputata 'De Magistro' di s. Tommaso d'Aquino," *Rivista di filosofia neoscolastica*, XIV (1922), 109-65.

G. Muzio, *S. Tommaso d'Aquino: Il maestro* (Torino: Soc. ed. intemaz., (1928).

A. Guzzo, *Tommaso d'Aquino: Il maestro* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1930).

D. Morando, "Sul 'De Magistro' di s. Tommaso," *Rivista Rosminiana di filosofia e di coitura* (Torino), XXV (1931).

G. Tineant, "L'azione intellettuale del maestro secondo s. Tommaso d'Aquino," *Scuola Cattolica*, vol. XIX, ser. V (1920), 37-50, 115-29, 173-85.

E. Chiochetti, "La pedagogia de s. Tommaso," *S. Tommaso d'Aquina: Pubblicazione commemorativa del sesto centario della canonizatione* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1923), pp. 280-93.

M. Casotti, *Maestro e scolaro: Saggio di filosofia dell' educatione* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1930).

book in English which treated specifically the philosophy of teaching according to St. Thomas. Since the publication of this book, however, there have been two doctoral dissertations which have been written which compare the *De Magistro* of St. Thomas with the *De Magistro* of St. Augustine.<sup>44</sup>

Mayer's book has met with much criticism in recent times. One critic feels that Mayer neglected to take into account the historical setting of the work in question. For this reason he observes that "the interpretation often becomes distracted . . . The result, consequently, is a rather unorganized, often inaccurate, and incomplete presentation of Aquinas' theories.<sup>45</sup>

Another writer maintains that Mayer reads more into the *De Magistro* than is really there. This critic asserts that Mayer has magnified the *De Magistro* out of due proportion, and that the work is concerned with knowledge and not character formation; that learning can be understood as character building only in a very limited sense; that to maintain otherwise would be to imply that knowledge necessarily produces ethical behaviour on the part of the learner; and that such an interpretation of St. Thomas would make of him a Moral Intellectualist.<sup>46</sup>

Pace did a study in 1900 which treated the *De Magistro* as an *ex professo* treatment of educational theory. After

44. William L. Wade, S.J., "A Comparison of the 'De Magistro' of St. Augustine with the 'De Magistro' of St. Thomas" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of Philosophy, St. Louis University, 1935).

45. Tad W. Gurie, S.U., *The Analogy of Learning* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), p. 8.

46. John L. Hart, O.P., "Teacher Activity in the *De Magistro* of St. Thomas Aquinas," (Unpublished Licentiate Dissertation, School of Sacred Theology, Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C., 1944), pp. 67-71.

stating the necessity for the educator having a spiritualistic view of the pupil he goes on to state the purpose of St. Thomas in the *De Magistro* in these words:

What he seeks to clear up is the rationale of the teacher's work, the philosophy that underlies the whole process of education.<sup>47</sup>

Here we have another example of an author treating the work of St. Thomas outside of its historical context and presenting it as though it were the complete Thomistic theory of education. As Hart has suggested this work of St. Thomas "is a limited treatise, a part of his theory of education,"<sup>48</sup> and thus Pace's treatment of this subject "introduces us to some of the major faults to be committed in the following fifty years by scholars of Thomistic learning theory."<sup>49</sup>

Vargas in his treatment of this matter of teaching attempts to present the relations existing between psychology and philosophy in the problem of teaching.<sup>50</sup> He makes the distinction, which Maloney also makes in his article,<sup>51</sup> between education and instruction. Every educator is an instructor because education attains its end through instruction. However, the instructor must also be consciously an educator otherwise he fails to accomplish the highest aims of his science.

Schwalm is one of the earliest writers to bring out the

47. E. A. Pace, "St. Thomas' Theory of Education," *Catholic University Bulletin*, VIII (1902), p. 292.

48. Hart, *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

49. Guzie, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

50. Brother S. Alfonso Vargas, *Psychology and Philosophy of Teaching* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1944), p. ix.

51. Cornelius L. Maloney, "Dualism in Education"; *Catholic Educational Review* XLIV (1946), 335-41.

important role played by the teacher. He indicates very clearly that the teacher is much more than a mere guide in the classroom.

L'action d'un maître est donc profonde. Elle n'est pas simplement comme le geste d'un guide soulignant quelque indication.M

However, he does not make any distinction between learning through instruction and learning through personal discovery very clear. To him there seems little difference between these two ways of learning.

Some time later there were three other articles which appeared treating the subject of the teacher in the light of the writings of St Thomas. Keller sums up very succinctly the thoughts of Aquinas but we must agree with Guzie in saying that he implies that knowledge is in some way deduced from first principles?' This seems to be based on the misinterpretation of St Thomas' analogous use of the Augustinian "seminal reasons" as applied to first principles. Corbishley's treatment is one which shows maturity in the study of St Thomas.<sup>54</sup> He does not treat the *De Magistro* as a fully fledged syllabus of Christian education. Nor is he of the opinion that the solution to all modern-day educational problems can be found in the pages of St Thomas. By this he means the accidentals of education vary enormously from age to age and from

52. M. B. Schwalm, "L'action intellectuelle d'un maître d'après s. Thomas," *Revue Thomiste*, VIII (1900), p. 265.

53. L. Keller, "Lehren und Lernen bei Thomas von Aquin," *Angelicum*, XIII (1936), 210-227.

54. T. Corbishley, S.J., "St. Thomas and the Educational Theory" *The Dublin Review*. CXII (1943), 1-13.

country to country. The third article appeared in 1949.<sup>55</sup> Shannon gives a re-presentation of the *De Magistro* and also points out the fact that it is not intended to be an exhaustive treatise on education. However, he does not make too clear why teachers are important.

One of the best presentations of the role of the teacher in the learning process is given by Gilson.<sup>56</sup> The work is both scholarly and inspiring. It ennobles the teaching profession and returns it to the high position which it deserves.

Wade,<sup>57</sup> Hart,<sup>58</sup> and DeSousa<sup>59</sup> have written excellent works on the part played by the teacher in the classroom situation. Two, dissertations done at the University of St Louis touch on this problem. Donohue<sup>60</sup> gives a synopsis and a formulation from the writings of St. Thomas of the elements in the activities of teaching and learning and compares this position with the opinion of Henry

55. C. M. Shannon, S.J., "Aquinas on the Teacher's Art" *The Clergy Review* XXXI (1949), 375-385.

56. Anton C. Pegis (ed.), 4 *Gilson Reader* (New York: Image Books, 1957), pp. 224-229; 298-311.

57. F. Wade, S.J. "Causality in the Classroom," *The Modern Schoolman* XXVIII (1951) 138-46; "St. Thomas Aquinas and Teaching," *Some Philosophers on Education*, ed. Donald A. Gallagher (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1956), pp. 67-85.

58. John L. Hart, O.P. "Teacher Activity in the *De Magistro* of St. Thomas Aquinas," (Unpublished Licentiate Dissertation, Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D.C., 1944).

59. Rev. D'Arcy DeSousa, "Teacher-Pupil Relation in Catholic Educational Theory," (Unpublished Master's thesis, Catholic University of America, Department of Education, 1956).

60. John W. Donohue, S.J. "The Teaching-Learning Process According to St. Thomas & Henry C. Morrison," (Unpublished Master's thesis, St. Louis University, Dept. of Philosophy, 1950).



G. Morrison. Lauer<sup>61</sup> discusses the art of teaching based on the principles of St. Thomas. He discusses the question of art and the peculiar problems of teaching as an art. Conway<sup>62</sup> has presented a very erudite presentation of teaching and learning in his *Principles of Education*. But his general statements do not seem to come to grips with fundamental problems at hand.

From this survey of literature on the theory of education as derived from the writings of St. Thomas and in particular on the roles of the teacher and pupil in the learning process we can come to certain definite conclusions.

First, it has already been pointed out that St. Thomas Aquinas has not left us a complete educational treatise as such. His work the *De Magistro* was not intended to be a complete and exhaustive treatment of education. It was a reply to certain errors of his day in regard to the question of how man attains knowledge. St. Thomas investigates truth insofar as it exists in man. It has been the mistake of many writers in the past to treat this as an *ex professo* work on education without regard for its historical setting.

Secondly, there has been relatively little done by American scholars on the educational theory of St. Thomas. Some have merely repeated the same texts as isolated statements without viewing them in the light of a whole Thomistic philosophy.

Thirdly, it has been noted that the problems of education change from century to century, from country to

61. J. Quentin Lauer, S.J., "The Art of Teaching According to the Principles of St. Thomas," (Unpublished Master's thesis, St. Louis University, Department of Philosophy, 1948).

62. Pierre Conway, *Principles of Education* (Washington: The Thomist Press, 1960).

country. These are accidental changes. Therefore, we cannot always call on St. Thomas for a solution to our problems since many of them did not exist for him. However, the essential elements of education will never change. The nature of the child will always remain the same. It is here that we can draw much from the teaching of St. Thomas. The answer to the question, "What is Man?" is fundamental for the educator. On it depends the whole relationship between teacher and pupil. To deny its basic importance would lead to chaos and error in education circles. Administration policy, guidance programs, curricula, methods of teaching are ultimately determined by the answer given to this question.

Fourthly, it is necessary to clarify the role of the teacher in education today. Many have lessened the importance of a teacher to the degree that the pupil's dependence on him is hardly appreciated. This line of thought is the result of an emphasis on self-activity on the part of the child to the exclusion of the teacher's causality in the learning process.

Fifthly, not only the human instrumentality of the teacher in the classroom is important, but there has been very little written on the place which God has in the whole education system. The relation which exists between God and the teacher and between God and the pupil learning has not been treated to its fullest by any writer of recent times. It is necessary, therefore, to show the hand of God as constantly present whenever one discusses the causes of learning.

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## CHAPTER I

### EFFICIENT CAUSALITY

Education involves change. One need only to examine the definitions of education to establish this fact. Since the days of Plato and Aristotle one sees implicitly, if not explicitly, some reference to change. Note the verbs—to form, to fashion, to develop, to mold, to produce, to elevate, to perfect, to transform and the like—so frequently employed in defining education. Evidently as a result of education human beings are somehow changed from what they were before. This notion of change can also be applied to learning.

#### CHANGE: Concept and Types

The passing from potentiality to actuality is the process of becoming. And thus change has been defined as the movement or transit from one state of being to another; it is the transit from potentiality to actuality. “But in scholastic philosophy the idea of change is the coming forth of the new from the old, where the new was potentially. The new state is not created out of

nothingness. It was in the potentiality of the old, but needed to be brought into actuality." 1 Therefore, when we speak of a being as having changed we mean that a potentiality which it possessed has been reduced to actuality. This is the teaching of Aristotle and St. Thomas and is based on the distinctions between "Potentiality and act, the priority of act to potentiality, the reality of motion and becoming, but the priority of being to motion."23 The extreme opposite positions of this view are termed by Maritain as "exaggerated intellectualism" and "anti-intellectualism."24

There are four types of change, three of which are accidental and one substantial. It may be helpful to identify the particular types with which learning is concerned. We may eliminate at the outset substantial change.

Accidental change is either *local* (a change of place), *qualitative* (a change in quality), or *quantitative* (a change in quantity). Obviously, learning is not concerned with local change. However, it is definitely concerned with both qualitative and quantitative, but chiefly with qualitative. It is a *qualitative* change insofar as the knowledge of the learner is reduced from potentiality to actuality. It is a *quantitative* change insofar as what the pupil learns

1. John F. McCormick, *Scholastic Metaphysics* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1928), p. 57. 13.

2. Jacques Maritain, *An Introduction to Philosophy* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1947), pp. 250-51..

3. "*Exaggerated intellectualism* (Parmenides, Spinoza, Hegel) refuses to admit the notion of potentiality . . . everything which is, is wholly act or pure act, (therefore) either motion must be unreal (Parmenides) or contraries identical (Hegel) and. creatures must possess the same nature as God (Pantheism).

Anti-intellectualism (Heraclitus, Bergson) equally rejects the distinction between *potentiality* and *act*, but because the notion of *being* is in the opinion of these philosophers illusory." *Ibid.*, p. 251.

can be measured. In speaking of *scientia* St. Thomas remarks: “. . . it has a certain quantity through being in its subject, and in this way it increases in a man who knows the same scientific truths with greater certainty now than before.” 45

Every change involves five things: (1) *Terminum a quo* which is the thing to be changed whether substantially or accidentally. It is the *term from which* the change moves or takes its beginning. (2) *Terminum ad quern* which is the thing resulting from the change. It is the *term to which* the change moves and in which it finds its completion or fulfillment. (3) *Transitus* which is the actual transmission or movement in which the change essentially or formally consists. (4) *Substratum* or substantial support for change, and this remains unchanged in the process. (5) *Agent* or mover or motor force which effects the transition, an efficient cause.

All five are evident in the teaching-learning situation. No new item of knowledge can be acquired without them.

Thus Aristotle sums up the notion of change in these words: “For everything that changes is something and is changed by something into something. That by which it is changed is the immediate mover.” 6

### *Nature of Cause*

If learning involves change, obviously it is caused, for “nothing passes from potency to act save by a being already in act” 7 It is necessary for us, therefore, to in-

4. S.T., II II, 24, 5, c.

5. Paul J. Glenn, *Ontology* (St. Louis: Herder, 1937), p- 88.

6. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII, 3.

7. S. T., I, 2, 3; c; Cont. Gen. I, 13.

quire into the nature of cause and its divisions. It is only through a clear explanation of the nature of cause and its divisions that we will be able to have an understanding of the teaching-learning situation in regard to its efficient causes.

*A cause is not a condition.* We can define a condition as a "circumstance or set of circumstances required for the working of the cause." 8 It differs from a cause in this: that though it is necessary yet it in no way suffices for the existence of the effect. A connection with the source of electricity is a prerequisite for the incandescence of the bulb. The connection does not make the bulb glow but merely enables electricity to reach the bulb and produce there incandescence. Again, when a switch is thrown, the throwing of the switch is not the cause of the locomotive passing to another track, but only the condition for its passage, by removing an obstruction from the way. As one author has put it: The influence of a condition "is not positive but purely dispositive insofar as it removes obstacles which prevent the cause from acting." 9

*A cause is not an occasion.* An occasion is a circumstance or set of circumstances that favor the operation of a free cause in the exercise of its causality. An occasion can exercise a positive influence when it helps to induce a free cause to produce an effect. The operation could take place but not so readily. Night is not the cause of robbery but favors the operation of the robber. In other words, the occasion merely facilitates the production of the effect.

*A cause is a species of principle.* A cause stands to a principle as a species to genus, that is, a cause is a special

8. McCormick, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

9. Henry J. Koren. *An Introduction to the Science of Metaphysics* (St. Louis: Herder, 1955), p. 230.

kind of principle. In its widest sense, a principle is defined as "that from which something proceeds in any way whatever." 10 And that which so proceeds from a principle is called a principiate.

It has been pointed out by the scholastics that a being may be a real principle in two ways: (1) By simply communicating the same numerically identical nature and perfection which it possesses, e.g. Blessed Trinity; or (2) By producing at least numerically different from its own some other perfection. In this latter case we have what is called a *cause* and an *effect*.<sup>11</sup>

Thus it is said that the relation between a principle and a principiate may be a relation of order only, or a relation of order and dependence. When there is a relation of order and dependence, that is, when one thing flows from another with dependence on that other, the principle is called a cause and the principiate an effect. "A cause, therefore, is a principle from which something originates with dependence." 12

Hence, though every cause is a principle, not every principle is a cause; for cause implies "entitative" otherness, and dependence of its principiate, which a principle as such does not. Thus a point is the principle of a line but not its cause; the dawn is the principle of the day but not a cause.

A cause, therefore, is that which contributes, in any way whatever, to the producing of a thing. It implies a certain influx into the being of the thing caused,<sup>13</sup> and connotes that on which, in turn, things depend either

10. *S.T.*, I, 33, 1, c.

11. Michael W. Shallo, *Scholastic Philosophy* (Philadelphia: Peter Reilly Publisher, 1915), p. 158.

12. McCormick, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

15. In *V Met.*, 1, n 751.



for their being or becoming.<sup>14</sup> The thing produced by a cause is called its effect. "For true causality to exist there must be: a *real distinction* between cause and effect; a true *dependence* of effect upon cause; a *priority of time or nature* in the cause when viewed in conjunction with its effect."<sup>15</sup>

The belief in cause and effect is based on the experience of things causing other things, or of events causing other events. Everything that we experience and understand is an instance of the cause-effect situation. "Our experience of the cause-effect situation is virtually infinite in extent, and is ever present. We believe that things are produced by other things because we see and feel those things producing other things, because we produce things ourselves and are conscious of doing so, and because things act upon us and produce effects in us." 1617

Another factor which confirms our belief in cause and effect stems from the principle of identity, namely, that which is, is, and its obverse statement, the principle of contradiction, forbid us to believe that anything comes from nothing.

That -which is not, since it is not cannot become something; and that which is something cannot of itself become what it is not. That which is potentially something, since in itself it is *only potentially* that thing, cannot of itself be it; it may become it, but only by receiving the actuality which it lacks.\*?

Therefore, we may conclude, that our mind demands a cause for whatever occurs. Perception, in most cases,

14. In *I Phy.*, 1; cf. *ST.*, I, 104, 1, c; *De Pot.*, 5, 1, c; In *I Sent.*, 12, 1 2 I.

15. Glen, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

16. Brother Benignus, F.S.C., *Nature, Knowledge and God* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1947), p. 390.

17. *Ibid.*

fulfills this demand by showing us events as following from prior events.

It behooves us then to take a realistic attitude toward learning and to realize that learning does not just happen, but is *caused*; The pupil does not pass from potentiality to act with respect to any given item of knowledge unless there be a cause upon which this effect depends.

DIVISION OF CAUSE

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Of the generic concept of cause, St. Thomas recognized the fourfold division—material; formal; efficient, and final,<sup>18</sup> which had been elaborated so systematically by Aristotle.<sup>19</sup> It is important for our purpose that we discuss briefly cause as seen under these aspects. We should note here that the terms, material and formal may be used analogously, that is, to designate in the case of the former a subject that is indeterminate and in potency to receive various determinations and in the case of the latter those specific determinations by reason of which the subject of which the subject may be said to have learned or acquired knowledge through instruction.<sup>20</sup>

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18. *Cont. Gen.*, III, 10; *S.T.*, I, 3, 8, c; I, 105, 5, c; In II *Phy.* 10h; In V *Met.* 2 & 3; *De Pot.* 5, 1, c; In *Sent.* 29, 1,1, c; In *De Somno*, 4a; In I *De Caelo* 9a; In I *Gen. et Corr.* 1c & 2a.

19. *Phy.*, II, 3, 194b, 23; *Anal. Post.*, II, 11, 94a, 21; *Met.* I, 3, 983a 26; V, 2, 1913a, 24; *De Gen. Anim.*, I, 715a, 3-6.

20. "The terms *material* and *formal* have passed from natural philosophy into all branches of philosophy, to designate by analogy, on the one hand whatever, in itself indeterminate and potential, plays the part of a subject which receives a determination, on the other hand whatever possesses of itself a determining, actualizing, and specificatory function, or again whatever is taken as possessing a particular character, in a particular aspect." J. Maritain, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 252.

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*Final Cause.* The final cause is first in intention and last in execution for it is "that for the sake of which something is done;" 81 e.g. a student will go to school for the sake of attending a lecture. In the order of intention, therefore, the final cause is first because it induces the agent to act.<sup>82</sup> A detailed and minute explanation of final cause is not Our purpose here.<sup>83</sup> We must note, however, that the final cause is a positive influence on the action of the efficient cause and it exercises a positive influence upon the existence of the effect. Therefore it is a true cause. This influence of the final cause on the efficient cause is not by an immediate physical action but only<sup>21</sup>

21. *In V Met.*, 2, n. 771.

22.. "We may distinguish 'end for which' i.e., that for whose benefit a thing is done, and 'the end which,\* or the object intended. The end which is intended may be *immediate* or *ultimate* according as it is subordinated to another end or not. For example, if a man works hard to send his son to college, the son is the end for which, and 'to send to college' is the immediate end which is intended; the ultimate end intended by the father in this particular line would be to give his son a better preparation for life, or something similar.

"We may also distinguish the end of the act and the end of the agent. The *end of the act* is the end towards which the act naturally tends, whereas the end of the agent is the end which the agent has in mind in performing the act. For example, the end of the act of healing is the restoration of health, but the end of the agent (the physician) may be to make money." Koren, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

23. Cf. *Cont. Gen.*, III, 2; *De Verit.*, 12, 2, c; *In I Met.*, 4, nn. 70-71; *In V Met.*, 3, n. 782; *In II Phy.*, 5 fc 10.

Keven O'Brien, *The Proximate Aim of Education* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1958).

Russell J. Collins, "The Metaphysical Basis of Finality in St. Thomas," (Unpublished doctoral dissertation. School of Philosophy, Catholic University of America, 1947).

Aldo J. Tos, "Finality and Its Implications for Education," (Unpublished master's thesis. Department of Education, Catholic University of America, 1955).

inasmuch as it is an object of appetite to the efficient cause, moving the latter to action. It may be something nonexistent which the agent seeks *to produce*, or something really existing which the agent seeks *to get possession of*, or finally, something actually possessed *which the agent enjoys*.<sup>24</sup>

The efficient cause cannot exercise its causality without the final cause which moves it here and now:

A potential agent cannot determine itself to a definite act without violating the principle of sufficient reason. A potential agent needs to be determined to a definite act here and now, and this is done through the causality of the end which determines the agent to act in this way *to attain the end* and not in another way.<sup>25</sup>

Hence, the final cause is the explanation of the action here and now of the efficient cause; without the final cause there could be no efficient causality. Speaking of the relation between the final cause and the efficient cause St. Thomas says: "The efficient cause and the final cause correspond, for the one is the starting point and the other is the terminum . . . The efficient cause is the cause of the final cause, and the final cause is the cause of the efficient cause. Yet with this difference: the agent is a cause of the end even in respect of existence, since by producing change it leads to the end coming to be."<sup>26</sup> Finality permeates the entire system of St. Thomas and enforces some weighty conclusions as Tos observes.<sup>27</sup>

24. Shallo, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

25. Russell J. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

26. *Selected Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, M. C. D'Arcy (ed.) (New York: Dutton & Co., 1950), p. 155.

27. Tos, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

**The whole Thomistic doctrine on the relation between efficient causality and final causality is summed up very well by the Angelic Doctor in these words:**

Matter receives form only insofar as it is moved by an agent, for nothing reduces itself from potency to act. But the agent does not move without intending an end or as a preordained end . . . For unless the agent were determined to a particular effect it would not do one thing rather than another. If, therefore, it is to produce a determining effect, it must be preordained to a particular thing which is its end.<sup>28</sup>

In education it is the neglect of the final cause which has brought about much of the confusion and chaos which exists in it today. "The surprising weakness of education today . . . proceeds from our attachment to the very perfection of our modern educational means and methods and our failure to bend them toward the end."<sup>29</sup> It would be difficult to exaggerate the need for taking into consideration the end of learning—the final cause—in our statement of principles. St. Thomas points out that . . . the end in practical matters is what the principle is in speculative matters."<sup>30</sup> That is to say: "\_\_\_ the end stands in the same relation to the means to the end, as do the premises to the conclusion with regard to the understanding."<sup>31</sup>

The *immediate end* of learning is the acquisition of knowledge. But "the *supreme end* of man in general and common to every form of human activity is that of bring-

28. S. T., I-H, 1, 2, c.

29. Jacques Maritain. *Education at the Crossroads* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), p. 3.

30. S.T., I, 82, 1, G

31. S.T., I, 19, 5, G

ing man closer to God.” 52 Pope Pius XI warns us that “it is . . . as important to make no mistake in education, as it is to make no mistake in the pursuit of the last end, with which the whole work of education is intimately connected.” \*\* And this “there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man’s last end.” 84 This applies to teaching and to learning. The final cause is the cause that gives direction to every activity in the teaching-learning situation.

*Material Cause.* The material cause has been defined as the matter out of which a thing is made and which persists actually within the effect.<sup>85</sup> In other words, a material cause is matter. As such this would be an inadequate, though descriptive definition. For example, if a statue is made of marble, the color and hardness of the marble persist in the statue unchanged; they are neither new being nor the stuff of which new being is made. The true stuff is the marble’s potency for receiving the new perfecting principle. Thus Collins defines material cause as: “the permanent potential substrate of the new form” M He points out further that the raw stuff’s potency is a permanent substrate: (a) a substrate because it will receive the new perfecting principle and (b) permanent in the sense that it was in existence before the new being existed and persists in the new thing.

82. Vincent A. Yzennans (ed) *Pope Pius and Catholic Education* (St. Meinrad: Grail Publications, 1957), p. 98.

33. Pope Pius XI, *Encyclical on the Christian Education of Youth*.

34. *Ibid.* 11

35. *In V Met.* 2, n. 763.

36. William B. Collins, *Metaphysics and Man* (Dubuque: Loras College Press, 1959), p. 111.

When the efficient cause produces new being, it makes the essence actually present that was potentially but really present in the material cause. "The potency to be actualized, or subject in which the change occurs, is the material cause." 37 From this one can readily see why the material cause is called an *internal* cause.38

In discussing the material cause in education we can speak of the *remote material cause*, that is, the person who is being educated; and the *proximate material cause*, that is, the learner's faculties, his intellect and will. As we have already pointed out the word *material* is used here in an analogous sense to designate a subject that is in potency to receive various determinations; it does not mean that the pupil is nothing more than matter. It means rather that the material cause is a human person with a soul as well as a body.3940

This view seems to be in harmony with that of Pope Pius XII who tells us: ". . . it must never be forgotten that the subject of Christian education is man whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties natural and supernatural, such as right reason and revelation show him to be; man, therefore, fallen from his original state, but redeemed by Christ and restored to the supernatural condition of adopted son of God ..." «

37. Ivo Thomas, "Deduction of the Four Causes," *Dominican Studies* II (1949), p. 311.

38. The material and formal causes are called *internal* because they are inside the new being. Similarly, the efficient, final and exemplary are said to be *external* since they are outside the new being.

39. Sister Mary de Sales Cosen, *A Philosophical Study of Education as a Science* (Washington: Catholic University, 1960), p. 20.

40. Pope Pius XII, *Ibid.*

*Formal Cause.* The formal has been defined as "An internal principle that perfects and determines the material cause." 41 It perfects the substrate's potency to become an essence; it actuates the substrate's potency to receive its defining principle. Therefore, there is a very close relation between the material and the formal causes. The latter, like the former, is also an internal principle.42\*

The effects of the formal cause are also twofold: (a) it actuates the material cause, thereby producing the new essence; (b) it gives existence to the new being in the sense that it makes the essence definite enough to exist. "The substantial form gets the matter-form compound ready for existence. An accidental form makes the being ready to receive its new accidental existence, but in a very peculiar way, for the accident gets the substance ready for having the accident share in the substance's existence." 43

The causality of form is neither action nor passion but specification or determination; the formal cause is, as Aristotle calls it, a formula. It does not *do* anything any more than the precise formula of a chef's recipe, or the relations between notes in harmony do anything, if by doing is meant acting. But by virtue of its union with matter, the effect is produced and exists.44

It must be pointed out, however, that formal causality is never operative except as applied by an efficient cause. An action exists only by virtue of the movement of an efficient cause. Hence, though formal and efficient causality are mutually dependent, the efficient cause is prior

41. William Collins, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

42. *De Peril.*, III, 1, c; XXVII, 3, 25; *In V Met.*, 2, 264; *De Spirit. Creat.*, i, 9m.

48. W. Collins, *Ibid.*

44. Brother Benignus, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

in the order of causality. The formal cause is a cause only insofar as the efficient cause applies it to action by acting under its formal determination.

We can, therefore, say in conclusion that causality of the material cause and the formal cause (the internal principles of being) "consists in a mutual communication of their own particular reality, the matter as potency and the form as act."<sup>45</sup> It is the union of two intrinsic principles, an immediate union and a perfect one.<sup>46</sup>

In education the formal cause, as in so many of the productive sciences, coincides with the proper and immediate end, except for the fact that the formal cause is always intrinsic while the final cause, being in the order of intention, is always extrinsic.<sup>47</sup> It is the accidental formal cause that is spoken of in education since there is no substantial

45. Henri Renard, S.J., *The Philosophy of Being* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1943), p. 159.

46. In order to clarify the proper role of the material and formal causes in their relation to the existence of a new being it would be well to examine the three ways in which a new being comes into existence and what the material and formal causes are in each case. (1) When a new being comes into existence by an *accidental change* of an old being, that is, when a statue is made or a man acquires a new mental action, the formal cause is obviously the new accident. But which of the potencies of the old being is the permanent substrate of the new form? It is the substance of the old being. (2) When new being comes into existence by a *substantial change* of an old being, that is, when food is assimilated by a man and becomes human substance, prime matter is the material cause since it is the only potency of the old being that persists. And the formal cause is the new substantial form. (3) When a new being comes into existence out of nothing, there is no material cause. In this case the efficient cause, that is, the Creator, does not have the assistance of a material cause. But the material cause and the formal cause are correlatives. Therefore, since there is no material cause, neither is there a formal cause.

47. Sister Mary de Sales Gosen, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

change wrought in the pupil by the teacher. Education, from the point of view of the educator, is a matter of inducing new accidents within the pupil through the co-operative causality of all secondary agents of education under God, the Primary Agent.<sup>48</sup> All that has been said about the broader term education can be applied to the teaching-learning situation as well. The knowledge acquired by the learner is an accidental change and the formal cause in such an instance is the new accident. Thus, it is the *accidental formal cause* that is spoken of in the teaching-learning situation.

#### EFFICIENT CAUSALITY

To this point we have discussed the concept of a cause and have seen that it is not a condition and not an occasion. It is a species of principle. We have also seen three types of cause—final, material and formal. It is now our intention to examine at length the nature of efficient cause. Only in the light of this concept will it be possible to understand the Thomistic position in regard to the nature of learning through instruction, and the role of the various agents responsible for it.

The concept of efficient cause is discussed by St. Thomas in several places.<sup>49</sup> The essential feature of the efficient cause, according to St. Thomas, is *productivity*. This is the distinctive mode of influx which gives the efficient cause its specific nature.<sup>50</sup> In other words, it is the

48. *Ibid.*

49. *In I Met.*, 4, n. 70; *In V Met.*, 2, n. 765; *In II Phy.* 2.

50. "On the contrary, the act of being, as such, is caused by creation, which presupposes nothing; because nothing can pre-exist that is outside being as such. By makings other than creation, *this* being of *such* being is produced; for out of pre-existent being is made this being or such a being." *Cont. Gen.*, II, 21.



making of a thing by action. Thus, an efficient cause is an *acting cause*. Because it contributes to the being or the becoming of another by its action the efficient cause is also known as a *productive cause*.

Efficient cause alone, in the proper sense, exercises its causality "per modum actionis," so that it can be said of it exclusively that action is its mode of influx,<sup>51</sup> and it is through action alone that the effect depends in its efficient cause.<sup>52</sup> This is what distinguishes it from other causes. For here we understand the words "to act" in a strict sense, that is, *effectively*, which is the causality of the efficient cause. Thus St. Thomas has pointed out:

A thing is said to act in a threefold sense. In one way, formally, as when we say whiteness makes white --- In another sense a thing is said to act effectively, as when a painter makes a wall white. Thirdly, it is said in the sense of the final cause, as the end is said to effect by moving the efficient cause.<sup>53</sup>

It is through action, therefore, that what we term the effect proceeds from<sup>54</sup> and is dependent on the efficient cause.<sup>55</sup> AU actual efficient causality and true efficiency bespeaks action tending from an agent toward another<sup>55</sup> which is its term.

To act effectively is to communicate the proper per-

51. ". . . influere causae efficientis est agere;" *De Périt.*, XII, 2, c; "Efficiens est causa in quantum agit," *In Met.*, 2,

52. "■. ; ; per actionem --- alicuius principii dependet effectus a causa agente." *De Potentia*, 5, 1, c.

53. *S.T.*, I, 48, 1, ad 4.

54. "Again, an effect proceeds from its efficient cause through the latter's action" *Cont. Gen.*, II, 32, 4.

55- ". . . for it is through the agent's action that the effect depends on the efficient cause." *Ibid.*, 31, 3.

56. "Efficiency denotes action tending to something else." *S.T.*, II-ÍÍ, 183, 3, ad 2.

fection to others. Now to act from itself does not indicate any mutation in the agent. It is not necessary that the mover be moved. In other words, the cause acting does not change. To change or to be moved implies to receive, and is consequently a passive potency which is the capacity to receive. On the contrary, to act means to give by itself alone and not to receive. This implies an active potency.<sup>57</sup> Thus we have here the metaphysical basis for change.

In other words, whenever there is change, substantial or accidental, or from non-being to being, this change must be ascribed to something which by its real causal influence produces or effects the change.<sup>58</sup>

57. Meehan has summarized the Thomistic teaching on this point in the following way:

1. Motion is neither the potency of something existing in potency, nor the act of something existing in act, but properly the *act of something existing in potency*; "act" relative to an ulterior perfection or act. (In III Phy. 2).

2. It is the act of and therefore takes place in the object acted upon and not in the mover or agent, for what exists in potency as such is *mobile* and not *movens*. The latter as such is in act. As act of the *mobile*, it is called *passio*. (*Ibid.*)

3. Nevertheless motion is at the same time the act of the agent or mover. (In XI Met. 9, n 2310). As such it is called "actio" (In III Phy. 4) and takes place not in the agent but in the patient. (In III De Anima, 2, n. 592).

4. There are not two distinct motions of which one is the act of the agent, and the other the patient for

a. either the two motions would be in two different subjects, one in the agent and one in the patient, or

b. they would be in the same subject; both being exclusively either in the agent or in the patient.

Cf. Francis X. Meehan, *Efficient Causality in Aristotle and St. Thomas* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1940), pp. 223-224.

58. Joseph Schneider, "Efficient Causality and Current Physical Theory," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association XIV* (1938), p. 13.

Summarily, then, *action*, that is, the exercise of its energies by which it makes something else to be, which was not before, is the distinguishing characteristic of efficient causality. It transfers something from non-existence to existence "since the imperfect is not brought to perfection, except by something perfect already in existence."<sup>59</sup> In other words, the notion of efficient cause is the notion of a being which by its action, brings about or produces another being. The notion of effect is the notion of a being produced or brought about by the action of another.

To St. Thomas and the scholastics the principle of efficient causality meant a necessary and universal principle, *ontologically* valid and objective, which can be stated as follows: "Whatever begins to exist must have an efficient cause."<sup>60</sup> Too much emphasis cannot be laid on the fact that the philosophical concept of efficient causality is not generalized experience, a law or principle arrived at through a number of experiments. It is not directly sensible. It cannot, like color and sound, be perceived by the senses. It is the object of a primary idea of the intellect, an immediate and necessary deduction from the principles of identity and contradiction.

Thus, it is not our concern here to present a refutation of those false philosophies which have clouded much of the recent philosophical thinking by their erroneous views on the nature of a cause.<sup>61</sup> We have attempted merely to

59. *S.T.*, I II, 66, 6, ad 3.

60. *S.T.*, I, 44, 1, ad 2.

61; The principle of efficient causality meant ". . . to Hume, an instinctive belief based upon association without metaphysical implications --- to Kant, a purely subjective condition of the mind relating things causally --- to Comte, a convenient instrument of classification without absolute necessity or universality." Schneider, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

present a dear and distinct concept of the efficient cause as it is found in traditional scholastic teaching. Thus, it is the teaching of Aristotle and St. Thomas which provides us with the basis for this most important doctrine.<sup>62</sup>

## KINDS OF EFFICIENT CAUSE

In order to have a clear concept of the function of efficient causality in the teaching-learning situation we will now consider the various classifications under which it can be viewed. These different aspects of the efficient cause will throw much light on its nature and will give us a more concise understanding of its role in learning and education.<sup>63</sup>

1. *PRINCIPAL AND INSTRUMENTAL.* The *principal* efficient cause is that on which the existence of the

62. The conditions required for efficient action insisted upon by Aristotle and St. Thomas are: (1) the previous proximate potentiality of the agent and patient, passive on the part of the subject acted upon and active in the case of the agent; (2) antecedent dissimilarity or contrariety between the form in the agent, the likeness of which is to be communicated, and the form in the receiving subject; (3) contact, either physical and immediate or virtual and mediate, between agent and patient; (4) unimpeded action, that is to say, absence of hindrance or obstacle.

Cf. Meehan, *op. cit.*, pp. 235-236.

63. St. Thomas in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics* notes the division of efficient cause as given by Ibn-Sina. He gives four varieties of efficient cause: (1) *Perfective* which gives final completeness to a thing; (2) *Dispositive* which prepares matter to receive form; (3) *Auxiliary* which differs from the principal agent in that it acts for another's end; (4) *Consiliary* which differs from the principal cause by laying down the scope and manner of action.

Cf. *Selected Writings of St. Thomas (D'Arcy, ed)* pp. 155-56.

effect primarily depends and its power and efficacy is permanently inherent.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, an *instrumental* efficient cause acts only insofar as it is moved by the principal cause.<sup>65</sup> It indeed influences the effect but only through the activity of the principal cause. The saw, the axe and the chisel (instrumental causes) really cause but only when they are put into act by the carpenter (principal cause).

2. *PRIMARY AND SECONDARY.* A principal cause is either primary or secondary. A *primary* efficient cause does not need the help of another cause for the actual exercise of its causality. God is the sole Primary Efficient Cause, for the definition of primary efficient cause is this: a cause which is wholly independent of other things.<sup>66</sup> "God is the universal cause of all being."<sup>67</sup> A secondary cause needs the help of another cause to use its power to act. This other cause may be a superior efficient cause or it may be a material cause. It will be evident later on that it needs both.<sup>68</sup> Thus creatures are secondary causes because they depend upon the First Cause for their existence and their equipment and their function.

In the teaching-learning situation we shall see that

64. *S.T.*, in. 62, 1; ad 1 & 2; III, 4; I, 3, ad 3; II, 3, ad 2; 2/ ad 3; I, 2, ad 1.

65. *S.T.*, II, 5 ad 1; 1, ad 3: 1, ad 1; 4, ad 2; I, 3, ad 2.

66. Glenn, *op. cit.*, p. 318

67. *S.T.*, I, 45, 2, c.

68. "When the other cause is a superior cause, the distinction between a second principal cause and an instrumental cause is tenuous. But if a proximate efficient cause is a second cause, the action which produces the effect *issues from the second cause's own power*, while if the proximate efficient cause is an instrument, its action *issues partly from the power of the instrument and partly from the power of the principal cause.*" W. Collins, *op. cit.*, p. H7.

God has a role to play which is in accord with the notion of primary efficiency. "God alone teaches interiorly and principally, just as nature alone heals interiorly and principally."<sup>69</sup> Therefore, God is a principal and primary efficient cause of learning but in a very unique way. However, there is also a principal secondary cause. "For the signs are not the proximate efficient cause of knowledge, but reason, in its passage from principles to conclusions."<sup>70</sup> We shall also examine in detail the role of the teacher who is an "indispensible mover, bringing the intellect from potentiality to actuality."<sup>71</sup>

Thus the term "secondary cause" distinguishes all other causes from the Primary Cause: God. But they are true causes and exercise a real influence and efficiency in the order of being. "Hence, secondary causes produce the whole effect . . . partly in virtue of their own nature, by which the effected actuation is determined, and partly in virtue by God's influx into them, by which they do all that they do." K

3. *TOTAL AND PARTIAL.* The *total* cause accounts for the whole effect; for instance, a horse pulling a cart is the total cause of the movement of the cart. The *partial* cause accounts for only part of the effect; either of two horses pulling the cart.

4. *PHYSICAL AND MORAL.* A *physical* efficient cause is one that produces an effect by its own physical activity. A *moral* efficient cause (which some say is not

69. *De Verit.*, XI, 1, c.

70. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, ad 2.

71. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, ad 12.

72. *De Pot.*, HI, 4. c.

an efficient cause properly so called, but as such by an extension of the meaning)<sup>73</sup> is one that exercises an influence on a free agent by means of a command, persuasion, invitation or force of example. The free agent who is moved to action by such influence is the *physical* efficient cause of the action; the one who exercises such influence over the physical cause is the *moral* efficient cause of the action.

5. *PROXIMATE AND REMOTE*. A *proximate* efficient cause admits no medium between itself and its effect. A *remote* efficient cause has one or more mediate causes between itself and its effect. A thief is the *proximate* cause of the theft; the man who ordered the thief to steal, or showed him how to do it, is the *remote* cause. A disease may be the proximate cause of death; the contagion or infection which induced the disease is the remote cause. "There is here an axiom of value to the philosopher and moralist: *Causa causae est causa causati* which is translated literally as, 'The cause of a cause is the cause of what the latter produces.' We may, however, translate the axiom freely thus, 'The remote cause is a true contributor to the effect of the proximate cause'"<sup>74</sup>

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6. *NECESSARY AND FREE*. A *necessary* cause is one that is compelled by nature to produce its effect when all conditions for it are fulfilled. Fire under dry chips is the necessary cause of flame. The sun is the necessary cause of daylight. A free cause is one that can refrain from producing its effect when all conditions for it are fulfilled. A hungry man with appetizing food before him may still refuse to eat.

73. Glenn, *Ibid.*, p. 319.

74. *Ibid.*, pp. 320-21.

7. *PER SE AND PER ACCIDENS*. A *per se* or direct efficient cause is one that tends by nature or intention to produce the effect that actually is produced. Fire is the *per se* efficient cause of light and heat; it tends by nature to produce light and heat. A hunter who shoots a rabbit is the *per se* efficient cause of the killing, because he intends it. A *per accidens* or indirect efficient cause is one that produces an effect "by accident," since it is either not such a cause as naturally produces this effect, or the effect is not intended. A man drilling a well for water strikes oil; the drilling is not by nature calculated to bring up oil in each case, it does so *per accidens*. Another example would be a man digging a grave uncovers buried treasure *per accidens*.

7. *UNIVOCAL AND EQUIVOCAL*. A *univocal* cause produces an effect of the identical species to which itself belongs. "Now there are some univocal agents which agree with their effects in name and definition, as man generates man."<sup>75</sup> An *equivocal* cause, on the other hand, produces an effect which belongs to a different species than that to which the cause belongs. The human sculptor produces a non-human statue.

It is important that we note here that an "instrument is neither a univocal nor an equivocal cause."<sup>76</sup> And in the same place he makes it clear that the instrument derives its univocal or equivocal causality according to whether the principal agent is a univocal or equivocal cause.

8. *NATURAL AND RATIONAL*. A *natural* efficient cause is any necessary cause in the physical order. It is

75. *S.T.*, I, IS, 5, obj. 1.

76. *In IV Sent.*, 1, 1, 4, 5.

also called *agens per naturam*, that is, "acting by its nature." A *rational* efficient cause is a free cause, a cause which acts with knowledge and free choice. It is also called *agens per intellectum*, that is, "acting with understanding." It is this latter type of cause with which we are concerned in the teaching-learning situation.

9. *COORDINATED AND SUBORDINATED*. A *co-ordinated* cause is the same as a partial cause and thus accounts for only part of the effect. A *subordinated* cause is one which depends upon another cause.

10. *POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE*. A *per accidens* efficient cause may be either positive or negative. A *positive* cause prepares the way for the effect by disposing the subject for its reception. A *negative* cause prepares the way by removing impediments which hinder the production of the effect.

11. *IMMANENT AND TRANSIENT*. The effect of an *immanent* cause is produced within the cause itself. The effect of a *transient* cause is produced outside the efficient cause.

## SUMMARY

Since education involves change and since change is brought about by a cause we have explained the nature of cause in general along with its specific classifications. For our purpose we are mainly concerned with efficient causality. As we have seen an efficient cause may be primary or secondary; principal or instrumental; total or partial; physical or moral; proximate or remote; neces-

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sary or free; *per se* or *per accidens*; univocal or equivocal; natural or rational; coordinated or subordinated; positive or negative; immanent or transient.

In the teaching-learning situation the effect that is produced is the knowledge of the learner. In the following chapters we will examine in detail the efficient causes of learning: God, First Cause; the pupil, principal cause; the teacher, instrumental cause. Through analysis of the writings of St. Thomas we hope to show all that is involved in teaching and learning from the viewpoint of efficient causality.



## CHAPTER II

### GOD AS THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF THE PUPIL'S LEARNING

Before treating specifically God's role as an efficient cause of the pupil's learning, it seems fitting to treat in a general way the pupil's relationship to God as a creature whose end is God and who is necessarily governed by God's providence. It is only within this framework that one can gain the proper perspective with relation to the more specific question of the divine causality in the teaching-learning situation.

God is the cause of all things.\* He alone is His own existence while all other things have their existence by participation. Now whatever exists by participation is caused by that which exists essentially, as everything ignited is caused by fire.<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas states that all creatures are to God as the air is to the sun which enlightens it. "For as the sun possesses light by its nature, so God alone

1. *S.T.*, I, 57, 2, c; "since He is the cause of the entire substance of the thing, as to both its matter and form." Also cf. I, 22, 2; I, 44, 1; I, 45, 2; I, 61, 1; I, 65, 3, c; I, 75, 5, ad I; I, 79, 2, c; I, 103, 5, c; *Cont. Gent.* II, 6, 1.

2. *S.T.*, I, 61, 1, c; cf. *Ik* 44, I, c.

is Being by virtue of His own essence; whereas every creature has being by participation.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore, we say that God is the *First Cause* of all things.

At the fountainhead of the hierarchy of beings is the source of all beings, God. There must be a source which is being in the highest sense of the word. Any study of being in its various manifestations necessitates constant reference to its cause; this obviously leads to the First Cause, God. While first principles are derived from experience we can pass beyond that realm and probe deeper into the source from which they come.<sup>4</sup>

To say that God is the First Cause of all being is to say that God is the only true Creator. When we say an artist has created a masterpiece we are speaking in an analogous sense because creation belongs only to God.<sup>5</sup> “To create is, properly speaking, to cause or produce the being of things.”<sup>6</sup> Creation, and creation alone of all acts of production, is the production of being itself and not a mere change in being.<sup>7</sup> It follows, then, that every creature possesses being as having received it. Of itself, apart

3. *S.T.*, I, 104, 1, c.

4. Sister Mary Dominica Mullen, *Essence and Operation in the Teaching of St. Thomas and in Some Modern Philosophies*, (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1941), p. 16.

5. *S.T.*, I, 90, 3, c: “God alone can create; for the first agent alone can act without presupposing the existence of anything; while the second cause always presupposes something derived from the first cause --- and every agent that presupposes something to its act, acts by making a change therein. Therefore everything else acts by producing a change, whereas God alone acts by creation.” Also cf. *St. T. I*, 65, 3, c; I, 14, II, c; I, 15, c, ad 3; I, 44, 2, c; 3, ad 4; *Cont. Gen.* II, 15, 3; II, 16; II, 17.

6. *S.T.* I, 45, 6, c.

7. *S.T.* I, 45, 2, ad 2; *Cont. Gen.* II, 17.

from God, it is nothing. Therefore all creatures belong to God “naturally.”<sup>8</sup> For He brought them from non-being to being.<sup>9</sup>

All creatures are like God inasmuch as every effect must to some extent resemble its cause. But, at the same time we must hold that no creature is specifically or generically like God, for God is not contained in any species or genus. Hence, the creature bears only an analogous likeness to God for God is not a univocal cause, but an equivocal cause.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Sacred Scripture recalls the likeness between God and creatures: “Let us make man to our image and likeness” (Genesis 1:26). Yet at times the likeness is denied as in Isaiah (*XL:18*): “To whom then have you likened God, and what image will you make Him?” or in the Psalm (*LXXXIII*): “O, God, who shall be like to Thee?”

God is completely independent of everything. But this is not true of a creature. On the contrary, a creature's dependence upon the Supreme Being is absolute.

All living being other than God move themselves, only because they are moved by another. There is another, namely, the First Cause of all *being, that moves* them or determines them to move themselves, without thereby contradicting the notion of life or destroying their vital autonomy.<sup>11</sup>

Maritain further points out that it is as the cause of being that reason is compelled to recognize the existence of God.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the notion of the First Cause of all being

8. *S.T. I*, 60, 5, c.

9. *S.T. I*, 61, 2, c; *Cont. Gen.* II, 16.

10. *Cont. Gen. I*, 29, 2.

11. Jacques Maritain, *A Preface to Metaphysics* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1948), p. 139.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

shows not only the dependence of all creatures on God but also is the very foundation of His existence.

### GOD: The Omega of All Being

A discussion of God as the First Cause of all being would be incomplete and somewhat awkward if there was no mention of the purpose of creation. Because education is an activity manifestly aimed at changing an individual and leading him to certain goals, it must be guided in that activity by the end which the First Cause has in creating. Gilson tells us that science can give an account for many things in the world but fails to answer the question: Why is there something rather than nothing?<sup>13</sup>

13. "The problem of final causes is perhaps the problem most commonly discussed by these modern agnostics . . . I am asking in Leibniz's own terms: Why is there something rather than nothing? Here again, I fully understand a scientist who refuses to ask it. He is welcome to tell me that the question does not make sense. Scientifically speaking, it does not. Metaphysically speaking, however, it does. Science can account for many things in the world; it may some day account for all that which the world of phenomena actually is. But why anything at all is, or exists, science knows not, precisely because it cannot even ask the question.

To this supreme question, the only conceivable answer is that each and every particular existential energy, each and every existing thing, depends for its existence upon a pure Act of existence. In order to be the ultimate answer to all existential problems, this supreme cause has to be absolute existence. Being absolute, such a cause is self-sufficient; if it creates, its creative act must be free . . . Now an absolute, self-subsisting, and knowing cause is not an It but a He. In short, the first cause is the One in whom the cause of both nature and history coincide, a philosophical God who can also be the God of a religion." Etienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), pp. 137-141.

It has already been pointed out that God, since He is First Cause and Supreme Being, is not subordinated to nor moved by any other being. Consequently, the end for which He acts cannot be anything below or outside Himself for then He Who is perfect would be acting for something that is not perfect. Hence the end for which God acts can be no other than Himself.<sup>14</sup> Creatures, since they are creatures and hence lack the perfection of being, act from a desire for an end not yet possessed. God, however, does not act because He requires something perfect Himself<sup>15</sup> but rather to manifest His goodness and perfection.<sup>16</sup> To view the causality of God in any other way would be to posit imperfection in God. Although this might be the source of some difficulty for those who do not think of God from the aspect of perfection of Being, it is not difficult to understand when one considers God that the very essence of the Supreme Being is the possession of perfection of Being itself.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, it follows that God in acting does not increase in perfection.<sup>18</sup> His acts are ordered to Himself because He can act for no end outside Himself and consequently everything that

14. ". . . nothing apart from God is His end." *S.T.* I, 19, 1, ad 1.

15. ", . . since the goodness of God is perfect, and can exist without other tilings inasmuch as no perfection can accrue to Him from them . . ." *S.T.* I, 19, 5, c.

16. ". . . God wills things apart from Himself only for the sake of the end, which is His own goodness, it does not follow that anything else moves His will, except His goodness." *S.T.* I, 19, 2, ad 2.

17. . . The Divine Being is undertermined and contains in Himself the full perfection of being." *S.T.* I, 19, 4, c.

18. ". . . all things which are diversified by the diverse participation of being, so as to be more or less perfect, are caused by one First Being, Who possesses being most perfectly." *S.T.* I, 44, 1, c.

flows from His creative act is ordered to Him as end. God is the final and ultimate end of all that is, and just as the Good is the end for which every agent acts, so God, the Supreme Good, is that end toward which all things are directed. "Now all things are ordered in various degrees of goodness to the one Supreme Good, which is the cause of all goodness; and so since good has the nature of an end, all things are ordered under God as preceding ends under the last end. Therefore, God must be the end of all." «

It can be concluded then from what has gone before that God in some way is directing all things to Himself and that He alone is the End of all being.

#### MAN'S FIRST CAUSE AND FINAL END

Man is the masterpiece of God's earthly creation. Just as all beings are directed toward God as their last end, so especially is man who has been made to the Divine image and likeness. Because of his intellectual nature man is ordered to God in a way that belongs to no other creature of God. "Consequently, this must be the end of the intellectual creature, namely, to understand God." 19

Because man is directed toward God as his final end it is only in the possession of God that he will find true and complete happiness. Anything less than God would lead to frustration and disappointment. "Common sense demanding a *reason of being*, arrives at God who is the *Alpha* of all things. Common sense demanding the *intel-*

19. *Cont. Gen.* III, 17.

20. *Ibid.*, III, 25.

*legibility of action*, arrives at God as the *Omega* of all things.”<sup>21</sup> This is the entire answer to life itself. Without this answer men have turned to pleasures of the body, honors, wealth, world power and many other goals some of which have also brought insanity and suicide to their possessors.

Certainly it is not too difficult to see the error promulgated by a false philosophy of education that would set up goals which have their roots in a merely earthly existence. St. Thomas was keenly aware of this danger.

1 The last end of man is God . . . ; We must therefore posit as man's last end that by which especially man approaches to God. Now man is hindered by the aforesaid pleasures from his chief approach to God, which is effected by contemplation, to which these same pleasures are a very great hindrance, since more than anything they plunge man into the midst of sensible things, and consequently withdraw him from intelligible things. Therefore human happiness is not be placed in bodily pleasures.<sup>22</sup>

It is important therefore that a philosophy of education recognize man's true ultimate end. Wealth and honors do not bring terminative happiness which is the essence of a true and ultimate end. No sooner are these possessed than it is realized “how ephemeral and superficial they, too, are to fill up the void in our hearts. And the intellect tells us that all these riches and honors are still but a poor finite good that is dissipated by a breath of wind.”<sup>23</sup>

21. Fulton J. Sheen, *God and Intelligence* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1925), p. 265. (Courtesy of David McKay Company)

22. *Cont. Gen.*, III, 27.

23. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Providence* (St. Louis: Herder, 1944), p. 43.

The same may be said of other goods which, although they afford happiness for a time, soon give way to anxiety and weariness of mind.

## PROVIDENCE AND THE FIRST CAUSE

We have considered God as the beginning and end of all being. But we must go further than merely establishing the fact that there is a God who is called the *First Cause*. We must ask ourselves the very important question: Is this a far-distant deity who created man and the world in which he lives and then abandoned both to the whims of chance? In other words, are we to admit with the deist of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries God's existence and creative act but deny that he has any care for the world and the people in it? One who would be so foolish as to adhere to such a notion would be labeled by Gilson, and rightly so, as "one of the most delectable objects of contemplation for the connoisseurs of human silliness" 24 and by Bossuet as an "atheist in disguise." 25

In these days of positive unbelief, agnosticism and general indifference concerning the supernatural we cannot emphasize too strongly the influence of a Divine Being in our daily lives. We must recognize that there is reason, design and order in every breath that we take, in every moment that we live, in every leaf that falls to the ground. There is a reason which is divine for everything that happens, even the greatest evils that occur on this earth. That

24. Gilson, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

25. James B. Bossuet, *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches* (New York: D & J. Sadlier, 1845), BK. V, dip. 26.

*this tenet is true and valid as the very existence of God Himself is not always evident even in the field of religion.*

Even a casual survey of the field of religion today will reveal two outstanding facts, the progressive fading of any idea of the supernatural, and the almost general acceptance of the mechanistic explanation of the universe advanced by the exponents of philosophies based entirely upon a physical science. Despite its essential incongruity the notion of a finite God is seriously discussed by professedly Christian theologians --- Optimism, not discouraged by the collapse of Nietzsche's 'master morality,' is striving to eliminate any need for a Divine Providence by making strenuous efforts to banish evil from a universe evolving toward perfection.<sup>26</sup>

This doctrine is being met in many quarters today. One need listen to the advertisements of the "wonder drugs" that will do away once and for all with the evils of disease. The life span of every human being is being lengthened as though man is the master of life and death. The influence and design of an all Creative and All Loving Cause is totally ignored. Man is trying to convince himself that everything depends on himself and he can look to no higher power for help or purpose in living, or even more, in dying. "But, for many Christians also, the forgetfulness of these laws (of providence) is the cause of a fatal discouragement."<sup>27</sup>

The influence which this type of thinking has had in the field of education can be easily seen if one merely examines the aims and goals put forth in many educational journals. The secularism that characterizes much of

26. Richard Downey, *Divine Providence* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. vii.

27. Henry Ramiere, *The Laws of Providence* (Philadelphia: Messenger of the Sacred Heart, 1891), p. 7.

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our education today can be traced back to the seeds planted by the deists and the tenets of deism. The fundamental principles of this false philosophy were watered and nurtured by the French and British empiricists.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, a complete understanding of the doctrine of Divine Providence is most important today if we are to have a true Christian philosophy of education.<sup>29</sup> Our strategy must be aimed at the very roots of a godless philosophy of education which would deny or ignore, not only the existence of God, but even more, the fact that He is a God Who takes loving care of His creatures. Shakespeare spoke these words through one of his characters on

28. "Before the time of Locke, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1581-1633) had advocated a naturalistic philosophy of religion, thus planting the seed of the deistic doctrines which appeared after the days of Locke and found a congenial soil in English empiricism, *Deism* may be described as a movement tending to free religious thought from the control of authority. Its chief thesis is that there is a *universal natural religion*, the principal tenet of which is, 'Believe in God and do your duty'; that positive religion is the creation of cunning rulers and crafty priests; that Christianity, in its original form, was a simple though perfect expression of natural religion; and whatever is *positive* in Christianity is a useless and harmful accretion. These principles naturally provoked opposition on the part of the defenders of Christianity, and there resulted a controversy between the *deists*, and *free thinkers*, as they were called, and the representatives of orthodoxy. . . .

"While this controversy was being waged, the principles of empiricism were being applied to psychology by the founders of the association school, and to ethical problems by the founders of the British schools of morals." William Turner, *History of Philosophy* (New York: Ginn & Co., 1929), pp. 494-495.

29. "God therefore is infinitely wise and infinitely powerful. In other words, He is a personal God. This fact of facts, the existence of a personal God, is of supreme importance in any program of education." William J. McGucken, S.J., *Catholic Education* (New York: American Press, 1955), p. 4.

the providence of God: "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." (Hamlet V, ii, 10).

## NOTION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Having seen the necessity and importance of divine providence in life and specifically in the field of education, we are going to consider the nature of the providence of God. St. Thomas has written concisely on the necessity and meaning of divine providence.<sup>30</sup> All creation comes under the providence of God but it is man who is especially cared for by God.<sup>31</sup> Since it is the divine intellect and will, considered as governing creation, providence is eternal. But the execution of this order in creatures takes place in time. This execution is divine government.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover it is pointed out by St. Thomas that providence in God corresponds to the virtue of prudence in us.<sup>33</sup> There is a prudence which is found in a father who

30. "God is the cause of all things by His intellect, it is necessary that the type of the order of things toward their end should pre-exist in the divine mind; and the type of things ordered toward an end is, properly speaking, providence." *S.T.* I, 22, 1, c.

31. "... it necessarily follows that all things, inasmuch as they participate existence, must likewise be subject to divine providence." *S.T.* I, 22, 2, c. Also cf. I, 8, 3; I, 23, 1; I, 105, 5, ad 3; I, 113, 6; I II, 91, 2, c; I II. 93, 1, c, 4, 5.

"Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine Providence in the most excellent way." *S.T.* I-II, 91, 2, c. Also cf. *S.T.* I, 103, 5, ad 2; 113, 2, c; 116, 1, c; I-II, 83, 2. *Cont. Gen.* III, 76; 77.

32. Brother Benignus, *op. cit.*, p. 576.

33. "Now it belongs to prudence --- to direct other things toward an end whether in regard to oneself --- or in regard to others subject to him, in a family, city, or kingdom." *S.T.* I, 22, 1, c.

must provide for the needs of his family and also a prudence found in lawmakers and government officials for the promotion of common interests of the nation. So in God there is a providence directing all things to the good of the universe. "It belongs to God to direct things toward their end."<sup>34</sup>

The notion of Divine Providence can be summed up under three general statements. First of all, as it has been pointed out, Divine Providence extends to all creation. This is deduced from the fact of the universality of divine causality.<sup>35</sup> God is the First, if not exclusive, Cause of all things except evil.<sup>36</sup> In regard to physical evil and suffering, God wills them only in an accidental way, in view of a higher good.<sup>37</sup>

Secondly, from the universality of Divine Providence, we may conclude that it safeguards the freedom of our own actions. For providence extends to the free mode of

34. *S.T.* I, 23, 1, c.

35. "But tire causality of God, Who is the first agent, extends to all being . . . Hence all things that exist in whatsoever manner are necessarily directed by God towards some end . . . the providence of God is nothing less than the type of the order of things --- it necessarily follows that all things, inasmuch as they participate existence, must likewise be subject to divine providence." *S.T.* I, 22, 2, c.

36. "Now God cannot be directly the cause of sin, either in Himself or in another, since every sin is a departure from the order which is to God as the end." *S.T.* I-II, 79, 1, a

37. "Hence He (God) in no way wills the evil of sin, which is the privation of right order towards the divine good." *S.T.* I, 19, 9, c. "Since God, then, provides universally for all being, it belongs to His providence to permit certain defects in particular effects, that the perfect good of the universe may not be hindered, for all evil were prevented, much good would be absent from the universe." *S.T.* I, 22, 2 ad 2.

**our actions by actuating the liberty itself which it produces in us with our cooperation.<sup>38</sup>39**

**The slightest idiosyncrasy of temperament and character, the consequences of heredity, the influence exerted on our actions, by the emotions are all known to providence; it penetrates into the innermost recesses of conscience, and has at its disposal every sort of grace to enlighten, attract, and strengthen us. There is thus a gentleness in its control that yields nothing to strength.<sup>40</sup>**

**We must always keep in mind that this free mode in our choice, this indifference dominating our desire, is still within the realm of being and nothing exists unless it is from God.<sup>41</sup>**

**Thirdly, it can be said that although providence as the divine ordinance, extends to all reality and goodness, to last fiber of every being, nevertheless in the execution of the plan of providence, God governs the lower creation through the higher, to which He thus communicates the dignity of causality.<sup>41</sup> Here we can see clearly the use of secondary causes by the first cause.**

**Hence secondary causes produce the whole effect . . . partly in virtue of their own nature, by which the effected actuation**

38. God, by moving voluntary causes, does not deprive their actions of being voluntary, but rather He is the cause of this very thing in them." *S.T.* I, 83, 1, ad 3. Also cf. I, 103, 5-8; I-II, 10, 4 ad I; 109, 1.

39. Garrigou-LaGrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-61.

40. *S.T.* 1-11,79, 1,2.

41. ". . . there are certain intermediaries of God's providence; for He governs things inferior by superior, not on account of any defect in His power, but by reason of the abundance of His Goodness; so that the dignity of causality is imparted even to creatures." *S.T.* I, 22, 3, c.

is determined, and partly in virtue of God's influx into them, by which they do all that they do.®

Thus, a secondary cause is a real and true cause. If God alone wrought everything, and created causes did nothing, then this would not be true. And if they are not valid causes "their employment by God would be futile and meaningless."<sup>43</sup>

### THE IMMEDIACY OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

God not only cares for all things by His providence but He cares for them *immediately*. In explaining this immediacy of God's providence St. Thomas makes the distinction between divine providence, which is the divine reason itself foreseeing and ordaining all things to their end, and the divine government of the world, which is the execution of the order of providence. "God immediately provides for everything, because He has in His intellect the exemplars of everything, even the least."<sup>44</sup> This care which God has for everything is immediate since "He gives to whatever causes He provides for certain effects the power needed for producing these effects. Wherefore, He must have beforehand in His intellect the order of these effects."<sup>45</sup> Thus, providence, or God's foresight and ordering, is immediate in respect to every being; God foresees and foreordains in itself every detail of the created world.

42. Robert O. Johann, "Comment on Secondary Causality," *The Modern Schoolman* XXV (1947-48), p. 23.

43. Brother Benignus, *op. cit.*, p. 590.

44. *S.T.* I, 103, 2. c; I, 22, 3, c.

45. *Ibid.*

This is not the case, however, in regard to the execution or carrying out of this ordination. God employs "intermediaries" or secondary causes which produce one effect through with God.<sup>46</sup> As was said above this is not from any defect in God but from the abundance of His goodness whereby He deigns to communicate to creatures the dignity of causation. Therefore, God's immediate provision of an effect includes the provision of secondary causes through which the effect will be produced.

### EFFECTS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

4 Considered from the point of view of its end, which is the divine goodness itself,<sup>47</sup> the effect produced in creatures by the government of God is the likeness of this

46. "For two things may be considered in every agent; namely the thing itself that acts, and the power whereby it acts; thus, fire by its heat makes a thing hot. Now the power of the lower agent depends on the power of the higher agent, insofar as the higher agent gives the lower agent the power whereby it acts, or preserves that power, or applies it to action . . . Consequently, the action of the lower agent must not only proceed from it through the latter's proper power but also through the power of all the higher agents; for it acts by virtue of them all; and just as the lowest agent is found immediately active, so the power of the first agent is found to be immediate in the production of the effect; because the power of the lowest agent does not of itself produce this effect, but by the power of the proximate higher agent, so that the power of the supreme agent is found to produce the effects of itself, as though it were the immediate cause, as may be seen in the principles of demonstration, the first of which is immediate. Accordingly, just as it is unreasonable that one action be produced by an agent and by virtue of that agent, agent and God, and by both immediately, though in a different way." *Cont. Gen. III*, 70.

47. "The ultimate end of things is necessarily the Divine Goodness itself." *Compendium of Theology*, chp. 101.

divine goodness<sup>48</sup>; in other words, God, by moving all creatures toward Himself as their ultimate end, produces in each of them, according to its own nature,<sup>49</sup> a reflection of, or participation in, His own Essential Goodness, and produces in all taken together the most perfect created reflection of His own perfection, namely, the order of the universe.<sup>50</sup> This assimilation of creatures to God is accomplished in two respects; God is good, and so the creature is made like God by being made good;<sup>51</sup> God causes goodness in others, and so the creature is made like God by being made able to move other creatures to good.<sup>52</sup> Hence, there are two universal effects of the divine government of things; the conservation of things in good and the movement of things to the good. These two effects of Divine Providence are called the Divine Conservation and the Divine Concurrence.<sup>55</sup>

48. "Therefore all the actions and movements of all creatures exist on account of the Divine Goodness --- in the sense that they are to acquire it in their own way, by sharing to some extent in a likeness of it." *Compendium*, clip. 103.

49. "Each thing imitates the Divine Goodness according to its own manner." *Cont. Gen.*, III, 20.

50. "Order towards good is itself a good . . . Now everything insofar as it is the cause of another, is directed to a good." *Coni. Gen.* III, 21.

51. "From the fact that they acquire the Divine Goodness, creatures are made like unto God." *Cont. Gen.*, III, 19.

52. "Things tend to be like God insofar as He is good --- Now it is out of His goodness that God bestows being on others, for all things act inasmuch as they are actually perfect." *Ibid.*

53. "Wherefore there are two effects of government, the preservation of things in their goodness, and the moving of things to good." *S.T. I*, 103, 4, c.

## I. Divine Conservation

Although God does use intermediaries in the workings of Divine Providence we must not think that He Himself is far off and that His creative act is something past and static. St. Paul calls upon us to realize that God is "not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being"\* (Acts XVII:27). Every creature depends upon God for its very existence.<sup>54</sup> A great river seems to take care of itself and is completely independent of anything else. But if one were to analyze the very existence of a river it would become evident that this is not the case. For the great river depends on a thousand little streams for its very existence. If all the small brooks were to dry up and the tiny streams which flow from them were to cease flowing then the great river would soon disappear. For it cannot for one instant claim self-sufficiency. To continue in existence the great river needs a constant influx of water. Its very being consists in the water which flows into it from a thousand tiny tributaries. These latter do not make the river and then leave it. If they were to stop making the river it would cease to be.

Sometimes men are inclined to think of creation as a past benefit, very much as we think of a plaything of our childhood as something we enjoyed then, but which has long since passed out of our lives. But creation is not static: it is essentially dynamic.<sup>55</sup> And so Guardini writes of the Divine Creator as "One Who is continually lifting

54. "For the creature needs to be preserved by God insofar as the being of an effect depends on the cause of its being." *S.T.* I, 104, 1, ad 2.

55. "Since God not only gave existence to things when they first began to exist, but also causes existence in them as long as they exist, by preserving them in existence." *Cont. Gen.* III, 67.

existence out of nothingness, Who constantly and totally effects it.”<sup>56</sup> This doctrine is most reasonable and most sound since . . . no effect can be endowed with power of self-preservation.”<sup>57</sup>

The complete and total dependence of man upon God is never seen more clearly than in this doctrine of divine conservation. It should be noted that this sustaining influence is not a new act, or a multiplicity of new acts, on the part of God. It is one continuous action which is without either motion or time.<sup>58</sup> St. Thomas compares the divine preservation to the preservation of light by the sun. . .

God is directly, by Himself, the Cause of every existence, and communicates existence to all things just as the sun communicates light to air and to whatever else is illuminated by the sun. The continuous shining of the sun is required for the preservation of light in the air; similarly, God must unceasingly confer existence on things if they are to persevere in existence. Thus, all things are related to God as an object made is to its maker, and this not only insofar as they begin to exist, but insofar as they continue to exist.<sup>59</sup>

In the continuous execution of the plans of divine providence there is no change, no succession in the creative set itself since it is eternal and immutable. “There can be no before and after in God.”<sup>60</sup> However, the verifi-

56. Romano Guardini, *The Conversion of Augustine* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1960), p. 121.

57. *S.T.* I, 104, 2, ad 2.

58. “The preservation of things by God is a continuation of that action whereby He gives existence, which action is without either motion or time.” *S.T.* I, 104, 1, ad 4.

59. *Compendium of Theology*, chp. 130.

60. *Cont. Gen.*, I, 58.



cation of the creative act, which takes place in time, involves both change and succession in the created object. As the sun is the only source of light to this planet, so God is the only source of conservation to the universe. "The cause of a thing's needs must be the same as the cause of its preservation; because preservation is nothing else than continued existence." 61 Thus it is in this sense that it is said that: "Providence is God's continual act, interplay of relations, as effecting of events." 62

This preservation of creatures in existence by God is not the immediate providence of God at work. It is here that we see the order among things which God has established.

God created all things immediately, but in the creation itself He established an order among things, so that some depend on others, by which they are preserved in being, though He remains the principal cause of their preservation. 63

In conclusion, then, it is evident that since the divine operation of conserving things is the same operation as creating them, it is clear that God could not possibly enable a creature to keep itself in existence without His assistance; to do so would be to cause something to be uncaused.

Accordingly, the statement that a thing does not need God to uphold its existence implies that it is not created by God; while the statement that such a thing is produced by God implies that it is created by Him. Wherefore, just as it would involve a contradiction to say that God produced a thing that

61. *Cont. Gen.*, IH, 65.

62. Guardini, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

63. *S.T.* I, 104, 2, ad 1.

was not created by Him. Even so it would involve a contradiction were one to say that God made a thing that did not need to be kept in existence by Him.®!

## II. Divine Concurrence

The second effect of Divine Providence is the action of God in the action of every created agent, giving it its power to act, moving it to act, and producing the effect which it produces. In all things that operate God is the Cause of their operating.

Any power of any agent whatsoever is from God, as from the first principle of all perfection. Therefore since all operation is consequent to some power, it follows that God is the Cause of every operation's

Therefore, every agent in the universe is an instrument in the hands of God. He produces, as First Cause, the effects which the natural agent produces as secondary cause. 64 The secondary cause does act by its own power but is always in subordination to the First Cause. 65 But because God is Pure Act and preserves things in being by

64. *De Pot.*, V, 2, c; cf. *S.T.* I, 104, 1, ad 2.

65. *Cont. Gen.*, III, 67.

66. "In the order of active cause, the more perfect is naturally first; and in this way nature makes a beginning with perfect things, since the imperfect is not brought to perfection except by something perfect already in existence." *S.T.* II-II. 1. 7, ad 3.

67. "Since then existence is the effect common to all agents, for every agent makes a thing to be actually; it follows that they produce this effect insofar as they are subordinate to the first agent, and act by its power." *Cont. Gen.* III, 66.

**His providence, it is by His power that a thing causes being, that is, is enabled to bring about an effect.**<sup>68</sup>

Since the natural agent acts only by powers of God in which it participated, and since the effect which it produces is due primarily and chiefly to God, God operates in the operation of every natural agent as a principal cause in an instrumental cause.

St. Thomas summarizes the teaching on divine concurrence in these words:

If, then, we consider the subsistent agent, every particular agent is immediate to its effect. But if we consider the power whereby the action is done, then the power of the higher cause is more immediate to the effect than the power of the lower cause, since the power of the lower cause is not coupled with its effect save by the power of the higher cause; wherefore . . . the power of the first cause takes the first place in the production of the effect and enters more deeply therein . . . Consequently, we may say that God works in everything forasmuch as everything needs His power in order that it may act. . . Therefore God is the cause of everything's actions inasmuch as He (1) gives everything the power to act, and (2) preserves it in being, and (3) applies it to action, and (4) inasmuch as by His power every power acts. And if we add to this that God is His own power, and that He is in all things, not as part of their essence, but as upholding them in being, we shall conclude that He acts in every agent immediately, without prejudice to the action of the will and of nature.<sup>69</sup>

**Though God does act immediately in every agent that agent still acts with complete freedom. The action of the**

68. "Nothing gives being except insofar as it is a being in act. Now God preserves things in being by His providence. Therefore it is by God's power that a thing causes being." *Cant. Gen. III*, 66.

69. *De Pot.*, III, 7.

First Cause does not mean that the agent's free will is lessened or taken away. On the contrary, the individual receives his freedom from God and therefore "the more efficacious God is in a man, the freer that man becomes. The more exclusively and all-inclusively God acts in him, the more truly does a man's action become his own."<sup>70</sup>

## DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR EDUCATION

For the educator, for the teacher, for the learner the effect of God's providence ramifies into a thousand different areas. It is here that we find the ultimate answer to all the questions about life. For Christ has told us: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; better are you than many sparrows" (Matt. X:28). Every person that has ever lived has come under the providence of God. Every moment of our existence has been watched over by the Creator of all existence.

There is not one detail that has been missed by Divine Providence and this is reflected in every event which affects a child in any way from the first moment of conception to the attainment of eternal salvation. He is born of these parents who may be Catholic or Protestant; Jew or Gentile; rich or poor; black or white. It is this particular century, in this particular environment, at this particular hour. He goes to a particular school and comes into contact with teacher and companions with their complex backgrounds each of which has a varied influence on

70. Guardini, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

him. The world may be at war or enjoying peace in a climate that is hot or cold. All these things have a fore-ordained purpose in the divine plan. Not one of these events is a waste, as it were. "Those things that are of God are ordained by Him" (Rom. XII:1). Nothing is too small nor too insignificant that it is deemed worthless or useless in the eternal blueprint of the Supreme Architect. In this doctrine we find the basis for our confidence in a provident Father: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore solicitous for tomorrow; for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. VI:34). Thus there is some higher, some eternal purpose to which the divine governance directs all things.

This is true not only for all the evident good that is brought about but even for the evil that is permitted to happen. This can be seen in the words of Christ: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. V:10). St. Paul also shows how this universal and infallible providence directs all things to a good purpose, not excluding evil, which it permits without in any way causing it. He writes these words to the Romans: "We glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience trial; and trial hope; and hope confoundeth not; because the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us" (Rom. V:3).

The providence of God is clearly illustrated by Our Lord in the parables of the prodigal son, the lost sheep, the good shepherd, and the talents. It would not be too rash, therefore, to say that a failure in school or a bad teacher or poor textbook definitely come under the divine providence. There is a purpose here that is not entirely

clear in the immediate present but, as in many other cases, will become clear at some future time. In regard to divine governance there are no accidents. Everything has its proper place in the plan of God.

#### PARENTS AND TEACHERS AS INSTRUMENTS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

It has already been pointed out that God uses intermediaries in the execution of divine providence. "Divine providence disposes not only what effects shall take place, but also from what causes and in what order these effects shall proceed." <sup>71</sup> The order of things is such that certain human beings govern and direct certain other human beings. This is the case with parents and teachers who are the principal cooperators in the divine order of things. Parents not only cooperate with the Creator in the generation of life itself but are also responsible for the education and training of their offspring. "But Christian parents must also understand that they are destined not only to propagate and preserve the human race on earth, indeed not only to educate any kind of worshipers of the true God, but children who are to become members of the Church of Christ, to raise up fellow citizens of the saints, and members of God's household, that the worshipers of God and our Saviour may daily increase." <sup>72</sup>

Parents are definitely part of a destiny which is divine and therefore makes them a precious instrument to the hands of God. Pope Pius XII speaking on the *Respons-*

<sup>71</sup>. S.T. II-II, 88, 2, c.

<sup>72</sup>. Raymond B. Fullam (ed.), *The Popes on Youth* (Buffalo: Canisius High School, 1956), pp. 287-88.

*bilities of Catholic Men* calls parents “the first educators” of their children:

Those parents merit much from the Church and society, who, conscious of their great responsibilities, exert themselves to become the first educators of their children; by word and example inciting to every Christian doctrine and showing their children how to practice their faith in their ordinary lives. But those parents who do not feel this responsibility and do not regulate their lives by the norms of the gospels, think only of religion as some accessory thing or something which may easily be tossed aside.??

The whole doctrine of parental rights in education can be ultimately traced to the doctrine of divine providence. For “all that happens here below is subject to divine providence”;<sup>73</sup> and since “the father is the principle of generation, education, of learning,”<sup>75</sup> we can say that parents have a special place in the design of God in ordering things in this world.

Because of the complexity of learning and education in our civilization it becomes necessary for the parents to delegate, not by choice but by obligation,<sup>76</sup> to those who will fulfill this task completely and competently. The teacher becomes another human instrument that is used by God in His eternal plan. In a later chapter we will discuss at length the role of the teacher in learning and education for the true work of a teacher cannot be overestimated since it carries with it so weighty a responsibility.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 24).

71. *S.T.*, I, 116, I.c

75. *S.T.*, H-II, 102, 1, c.

76. Sister M. Bernard Francis Loughery, *Parental Rights in American Educational Law* (Washington: Catholic University, 1957), p. 5.

Pope Pius XII calls the teacher a direct collaborator in the work of God and His Church:

Here is the reason why, in expressing our pleasure in receiving you, (Union of Italian Teachers), we speak as direct collaborators in this, the work of God and His Church, perhaps the most noble of all undertakings, even according to the unanimous opinion of human wisdom, as represented by Cicero, who looked upon the world with pagan eyes. “What public office,” he wrote, “can we exercise greater or better than the teaching and the instruction of youth?” Thus, the responsibility that we have in common is immense, and though in different degrees, it is not in completely different spheres. It is the responsibility for souls, for civilization, for the improvement and happiness of man both on earth and in heaven.??

#### GOD: The Principal Teacher

Because we are concerned with the efficient causes of learning we have discussed God, the First Cause and the role of Divine Providence in our lives, especially in the field of education. At this point we must see more specifically how God is a true teacher. Does God have a true role to play in learning and education? We have already seen that “the knowledge of God is the Cause of all things;”<sup>78</sup> and also that “God works in such a manner that things have their proper operation.”<sup>79</sup> Therefore, though it is true to say that “the intellectual operation is performed by the intellect in which it exists,”<sup>80</sup> it must

77. Fullam, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

78. *S.T.*, I, 14, 8, c; I, 14, 9, ad 3: I, 19, 4, ad 4.

79. *S.T.* I, 105, 5, c.

80. *Ibid.*, c, ad 1.

not be forgotten that "it is a secondary principle and depends upon the First Principle." 81 Hence, God moves the created intellect<sup>82</sup> and by Him the power to understand is given to the one who understands.<sup>85</sup> Thus St. Thomas concludes that "we always need God's help for every thought, inasmuch as He moves the understanding to act." 84

God moves the created intellect in two ways.

For He is the First immaterial Being; and as intellectuality is a result of immateriality, it follows that He is the First intelligent Being. Therefore since in each order the first is the cause of all that follows, we must conclude that from Him proceeds all intellectual power. In like manner, since He is the First Being, and all other beings exist in Him as in their First Cause, it follows that they exist intelligibly in Him, after the mode of His own Nature. For as the intelligible types of everything exist first of all in God, and are derived from Him by other intellects in order that these may actually understand; so also are they derived by creatures that they may subsistas

Therefore, God moves the created intellect by giving to it intellectual power and secondly, by impressing on the created intellect the intelligible species. Moreover, He maintains and preserves both power and species in existence for "God not only gives things their form, but He preserves them in existence, and applies them to act and is the end of every action." 86

This is all in accord with the established order of

81. *Ibid.*, ad 2.

82. *Ibid.*, ad 3.

83. *Ibid.*, ad 1.

84. *S.T.*, **HI**, 109, 1, ad 3.

85. *S.T.*, 105, 4, c.

16. *S.T.*, **I**, 105, 5, ad 3.

nature. "IE therefore we consider the order of things depending on the First Cause, God cannot do anything against this order." 87 Even from the point of view of secondary causes this is true; for He is not subject to secondary causes. "Wherefore God can do something outside this order created by Him, when He chooses, for instance by producing the effects of secondary causes without them, or producing certain effects to which secondary causes do not extend."88 Therefore, we can conclude with St Thomas:

The thing that underlies primarily all things, belongs properly to the causality of the supreme cause. Therefore no secondary cause can produce anything, unless there is presupposed in the thing produced something that is caused by a higher cause.89

St. Thomas is also careful to note that even though "God works sufficiently in things as First Agent, it does not follow from this that the operation of secondary causes is superfluous."90 This point will be enlarged upon in our treatment of the secondary causes of learning, namely, the pupil and the teacher. The important fact here that we wish to be clear is that "man cannot even know truth without divine help." 91

Consequently, whenever a natural agent produces an effect, God (a) moves the agent, applying its power to the production, as does any principal cause, and (b) He produces in the effect what is primary and most common,

87. *S.T.*, I, 105, 6, c.

88. *Ibid.*

89. *S.T.*, I, 65, 3, c.

90. *S.T.*, 105, 5, ad 1.

91. *S.T.*, I III. 109, 2, ad 3.

namely, being.<sup>9\*</sup> Therefore, since the natural agent acts only by the power of God in which it participates, and since the effect which it produces is *due primarily* and chiefly to God, God operates in the operation of every natural agent as a principal cause in an instrumental cause.<sup>92</sup>

From the preceding consideration another one follows very clearly, namely that both the truth of things and the truth of human intellects are from and depend upon the first truth, that is to say, the truth of the divine intellect upon which things depend for their being.

If we speak of truth as it is in things, then all things are true by one primary truth; to which each one is assimilated accord-

92. Brother Benignus, *op. cit.*, p. 586.

93. A good summary of all that we have said so far about how God operates in the operation of every natural agent can be found in these words of St. Thomas: "If, then, we consider the subsistent agent, every particular agent is immediate to its effect. But if we consider the power whereby the action is done, then the power of the higher cause is more immediate to the effect than the power of the lower cause, since the power of the lower cause is not coupled with its effect save by the power of the higher cause; wherefore . . . the power of the first cause takes the first place in the production of the effect and enters more deeply therein . . . Consequently, we may say that God works in everything for as much as everything needs His power in order that it may act . . . Therefore God is the cause of everything's action inasmuch as He (1) gives everything the power to act, and (2) preserves it in being, and (3) applies it to action, and (4) inasmuch as by His power every other power acts. And if we add to this that God is His own power and that He is in all things, not as part of their essence, but as upholding them in being, we shall conclude that He acts in every agent immediately, without prejudice to the action of the will and of nature." *De Pot.*, HI, 7.



ing to its own entity. And thus, although the essences or forms of things are many, yet the truth of the Divine Intellect is one, in conformity to which all things are said to be true.<sup>97</sup>

The divine intellect measures or determines the truth of things, since it gives them their being and the relation of that being to itself. It gives them also their truth in reference to human intellects, since in this respect they are true insofar as they are knowable, and they are knowable by virtue of their forms; ~~99~~ and these forms, which are the principles by which things are what they are, are from the Divine Intellect, the Creator, who is the exemplary and efficient cause of all things. Finally, since human intellects are true insofar as they are in conformity with things and since they are in such conformity only insofar as they possess the forms of things and predict these of things, it is manifest that their truth is from the intellect whence these are, and whence their own nature, power and operation are: the creative intellect of God. Hence, the divine intellect is the first truth and the source of all truth.<sup>90</sup>

Since truth is the proper subject matter of education it is important that this source of truth be recognized in any discussion on teaching and learning. Again, since God is the end of all things, including education, it should be noted that “the only natural desire for God recognized by St Thomas is the necessary tendency in every created intellect towards the possession of the truth, a tendency that cannot be satisfied by anything less than a knowledge

94. *S.T.*, I, 16, 6, c.

95. *S.T.*, I, 16, 2. c.

96. *De Vcrit.*, I, 8, c.

and vision of God.” 97 Thus it is said that the intellect by nature is impatient of ignorance.

## LUMEN INTELLECTUALE

St. Thomas speaks of the intellectual virtue of the creature as an “intelligible light derived from the prime light” 98 and as a certain participated likeness of the un-created light in which are found the *rationes aeternae*” 99 It is by reason of this shared light which is essential to it that the soul merits being called an intellectual substance. 100 God causes it to be connaturally present in the soul. Later on we shall see how the human intellect is strengthened by the light of faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

. . . human knowledge is assisted by the revelation of grace. For the intellect's natural light is strengthened by the infusion of gratuitous light. 101

Divine operation is so necessary for man's cognition (natural as well as supernatural) that He must not alone confer and conserve the intellectual light in being but must also direct and move it to action. 102 This follows

97. William R. O'Connor, *The Eternal Quest* (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1947), p. 180. (Courtesy of David McKay Company)

98. *S.T.*, I, 12, 2, c.

99. *S.T.*, I, 84, 5, c.

100. *De Verit.*, XII, 1, c.

101. *S.T.*, I, 12, 13, c.

102. Francis X. Meehan, "Lux in Spiritualibus According to the Mind of St. Thomas Aquinas," *Philosophical Studies in Honor of The Very Reverend Ignatius Smith, OJ\**. (Westminster: Newman Press, 1952), p. 155.

from the Thomistic teaching that God's activity is required in the operation of every creature.<sup>103</sup>

God, then, causes the activity of finite intellection, though not in the sense that there is no proper causality of the created intellect. The natural light concreated with the intellective substance is itself an active power which functions in a true but subordinated fashion under the influence of the Prime Cause. "The divine element in human cognition does not consist in an enlightenment that is over and above the illuminative power of the faculty's indigenous light, but simply in moving this light to its proper object. Such movement is most necessary, natural, intimate and interior."<sup>104</sup> St. Thomas gives this analogy:

The material sun sheds its light outside us; but the intelligible Sun, Who is God, shines within us. Hence the natural light bestowed upon the soul is God's enlightenment, whereby we are enlightened to see what pertains to natural knowledge.<sup>105</sup>

Thus, it is said that the human understanding has an "intelligible light, which of itself is sufficient for knowing certain intelligible things."<sup>106</sup> The certain intelligible things of which St. Thomas speaks is that knowledge which is had through the senses. To come to a knowledge of higher intelligible things a stronger light is necessary as we have seen in our discussion on Faith. "Hence, we must say that for the knowledge of any truth whatsoever man needs Divine help, that the intellect may be moved by God to its act. But he does not need a new light added

103. Cont. Gen., III, 67; *S.T.*, I, 105, 5, c; III, 109, 1, c.

104. Meehan, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

105. *S.T.*, I II, 109, 2, ad 2.

106. *Ibid.*, c.

to his natural light, in order to know the truth of all things, but only in some that surpass his natural knowledge.” 107

Not all things are equally intelligible to the human mind, nor are all things that are intelligible equally near to its light.<sup>108</sup> “Therefore man gains knowledge of things he does not know through two things: intellectual light and self-evident primary concepts. The latter have the same relation to the intellectual light of the agent intellect as tools to the craftsman.” <sup>109</sup> One of the weaknesses of human intellects is that they labor under the need of progressing from known intelligibles to those previously unknown, inferentially deduced by the process of reasoning. Participating only minimally in intellectual light, its advance toward the fullness of truth must be successive and gradual; it must proceed by means of its light from basic conceptions and first principles to the investigation of unknown fields. “For God endows our nature with the knowledge of first principles.” <sup>110</sup> They are known intuitively, effortlessly by a simple inspection of them under the natural light.<sup>111</sup> There is nothing there unless and until the intelligible species in which they are expressed have been first formed by the light of the agent intellect operating on sense phantasms.<sup>112</sup> Being, non-being, whole and part are known “through the intelligible species which he has received from phantasms.” <sup>113</sup> And since prime principles must be expressed in these concepts it is clear

107. *Ibid.*

108. *De Verit.*, XI, 3, c.

109. *Ibid.*

110. *De Vent.*, XVII, 1, ad 6.

111. Meehan, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

112. *De Verit.*, II, 1, c

113. *S.T.*, I-II, 51, 1, c.

that they are not ready-given as part of the mental equipment with which man is born as is the case with the natural light itself. They are subsequent to and dependent on the activity of the agent intellect and stand in relation to it as the prime effects of its causality: <sup>114</sup>. . . phantasms cannot of themselves affect the passive intellect, (but) require to be made actually intelligible by the active intellect.” 114

Man is said to be divinely endowed with the knowledge of first principles because God is the author of nature which under Him so readily forms them by means of its intellectual light. Thus God is truly a teacher:

That which is introduced into the soul of the student by the teacher is contained in the knowledge of the teacher . . . Now, the knowledge of the principles which are known to us naturally has been implanted in us by God: for God is the Author of nature. These principles, therefore, are also contained by the Divine Wisdom.<sup>115</sup>

Weak though our intellectual light is, all men normally, naturally apprehend the truth of these principles by reason of their specifically similar nature.<sup>116</sup> By means of them we judge everything else. Because of their evidence they are the deepest ground of certitude. They are focal points for the illumination of all subsequent truth.<sup>117</sup> Without them there would be no reasoning to certain conclusions from known premises, since they must illumine all other premises and less universal principles.<sup>118</sup> Th>

114. *S.T.*, I, 84, 6, c; I, 86, 2, a

115. *Cont. Gen.*, I, 7.

116. *De Spirit. Creat.*, I, 9, c.

117. *S.T.*, II-II, 171, 2, c.

118. *De Verit.*, XI, 1, c.

**entire certitude of all the sciences arises from the certitude of the principles. Conclusions are known with certitude only when resolved into principles and ultimately into the prime principles.**

The whole certainty of scientific knowledge arises from the certainty of principles . . . that something is known with certainty is due to the light of reason divinely implanted within us, by which God speaks within us.<sup>119</sup>

**Thus we conclude that the intellect of the creature is perfected only by the possession of truth and will reach the consummation of its perfection only when and if, like the water that has flowed from its fountain source, it is elevated and reverts to its principle where it can gaze ultimately upon revealed Truth Itself. If man is faithful to the light given him then he cannot but help grow in truth. By docility to it he will discover the will of God in himself and in all things. The love of truth will bring him back eventually to the luminous source of all truth, when in the presence of unveiled light he shall see all light as is given to all lovers of truth to see. "Therefore, it must be said that to see God there is required some similitude in the visual faculty, namely, the light of glory strengthening the intellect to see God, which is spoken of in the Psalm (XXXV: 10), 'In Thy light we shall see light/ " 120 121**

**Thus, "due to the light of reason divinely implanted within us, by which God speaks within us," Kl**

119. *Ibid.*, ad 13.

120. *S.T.*, I, 12, 2, c.

121. *S.T.*, I, 117, 1, ad 4.

**we conclude that "God alone teaches interiorly and principally." 122123**

Now, God in a most excellent way causes man's knowledge . . . For He adorned the soul itself with intellectual light and imprinted on it the concepts of the first principles, which are, as it were, the sciences in embryo, just as He impressed on other physical things the seminal principles for producing all their effects.<sup>123</sup>

**All human teaching depends upon man's possession of this intellectual light. It is God, the Giver of this light, therefore, Who is the principal teacher.**

Now this light of reason --- is placed in us by God, as though a certain likeness of the divine truth taking up its abode with us. Whence, since all human teaching cannot have efficacy except from the power of this light, it is clear that it is God alone Who teaches interiorly and principally, as nature is also the principal healer.

**So it is written of God: "He that teaches man knowledge" (Psalm CH:3), inasmuch as "the light of His countenance is signed upon us" (Psalm IV:7). It is through this light that all things are shown to us. For "the teacher only brings exterior help, as the physician who heals: but just as the interior nature is the principle cause of knowledge. But both of these are from God." 125**

122. *De Verit.*, XI 1, c.

123. *Ibid.*, XI, 3, c.

124. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, c.

125. *S.T., I*, 117, I, ad 1.

## LEARNING AND THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

What is beyond the power of human extrinsic agents, is possible to the Divine Teacher of soul, Who dwells immanently in the learner and Who exercises over him a strong, yet gentle and freedom-respecting influence. No finite nature can acquire all the knowledge to which it tends without first having in its possession the habits or virtues that are necessary in order to bring about a proportion of equality between the power of understanding and the object to be understood. Thus we will focus our attention on the Primary Cause as He is operative through the gifts of the Holy Ghost. This is another way in which God may be said to be the Principal Teacher in the teaching-learning situation. As Poggi has pointed out: "Only the Holy Ghost, hidden within the depths of the heart, can bring to fruition the efforts and good-will of His secondary instruments. He is the source of those truths which human agents attempt to transmit."<sup>126</sup> These supernatural realities, which place their subject in direct contact with the Author of *all truth*, function as further principles in the acquisition of even natural truth. Therefore a student who is in the state of grace, in whose heart the Holy Ghost abides, is even better equipped as a seeker of truth than his fellow who has the faith, but who lacks charity and the gifts.

It should be clearly understood that the gifts of the Holy Ghost *do not* assist in the pursuit of natural learning. They *do not* supplant the natural human reason in its

126. James E. Poggi, "The Gifts of the Holy Ghost and Their Implications for Education," (Unpublished master's thesis. Catholic University of America, Dept. of Education, 1955), p. 121.



work of acquiring and understanding truth. "The order of grace neither abolishes nor violates the limits of nature." 127 The gifts do *not* substitute for the hard work which reason must pay as the price for the acquisition of truth. There is no supernatural communication of natural truths. Human reason, in regard to its own proper object, must always act on its own level and according to its own laws. "Faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, in making perfect the reason, ônly clarify the sight." 128

With this reservation, how can it be said that the gifts facilitate natural learning? They do so in two general ways: (1) negatively, by guarding the mind from error through a relation of the natural truths to the supernatural; (2) positively, by favoring a synthetic, harmonious view of reality through an integration of supernatural and natural truths.

The intellectual gifts exercise a purifying influence upon the mind. Through the gifts of Understanding, Wisdom and Knowledge the Holy Ghost maintains a mental balance and accuracy. By Understanding the student is given a correct estimate of his supernatural end, the first prerequisite for correctly evaluating lesser and subordinate ends. The judgment is actually carried through by the gifts of Wisdom and Knowledge. It is the nature of these gifts to judge of human and created things in the light of the Divine, the former by proceeding from the highest causes to the lower; the latter by ascending from created realities to the first causes themselves.<sup>129</sup> Thus through the operations of these gifts, whatever is presented to the

127. Jacques Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), p. 428.

128. *Ibid.*

129. Poggi, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

mind of the student in the course of his academic pursuits will be weighed and tested in the light of ultimate values. If there be any inconsistency between the two truths, it will be unveiled through the hidden action of the Spirit. The pupil will at least sense implicitly, by a certain supernatural instinct, that all is not well. He will suspend judgment until he has had recourse to better informed authorities.

The gifts of the Holy Ghost contribute to the effectiveness of natural learning in a second way by inclining the student to the formation of an integrated view of reality. It is not enough that individual truths be learned. To grasp their full significance they must be studied in relation to other truths, especially to those principles and causes of a higher order from which they emanate. "To form the intelligence is to reveal to the student the splendor of order." 130 For knowledge, to be true and valid, must proceed along the lines in which reality itself is constructed.

The efforts of reason to arrive at integration are seconded and facilitated by the operations of the Holy Spirit through the intellectual gifts of Wisdom and Knowledge. Let it again be stated that these gifts do not supplant the work of reason. However, in their own proper mode of action, through an interior movement flowing from union with the Divine Truth itself, they come to the aid of weak human reason, lifting it up and compensating for its deficiencies in its strivings to view its findings under the light of the highest Truth. For ". . . it is a general law that the lower . . . without quitting its own proper and

130. J. Ruthe, *Le Saint-Esprit et l'Education* (Quebec: Libraire De L'Action Catholique, 1940), p. 24.

specific limits—tends towards the higher and seeks to enter into continuity with it.”<sup>131</sup>

Thus through the gifts of the Holy Spirit we can see the working of the Divine Causality in the teaching-learning situation. By focusing special attention upon His direct operations through these intellectual gifts we have a more precise picture of God's efficient Causality in education.

### THE GIFT OF FAITH AND LEARNING

A consideration of Faith is appropriate at this point because the gifts of the Holy Ghost pertain in a special way to Faith since they ultimately spring from it as from their root and faith opens up to the pupil vast areas of knowledge which otherwise would remain closed to him.

The Vatican Council has defined Faith as “. . . a supernatural virtue, whereby inspired and assisted by the grace of God, we believe that the things which He has revealed are true; not because the intrinsic truth of the things is plainly perceived by the natural light of reason but because of the authority of God Himself, "Who reveals them and Who can neither be deceived nor deceive.”<sup>132</sup>

Faith in itself is a total, but naked, acceptance of God's truth on the word of God revealing. It puts the Christian in direct contact with the supernatural truths which form the basis of the Christian life. But this virtue, taken purely

131. Maritain, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

132. Vincent McNabb, (ed) *The Decrees of the Vatican Council* (London: Burns & Oates, 1907), p. 22.

by itself, has certain limitations. Faith is of its nature dark, obscure, blind. It does not accept truth because it can see and understand it, but only because God has revealed it, Who is Truth Itself and cannot deceive. "The principal object of faith is the First Truth," 133 and "the merit of faith arises from this, that at God's bidding man believes what he does not see . . . reason debars merit of faith which enables one to see by knowledge what is proposed for belief." 154

But "reason, indeed, enlightened by faith," states the Vatican Council, "when it seeks earnestly, piously and calmly, attains by a gift from God some, and that a very fruitful, understanding of mysteries." 135 It is the function of the intellectual gifts to supplement Faith, and, by a penetration and judgment of the supernatural truths proposed by Faith, to remedy its intrinsic defect. "Faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes nature, and perfection supposes something that can be perfected." 136

In this matter the gifts of the Holy Ghost must be very carefully distinguished from faith itself and from discursive wisdom. ". . . Faith causes man to assent to the truths of revelation without investigating them by the processes of reason." 1,7 Subalternated to Faith there is discursive or theological wisdom which formulates judgments which proceed . . . discursively and are based on knowledge that is acquired by study, although its princi-

138. S.T., II-II, 5, 1, c.

134. S.T., III, 55, 5, ad 2.

135. McNabb, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

136. S.T., I, 2, 2, ad 1.

137. Thomas Donlan, O.P., *Theology and Education* (Dubuque: W. Brown fe Co., 1952), p. 4.

pies are obtained by revelation.” 138 Finally, supplementary to Faith but above theological wisdom, there is the infused gift of Wisdom, by which “. . . man is inclined to judge reality from the divine aspect by a kind of inclination or instinct which is divinely inspired.”<sup>139</sup>

To believe is one thing. To speculate and meditate upon the truths of Faith and to draw conclusions from them according to the human manner of reasoning is yet another. But to know these truths directly, to be placed in immediate contact with them and to experience something of their beauty and grandeur through the inner impulse of the Holy Spirit, is something else again; and it is this last mode of supernatural knowledge which is the particular feature of the intellectual gifts of the Holy Ghost.

. Through the gifts of Understanding, Wisdom and Knowledge man's knowledge of divine things is, as it were, brought into harmony with God's own knowledge of Himself. The human intellect is made “connatural” to God's way of knowing. “Face to face with God we have no other means of surpassing knowledge by concepts than our connatural knowledge, or 'co-naissance' as Claudel has called it, our co-nativity with Him.” **140**

We conclude, therefore, that God is the principal agent in the communication of new knowledge, since He is the author of human intellectual power which is in the human teacher and the learner. He is also the creative First Cause of the learner's perception of the truth and the certitude of what is proposed to him in instruction.

138. *Ibid.*

139. *Ibid.*

140. Maritain, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter we have discussed the role of Divine Causality in the teaching-learning situation. From a consideration of Divine Providence, which extends to all creatures, we saw that God not only conserves all beings in existence but also gives to every created agent its power to act by moving it to act and by producing the effect which it produces. In the execution of His Providence it was made clear that God uses intermediaries as His instruments.

Not only is God the First Principle of all operations of creatures but He is also the Author of nature. As such He has endowed human nature with the light of reason and has given to whom He will the added light of faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost which enable man to come to knowledge of things that would otherwise remain closed to him. In this way we have shown that God teaches principally and interiorly.

In the following chapters we will attempt to examine the relationship between Divine Causality and the roles played by the learner and the teacher in the teaching-learning situation.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PUPIL AS THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF HIS OWN KNOWLEDGE

In the preceding chapter we discussed God, the First Cause, and the role which He plays in the teaching-learning situation. It was pointed out that the pupil is not the total cause of any knowledge that he may possess as the result of teaching. He, with the teacher, is a secondary cause under God for whatever is learned through the cooperative activity of teaching and learning. Both the teacher and the pupil are partial causes of the end result, namely, the new knowledge acquired by the pupil.

Not all learning, of course, requires a teacher. There is much that the pupil discovers for himself. In this latter instance, the learner is not a partial cause, but the total cause of his knowledge at the level of secondary causes. As has been pointed out no one may be said to be the total cause of any knowledge that he possesses in view of the Divine Causality which is ultimately responsible for the activity of all secondary causes or agents. But focusing our attention on secondary causes the student may be said to be the total cause of whatever he has learned through discovery.

Our precise problem in this chapter, however, is to investigate the exact nature of the efficient causality of

the pupil in the teaching-learning situation and to determine more precisely how the pupil exercises his own efficient causality as a partial cause in cooperation with the teacher as another efficient and partial cause of whatever is learned in this situation.

## DISCOVERY AND LEARNING THROUGH INSTRUCTION

As a preface to our remarks on the pupil as an efficient cause of his own knowledge in the teaching-learning situation, it is necessary to distinguish between the two ways of learning.

*Learning Through Discovery.* The process through which the mind acquires knowledge through discovery is somewhat complex. Man's mind, at birth, is a *tabula rasa*—a blank tablet. Knowledge begins with the *senses*. *Nihil in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensibus*. But knowledge is much more than mere sense images or phantasms. Both Aristotle and St. Thomas reason to the existence of an active power within the mind which deals with whatever the senses have presented to it. Discovery, then, is essentially an active process.

St. Thomas speaks, moreover, of *rationes seminales* by which he means certain first principles of knowledge which exist in the mind and which are the seeds of all knowledge. As succinctly explained by St Thomas:

(1) Certain seeds of knowledge pre-exist in us, namely the first concepts of the intellect which are recognized immediately by the light of the active intellect through the species abstracted from sense presentations . . . From these universal principles follow as from germinal capacities.\*

1. *De Verit.*, XI, 1, c.

It is by reason of these endowments both at the sense level and the intellectual level that the pupil is able to learn things by himself. Because some knowledge exists in him in these *rationes seminales* the learner can reason and acquire additional knowledge.

*Learning Through Instruction.* The other method by which one learns, says St. Thomas, is through instruction by another. It is definitely a different way of acquiring knowledge since here there are two separate secondary causes involved whereas in learning through discovery there is but one secondary cause. This does not mean, however, that learning through instruction is *totally* different from learning through discovery. Indeed St. Thomas teaches that the teacher must keep in mind the process by which the pupil learns through discovery and minister accordingly. "For one man teaches another as a kind of univocal agent and thus communicates knowledge to the other in the same way that he himself has it." <sup>23</sup>But the way in which the teacher came to this knowledge is through a process of reasoning. "Consequently, one person is said to teach another inasmuch as, by signs, he manifests to that other the reasoning process which he himself goes through by his own natural reason." <sup>24</sup> Thus it may be said that learning through instruction is not altogether different from learning through discovery. The teacher can only minister to the pupil. He cannot supply the light of the pupil's agent intellect. He merely supplies material through which the pupil forms phantasms and the pupil's agent intellect can work. The words of the teacher, St. Thomas tells us, "heard or seen in writing, have the same efficacy in causing knowledge as things outside the soul." <sup>4</sup>

2. *Ibid.*, XI, 3, ad 4.

3. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, c.

4. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, ad 11.



Learning through instruction can be said to be “. . . a human awakening.” 5

In the following chapter on the efficient causality of the teacher we will discuss the concept of learning through instruction in more detail. For our present purpose let this distinction between learning through discovery and instruction suffice.

## EFFICIENT CAUSALITY OF THE PUPIL

In the first chapter we listed the various kinds of efficient causality. We explained each kind in detail. It is our intention here to apply these descriptive definitions to the role of the pupil in the teaching-learning situation in order to ascertain exactly in what manner he is said to be an efficient cause of learning.

1. The pupil is a *secondary* efficient cause. It has already been pointed out at some length in the second chapter that God alone is the primary cause of all being. Therefore all other causes are called secondary since there can be only one Primary Cause “since the second cause acts only in virtue of the first” 6

2. The pupil is a *partial* efficient cause. The total cause accounts for the whole effect whereas the partial cause accounts for only part of the effect. In the teaching-learning situation the pupil is a partial cause since he accounts for only part of the effect which results, namely,

5. Jacques Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), p. 9.

6. *S.T.*, I II, 19, 4, c.

his own knowledge. God is a Cause of this effect insofar as He has endowed the mind of the pupil with the light of reason and has given him the gift of intelligence. The teacher has contributed to the production of the effect by presenting to the intellect of the pupil the knowledge with which he (the teacher) already possesses. Thus the intellect of the pupil is a partial cause in the production of the effect in the teaching-learning situation along with God and the teacher.

3. The pupil is a *physical* efficient cause. The pupil is not a moral efficient cause of his own knowledge but a physical efficient cause. A physical cause produces its effect by direct action towards this effect and is not necessarily material to nature.<sup>7</sup> This is evident by the production of his own knowledge by the learner.

4. The pupil is a *proximate* efficient cause. The effect, the pupil's knowledge, proceeds immediately from his intellect. Thus in the teaching-learning situation the pupil is a proximate cause. "For the signs are not the proximate efficient cause of knowledge, but the reason is."<sup>8</sup>

5. The pupil is an *immanent* efficient cause. The causality of the pupil does not pass from one entity to another. "... acts of the intellect and will are the results of an immanent causality."<sup>9</sup>

7. "... the intellect is a physical cause of thought. Wherefore as is plain, *physical* in this place must not be identified *material*." Thomas Harper, S.J., *The Metaphysics of the School* (New York: Peter Smith, 1940), III, 16.

8. *De Vent.*, XI, ad 4.

9. Harper, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

6. The pupil is a *coordinated* efficient cause. A coordinated cause is the same as a partial cause in that it cooperates with the causality of God and the teacher thus accounting for only part of the effect.

7. The pupil is a *subordinated* efficient cause. In the teaching-learning situation the pupil depends on the causality of the First Cause and the causality of the teacher. Thus the pupil is said to be a subordinated cause.

8. The pupil is a *free* efficient cause. The pupil has a free will and therefore can make a choice as to whether or not he will allow himself to be taught. In other words, he has the "power of causing or not causing at his pleasure." St. Thomas observes, "Every agent acts either by nature or by intellect." 10 The word *necessary* as applied to cause means one which cannot help acting. This is not to be understood as contra-distinguished from *contingent*, but as the opposite of *voluntary*. Wherefore, as St. Thomas puts it, "Will is divided from nature, as one cause from another; for some things are produced naturally, others voluntarily." 11 Thus all the operations of nature, that is, unintelligent creatures, are necessary; while the operations of the intelligent creatures, as such, are free.

9. The pupil is both a *direct (per se)* and an *indirect (per accidens)* efficient cause. In the teaching-learning situation the pupil has the intention of acquiring knowledge; otherwise the effect would not take place. For the acquisition of this knowledge depends on the pupil inas-

10. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

11. *Metaphysics* 50, iii, c.

12. *S.T.*, I II, 10, 1, ad 1.

much as he can refuse to learn. Thus the pupil can be said to be the direct cause of his own knowledge since in order to acquire it he must freely intend to acquire it. But it is also pointed out by St. Thomas that a thing is the cause of another in a second way, that is, by accident. "A thing is the cause of another in two ways; in one way absolutely, in another way by accident. That is absolutely the cause of another, which produces the effect according to the virtue of its own nature or form. Whence it follows that the effect is in itself intended by the cause . . . A thing is cause of another by accident, if it be a cause removing a prohibitive." ¶ Therefore the pupil is said to be an accidental cause of his own knowledge insofar as he takes steps to remove various obstacles to learning. In other words, "That which is an efficient cause *by accident* is connected to or related to the effect not by virtue of its own nature or form, but in a variety of ways." 15 Thus we can say the pupil is both a *direct* and an *indirect* efficient cause in the teaching-learning situation.

10. The pupil is a *positive* and a *negative* efficient cause. As a *positive* cause the pupil prepares the way for the reception of the effect. He listens to the words of the teacher and makes a definite effort to understand what is being taught. As a *negative* cause he removes any impediments to learning. He attempts to clear his mind of distractions while the teacher is speaking. Every pupil at one time or another has the tendency to daydream about his after school activities. By controlling these distracting thoughts he acts as a negative cause in learning.

13. S.T., I, 104, 2, c.

14. S.T., I II, 85, 5, c.

15. Harper, *op. cit.*, III, 11.

11. The pupil is the *principal* efficient cause. As has been pointed out before the principal cause is that cause which acts with complete independence of any other efficient cause. Absolutely speaking, there is only one Principal Efficient Cause, the First Cause, God. All finite causes, in relation to the First Cause, are instrumental causes. Thus in this sense, even the pupil is said to be the instrumental cause of his own knowledge.

According to another usage of the term principal cause, every power or faculty given to an entity in order to enable it to operate, even though such a power or faculty is sufficient for the production of the effect, and is nobler than, or equally noble with the effect, is said to be an instrumental cause; while the supposit or substance, to which these faculties pertain, is deemed the principal cause.<sup>16</sup> Thus, for instance, in accordance with this acceptance man or the human soul would be the principal, and the intellectual faculty the instrumental, cause of thought. Metaphysicians make some very fine distinctions concerning the individual agent acting which are not of immediate concern to us here.<sup>17</sup>

16. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

17. In regard to the whole person acting one author points out certain distinctions which are *important in* the whole framework of metaphysics.

“(1) The individual agent acting, that is the supposit, e.g., man, the animal, etc., called the *principium quod agit*, is called the *causa ut quae*. (2) the agent's nature and active powers to act, called the *principium quo agens agit*, the *causa ut qua*·, (3) the actions of the powers are immediate causes *in facto esse*. Corresponding to these three obvious distinctions we distinguish the cause in remote first act, *causa in actu primo remoto* (the agent); cause in proximate first act, *causa in actu primo proximo* (the powers); and the cause in second act, *causa in actu secundo* (the actions of the powers).” Charles A. Hart, *Metaphysics for the Many* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1957), p. 212.

In regard to the teaching-learning situation St. Thomas observes: “. . . through the instrumentality, as it were, of what is told him, the natural reason of the pupil arrives at a knowledge of the things which he did not know.” 1819 The difference between learning through discovery and learning through instruction has already been indicated. In both instances the intellect of the learner is the principal efficient cause. The pupil contains within himself, in a state of potentiality, whatever knowledge he acquires.

Knowledge, therefore, pre-exists in the learner potentially, not, however, in the purely passive, but in the active sense. Otherwise, man would not be able to acquire knowledge independently.19

When it is said that something pre-exists in active completed potency, the external agent (the teacher) acts by helping the internal agent (the pupil's intellect), providing it with the means by which it can enter into act. To illustrate the teaching-learning situation St. Thomas uses the analogy of the doctor being assisted by nature in the process of healing. “. . . art in its work imitates nature . . . the exterior principle, art, acts, not as principal agent, but as helping the principal agent, which is the interior principle, by strengthening it, and by furnishing it with instruments and assistance of which the interior principle makes use in producing the effect.”20

In conclusion on this discussion of the pupil's efficient causality in the teaching-learning situation we can say that the learner is a real and true efficient cause. We have seen that he is a secondary, partial, physical, proximate, immanent, coordinated and subordinated, free, direct and

18. *De Perit.*, XI, 1, c.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *S.T.*, I, 117, c.

indirect, positive and negative, and finally the principal efficient cause. Hence, we agree with Maritain when he writes:

[1]

All this boils down to the fact that the mind's natural activity on the part of the learner and the intellectual guidance on the part of the teacher are both dynamic factors in education, but the principal agent in education, the primary dynamic factor or propelling force, is the internal vital principle in the one to be educated.<sup>21</sup>

In the next chapter on the causality of the teacher it *is also* possible to say that the teacher, in a sense, is a principal cause in the teaching-learning situation.

12. The pupil is a kind of *univocal* cause. The fact that the pupil is a univocal cause of his learning in the teaching-learning situation can be deduced from the words of St. Thomas when he speaks of the causality of the teacher in causing knowledge and the causality of an angel in causing knowledge. First *oE* all, we must examine the definition of a univocal cause and an equivocal cause. A *univocal* cause is one that produces an effect similar to itself; as, for instance, fire begets fire, a horse a horse, etc. An *equivocal* cause is one that produces an effect which is not similar of itself, and may be of various kinds. Thus heat produces softness in wax, hardness in clay, brilliancy in iron.

If, therefore, a cause is essentially limited to one effect which is the expression of itself by specific likeness; it is called a univocal cause. If a cause has more than one effect, or an effect which is not the determined expression of itself; it is called an equivocal cause.<sup>22</sup>

21. Maritain, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

It is important that we remember here that we are speaking of the pupil learning through instruction and not learning by discovery. Now St. Thomas explicitly states that the teacher is a univocal cause in the teaching-learning situation. This will be discussed at length in the next chapter but it is necessary to recall it here. "One man teaches another as a kind of univocal agent."<sup>23</sup> By this he means that the teacher "communicates knowledge to the other *in the same way he himself has it.*"<sup>24</sup> This way is the process of reasoning by proceeding from causes to effects. But when St. Thomas speaks of the causality of an angel in teaching he observes that "an angel teaches as a kind of equivocal cause for he knows *intuitively that which man learns through a process of reasoning.*"<sup>25</sup> Thus we can say that the pupil is a kind of univocal cause in the teaching-learning situation since he produces the effect by a process of reasoning within himself and not intuitively as an angel does.

We can conclude that the pupil is a kind of univocal cause from what St. Thomas says concerning an instrument. "An instrument is neither univocal nor an equivocal cause."<sup>26</sup> And in the same place he makes it clear that it derives its equivocal or univocal causality according to whether the principal agent is an equivocal or univocal cause. Now it is clear from the *De Veritate* that the teacher, who is the instrumental cause of the pupil's knowledge, is a "kind of univocal cause."<sup>27</sup> Therefore this would imply that the pupil is also a kind of univocal cause of his own knowledge.

23. *De Verit.*, XI, 3, ad 4.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. *In IV Sent.*, I, 1, 4, 5.

27. *De Verit.*, XI, 8, ad 4.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE EFFICIENT CAUSALITY OF THE TEACHER

Now that we have examined in detail the efficient causality of God, the First Cause, and the efficient causality of the learner we are now ready to investigate the role of the teacher in the teaching-learning situation. We have seen that God alone teaches "interiorly and principally"<sup>1</sup> insofar as He has "adorned the soul with intellectual light and imprinted on it the concepts of the first principles, which are, as it were, the sciences in embryo."<sup>2</sup> This is what is meant when St. Thomas says that knowledge pre-exists in the learning potentially? Because this potentiality is understood in the active sense and not in a purely passive sense we are able to posit two ways of learning; one in which the natural reason by itself reaches knowledge of unknown things, and this way is called *discovery* and another way in which someone else aids the learner's natural reason and this way is called *learning through instruction*. In both these ways we have seen that the pupil is the *principal efficient cause* of his own knowledge.

1. *De Verit.*, XI, 1, a
2. *Ibid.*, XI, 3, c.
3. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, c

In this chapter we are concerned with the efficient causality of the teacher. Just what is the position of the teacher in the teaching-learning situation? How exactly does the teacher fit in this triangle of learning through instruction with relation to God, the first Cause and also with relation to the learner. Though man is naturally equipped by the Creator to come to a knowledge of things on his own through discovery, he would be intellectually impoverished were this the only method by which to acquire knowledge. The knowledge to be attained is too profound and vast for individuals to aspire to attain it unassisted by others. Likewise, unruly passions and inordinate desires could scarcely be tempered and subjected to reason without the encouragement and instruction of others. Moreover, it seems contrary to nature. For a considerable time after birth, man's total intellectual and moral helplessness parallels his physical dependency. Even when he outgrows this dual dependency, man learns more profoundly and extensively by the assistance and contact with others than he would were he to live in isolation. Thus it is necessary for man to utilize the benefits of many trained minds in intellectual matters.

Were we left to ourselves, we might have to wait a long time before finding an answer. We might despair of ever finding one and quit bothering about the question.\*

Thus is the necessity of the teacher succinctly stated by Gilson. The same author shows the nobility of teaching when he quotes the words of St. Thomas: "it is a greater thing to distribute to others what one has contemplated than only to contemplate." ‡

4. Anton C. Pegis (Edit), *A Gilson Reader* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1957), p. 301.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 311.

There is definitely, then, a relationship which exists between the teacher and between God and the learner. Each is a true cause in the teaching-learning situation. Each is inter-related with the other. Herein lies the sacral character of learning. For we have here the cooperation of teacher and student with the providential plan of God for man. "The human teacher is the minister of God in achieving the communication and constant increase of knowledge. The student is assured that his docility and intellectual work are the normal means by which he perfects his own rational nature and simultaneously makes a closer approach to the infinite truth of God."<sup>6</sup>

#### THE EFFICIENT CAUSALITY OF THE TEACHER

1. The teacher is more than a condition for learning. The teacher is a true efficient cause in the teaching-learning situation. A condition is a circumstance which is required for the working of a cause. It in no way suffices for the existence of the effect. The teacher produces a real effect, namely, the knowledge acquired by the learner. He is more than a mere circumstance for this effect to come into being. As was pointed out above the influence of a condition is not positive but purely dispositive insofar as it removes obstacles which prevent the cause from acting. But "the teacher leads the pupil to knowledge of things he does not know in the same way that one directs himself through the process of discovering something he does not know."<sup>7</sup> When something comes into existence

6. James Collins, *St. Thomas: The Teacher—The Mind* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1959), p. xvi.

7. *De Verit.*, XI, 1, c.

it must have a cause. The pupil acquires knowledge through instruction. The pupil is the *principal* efficient cause of the knowledge acquired through instruction, but as we shall see later, the teacher, though referred to by St. Thomas as an instrumental or ministerial cause, also exercises a role as a principal efficient cause, contributing in part to the production of the final result—the pupil's knowledge.

2. The teacher is *not* an occasion. We have already pointed out that an occasion merely facilitates the production of an effect. It is not the cause. For the effect could take place without the occasion but not as readily. A bright, cheery and quiet classroom is not the cause of the pupil acquiring knowledge but it favors the teaching-learning situation. But the cause of the knowledge being communicated to the pupil is the teacher. Therefore the teacher is a true efficient cause and not the occasion of the pupil learning.

3. The teacher is a *secondary* efficient cause. All that has been said about the relation between the First Cause and all other causes can be applied here as well. It has already been shown that secondary causes are true causes.

4. The teacher is a *partial* efficient cause. Since the teacher does not account for the whole effect he is called a partial cause. In the teaching-learning situation the causality of the pupil and the causality of the First Cause, God, must also be considered.

5. The teacher is a *physical* efficient cause in one sense; a *moral* cause in another sense. A physical cause is one

“which produces its effect by its own proper power and action either immediately or through an instrument”<sup>8</sup> We have seen that the pupil is a physical cause of his own knowledge since he produces the effect immediately by his own proper power, that is, the power of his intellect. The teacher, through instruments, that is, signs, produces the effect through power which is proper to him.

Thus, before the mind has the habit, it is not only in accidental potency to know these things, but also essential potency. For the mind needs a mover to actualize it through teaching, as is said in *Physics*. But a man who already knew something habitually would not need this. Therefore, the teacher furnishes the pupil's intellect with a stimulus to knowledge of things which he teaches, as an indispensable mover, bringing *the* intellect from potentiality to actuality.<sup>9</sup>

Teaching implies act, and being moved bespeaks potency. Therefore, the teacher, acting under its own power, produces the effect as a *physical* cause using signs.

In another sense we can speak of the teacher as a *moral* efficient cause of teaching. A moral cause produces the effect through example, persuasion, threat, command, etc. To anyone who has taught the role of the teacher as moral cause is more obvious. However, as a moral cause the teacher can urge the pupil to go to the library and read books so that he will gain knowledge. This is the case on the university level. But it is not the role of the teacher in the teaching-learning situation we are discussing here. It is much more than mere persuasion to attain knowledge. This seems to be implied in the words of St Thomas:

8. Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

9. *De Verit.*, XI, 1, ad 12.

In effects which are produced by nature and art, art operates in the same way and through the same means as nature. For, as nature heals one who is suffering from cold by warming him, so also does the doctor. Hence, art is said to imitate nature. A similar thing takes place in acquiring knowledge. For the teacher leads the pupil to knowledge of things he does not know in the same way that one directs himself through the process of discovering something he does not know.<sup>10</sup>

6. The teacher is a *remote* cause. The effect of the teaching-learning situation is the knowledge acquired by the pupil. This effect is caused directly by the intellect of the pupil but “mediately by the one who teaches. For the teacher sets before the pupil signs of intelligible things, and from these the agent intellect derives the intelligible likenesses and causes them to exist in the possible intellect.”<sup>11</sup> Therefore it is said that the teacher is a remote or mediate cause in contradistinction to the proximate causality of the pupil. As we have already seen: “For the signs are not the proximate efficient cause of knowledge, but the reason is.”<sup>12\*</sup>

7. The teacher is a *transient* cause. This is evident from the fact that the “teacher or master must have the knowledge which he causes in another explicitly and perfectly, as it is to be received in the one who is learning through instruction.” Thus teaching involves a giving and a receiving. Gilson has summed it up very well.

Now causality is the very act by which a being gives some-

10. *Ibid.*, XI, I, c.

11. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, ad 11.

12. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, ad 4.

18- *Ibid.*, XI, 2, c.

thing of itself to another being, and this is the reason why effects naturally resemble their causes. The good teacher then loves to impart to his pupils the very best thing there is in him; namely, intellectual life, knowledge, truth . . . The highest reward of teaching is the joy of making over minds similar, not indeed to ourselves, but to the truth which is in us.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, as St. Thomas points out, teaching is the communication of knowledge. The teacher "*communicates* the identical knowledge which he has himself."<sup>15</sup> Thus it is said that the teacher is a *transient* efficient cause in the teaching-learning situation. ;

8. The teacher is a *coordinated* cause. Since the teacher accounts for only part of the effect he can be called a coordinated cause along with God and the pupil. He cooperates with the other two causes in a Divine work.

For this implies that the human teacher, not figuratively but in a very real sense, cooperates in a divine work. Hence, his dignity as well as responsibility. It is merely no mean service that he is called to perform in fostering and developing the *scientiarum semina* which God himself implants and vivifies.<sup>16</sup>

In the teaching-learning situation each cause is necessary and important. Without each cause being present this situation could not occur.

9. The teacher is a *free* cause. The teacher, being a human being, has a free will and is thereby enabled to

14. Pegis, *The Gilson Reader*, p. 309.

15. *S.T.*, I, 117, a

16. E. A. Pace, "St. Thomas Theory of Education," *Catholic University Bulletin VIII*, (1902), p. 302.

act voluntarily. He is not compelled nor coerced by the pupil the principal cause. He is a free agent acting voluntarily.

10. The teacher is a *subordinated* cause. The teacher is said to be a subordinated cause insofar as a secondary cause is dependent upon and subordinated to God, the *First Cause*. The teacher is free to offer his knowledge to the pupil. However, if the pupil does not cooperate as an efficient cause the effect will not take place. Thus in this sense the teacher is called a subordinated cause.

11. The teacher is an *indirect cause*. In order to understand how the teacher is an *indirect* cause of the pupil's knowledge we must first show how this knowledge pre-exists in the pupil before it becomes actualized by the teacher. The knowledge of the pupil pre-exists in an active and completed potency. Healing is an example of this kind of potency since the sick person is restored to health by the natural power within him. Therefore St. Thomas says: "When something pre-exists in active completed potency, the external agent acts only by helping the internal agent and providing it with the means by which it can enter into act." 17 Thus the teacher is an indirect efficient cause of the pupil's knowledge. Again we appeal to St. Thomas who states explicitly that the knowledge of the pupil is "caused directly by the agent intellect and mediately by the one who teaches." 18

12. The teacher is a *univocal* cause. As has been stated before a univocal cause is one which "has within itself

17. *De Verit.*, XI 1, c.

18. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, ad 11.

everything which it produces in the effect, and it has these perfections in the same way as the effect.”<sup>19</sup> In discussing the difference between the causality of a human teacher and that of an angel teaching St. Thomas observes: “For one man teaches another as a kind of univocal agent, and thus communicates knowledge in the same way that he himself has it.”<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that St. Thomas uses the words “as a kind of univocal cause” since the knowledge “which arises in the pupil through teaching is *similar to* that which is in the teacher.”<sup>21</sup> This knowledge is not “numerically the same”<sup>22</sup> in the teacher and in the pupil. Therefore since the cause does not have within itself *in exactly the same way* everything which it produces in the effect St. Thomas uses the phrase “as a kind of univocal cause” when he refers to the causality of a man who teaches another.

That the teacher as a univocal cause becomes even more clear when one considers the words “communicates knowledge in the same way that he himself has it” in the light of the words “has these perfections in the same way as the effect.” The first group of words refers to one man teaching another while the second group of words refers to the action of a univocal agent. For St. Thomas has previously stated that knowledge is produced *in the same way* whether it be by personal discovery or learning through instruction. “For the teacher leads the pupil to knowledge of things he does not know *in the same way* that one directs himself through the process of discovering something he does not know.”<sup>23</sup> In both cases the process

19. *Ibid.*, XI, I, c.

20. *Ibid.*, XI, 3, ad 4.

21. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, ad 6.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, c.



of reasoning is the way in which the effect comes about. The teacher causes the effect in the pupil in the same way that he acquired this knowledge, namely, through a process of reasoning and this effect which is the knowledge of the pupil is similar to the knowledge of the cause which produces this effect.

Therefore the words “in the same way” can be understood in a two-fold sense. When they are understood *per modum esse* the knowledge of the teacher and the knowledge of the pupil is said to be *similar*; when these words are understood *per modum actionis* the knowledge of the teacher and the knowledge of the pupil St. Thomas says “. . . he communicates the identical knowledge which he has himself.”<sup>24</sup> Thus it is said that the teacher is a univocal cause.

13. The teacher is an efficient cause “*adjuvando et ministrando.*” St. Thomas defines teaching as “to cause knowledge in another through the activity of the learner’s own natural reason.”<sup>25</sup> We have already seen that the learner’s intellect is the principal cause in the teaching-learning situation.

We must remark that the exterior principle, art, acts, not as principal agent, but as helping the principal agent, which is the interior principle, by strengthening it, and by furnishing it with instruments and assistance, of which the interior principle makes use in producing the effect.<sup>26</sup>

Thus the learner is the principal cause of his own knowledge while the causality of the teacher is looked

24. *S.T.*, I, 117, c.

25. *De Verit.*, XI, 1, c.

26. *S.T.*, I. 117. 1. c.

upon as “*adjuvando et ministrando.*”<sup>27</sup> This phrase is used by St. Thomas when he speaks of angels<sup>28</sup> and is applied to the teacher “helping the principal agent” by “furnishing it with instruments and assistance.” Though this be the case it does not lessen the dignity and importance of the teacher in any way whatever. For “when anyone acquires knowledge by himself, he cannot be called self-taught, or be said to have been his own master: because perfect knowledge did not precede in him, such as is required in a master.”<sup>29</sup> Commenting on this view of St. Thomas one author points out the unfavorable reception it would receive from some modern educational theorists and “from the present generation which is prone to admire the ‘self-taught’ man.”<sup>30</sup>

The teacher in a sense is the principal cause of the instruments used by the pupil in acquiring knowledge. Of this there can be no doubt. “The external agent acts only by helping the internal agent and providing it with the *means* by ‘which it can enter into act.’”<sup>31</sup> Thus it is that St. Thomas observes that it is . . . “through the instrumentality, as it were, of what is told him, the natural reason of the pupil arrives at a knowledge of the things which he did not know.”<sup>32</sup> As Smith has put it: “. . . the teacher is like the manufacturer of tools; the learner is like the user.”<sup>33</sup>

The teacher does not give the pupil the intelligible

27. Pace, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

28. *S.T.*, I, 112, 3, c.

29. *S.T.*, I, 117, 1, ad 4.

30. Pace, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

31. *De Verit.*, XI, 1. c.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Vincent Smith, *The School Examined* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1960), p. 23.

light but none the less “he is in a certain sense a cause of the intelligible species, insofar as he offers us certain signs of intelligible likenesses, which our understanding receives from those signs and keeps within itself.” 3435

14. The teacher as *ministerial* cause. It is our purpose now to examine the precise nature of instrumental causality since the teacher is a ministerial cause which St. Thomas defines as an intelligent instrument. Every instrumental agent produces its effect by the power of the principal cause communicated to it and by its own proper power. Just how does this statement pertain to the teaching-learning situation?

The most basic difference between the principal and instrumental causes St. Thomas notes are the following:

For a principal agent acts according to the requirement of its own form, and so the active power in it is some form or quality having complete reality according to its own nature. But an instrument acts inasmuch as it is moved by another. Hence, it has a power proportioned to this motion. But motion is not complete being, but it is a way of being, as it were something between pure potency and pure act . . . And so the power of an instrument inasmuch as it is an instrument, according as it acts to produce an effect beyond itself which is proportioned to it according to its nature, is not complete reality having a fixed being in its nature, but incomplete reality.^

From this passage it is quite evident that in pointing out the difference between principal and instrumental causality there are two major facts to be noted: (1) the power of the instrument as instrument comes from the

34. *De Verit.*, XI, I, ad 14.

35. *Comm.*, in *Quart. Lib. Sent. Dist. I*, Q.I, a. 4, qa. 5, sol. 2.

principal agent and (2) this instrumental power operates in producing an effect beyond the natural power of the agent which receives it. It is to be noted also that the effect produced in such an instance is in proportion to the power of the principal agent. These are the most fundamental distinctions to be made between the principal and the instrumental cause.

In any discussion of instrumental causality it is necessary to keep in mind that the instrument is not a purely passive thing submitting to the causality of the principal agent. This is especially true in the teaching-learning situation. When St. Thomas uses expressions such as "that through which someone operates" 36 and "moved mover" 37 he in no way wished to render the metaphysics of instrumental causality static nor did he intend to diminish the dynamism of being. These expressions represent summary conclusions of much more lengthy accounts of the nature of instrumental causality. He leaves no room for mere occasionalism in this matter. The instrument has and must contribute its own proper activity if it is to act as an instrument. For this reason it is important to distinguish the proper power of the instrument (*virtus instrumenti*) from that power which it receives from the principal cause precisely as it is an instrument (*virtus instrumentalis*). In the teaching-learning situation we have seen that the teacher is a transient cause and this is in accord with the notion of instrumental causality. This seems to be justified by the words of St. Thomas when he says, "the instrument is never used to perform an act except by way of a motion." 38 And again,

36. *S.T.*, III, 62, I, c

37. *Cont. Gen.*, III, 21; *De Verit.*, XXVII, 4.

38. *Coni. Gen.*, II, 21.

The instrument does not operate except to the extent that it is moved by the principal agent, which operates of itself; and therefore the power of the principal agent possesses permanent and complete being nature, whereas the instrumental power possesses transient being received from one thing into another, and this being is incomplete, just as motion is an imperfect act going from agent to patient.<sup>39</sup>

The expression “moved mover” makes clear the mind of St Thomas on this matter. Thus the instrument is constituted as such by the very fact that it is moved by the principal agent.<sup>40</sup>

It should also be noted that the instrumental power is a physical power. However, this does not exclude the term or intention of the action which must be taken into account if we are to establish the instrumental nature of a given thing. This instrument is constituted *this* kind of instrument from the end of its activity in which it is engaged. In fact it is to the end that we must look if we are simply to declare something as an instrument. For if the end of an action is such that a particular efficient cause in producing this action could not of its own power either intend or bring about that end, then we must conclude that the said efficient cause is an instrument. Nor does the fact that the instrumental power is a power of the physical order exclude one from calling this instrumental power an intentional power. For it is intentional inasmuch as it refers the observing intellect to an end which is its *raison d’etre* and which is commensurate with it.<sup>41</sup>

39. *S.T.*, III, 62, 4, c.

40. *S.T.*, III, 62, 4, ad 3.

41. *De Verit.*, XXVII, 4; *S.T.* III, 19, 1, c; III, 62, 1, ad 2; *In IV Sent. I*, 1, 4; *Cont. Gent.*, III, 69; *S.T.* III, 19, 1 et 2; III, 19, 1, ad 2; *De Verit.*, XXII, 13; *In IV Sent.*, XIX, 1, 2, 1; *Ibid.*, I, 1, 4, 3.

Up to this point we have been concerned with the exact notion of instrumental power and have viewed it in isolation, as it were, from its operational aspects. Looking at it from this operational angle, it is clear that the transient motion received from the principal cause by the instrument must precede the proper motion or action of the instrument. St. Thomas implies this in his use of the expression "moved mover." If the distinction between the *moved* and the *mover* is to mean anything, the transient motion must be received by the instrument previously. There is more than the simply combined energies of the two causes to produce this effect. And we have seen that the instrumental power in producing an effect beyond its native powers does this precisely because it has received a power from the principal agent which is more precisely noted as a transient motion. The simultaneous motion of the principal and instrumental causes is true only in the operational order, in the order of second act. But such an order presupposes something prior by which the agent is constituted as a cause. In instrumental causality such a presupposition is the instrumental power. Thus St. Thomas speaks of the instrument receiving its instrumental power in a two-fold way: one whereby it is constituted an instrument in which case it receives the power inchoatively, as it were; the other when it is actually moved by the principal agent to produce the effect.<sup>42</sup> For St. Thomas the most basic motion of any instrument to the extent that it is an instrument lies in the fact that "the thing moved moves; and so, just as the complete form is related to an agent acting of itself, so the motion by which the instrument is moved by the principal agent is related to the instrument."<sup>43</sup>

42. *In IV Sent.*, I, 1, 4, 5.

43. *De Verit.*, XXVII, 4, c.

As we have already pointed out the fact that St. Thomas describes the instrument as that through which some agent operates this must not be construed in the light of some kind of a passive submission to the principal cause. The instrument very definitely has an active and proper part to play in the actual production of the effect. In fact the instrumental action would be impossible without the instrument exercising its proper action. Thus St. Thomas points out: "every instrumental agent accomplishes the action of the principal agent through some action proper and connatural to itself." 44 And on another occasion he affirms that "the instrument does not perform that action which exceeds its proper nature unless it exercises some connatural action." 45

When the Angelic Doctor states that "the instrument does not act according to its own proper form or power, but according to the power of that by which it is moved," 46 he does not contradict himself. It simply means that the instrument considered as instrument does not act by its own power but by the instrumental power which is due to the movement of the instrument by the principal agent. The native power (*virtus instrumenti*) of the instrument can never constitute the instrument as instrument, though it does make it this or that kind of instrument. Nevertheless, the instrumental exercise of power is impossible unless the native power of the instrument be exercised.

; In any discussion on instrumental and principal causality there must be some mention made of "causal unicity." Simply, it means that in regard to the total production of the effect there is one operation of two causes. They do not work as two but as one, though in the order of

44. *Cont. Gen.*, II, 21.

45. *Tie Vent.*, XXVI, 1, c.

46. *S.T.*, III, 64, 5, c.

causality one is principal and the other is instrumental. The one total effect flows from the one operation that involves the principal cause using the power that is proper to the instrument and the instrumental cause participating transiently in the power of the principal cause which it has received into itself.<sup>47</sup>

By reason of this "causal unicity" the same effect must be totally attributed to the instrument and totally attributed to the principal agent. This fact is well worth noting for it determines the instrument as a true cause and not a mere occasion or causal partnership on the basis of equality. St. Thomas explicitly points out that the instrumental cause does produce the total effect.<sup>48</sup> But the answer to *how* it does this is found in the explanation of "causal unicity."

In conclusion we may say that, according to the metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas, the instrumental cause in union with the principal cause does produce the entire effect, so that the effect may be wholly attributed to the principal cause and wholly to the instrumental cause. This is explained by the causal unicity that obtains between the principal and instrumental causes which is effected by the participation of the instrumental cause in the power of the principal cause by means of intrinsic reception of the instrumental power from the principal cause.<sup>49</sup>

In this discussion on the nature of the instrumental cause we have attempted to show the importance of this type of causality in the metaphysical portrait. In addition

47. Emmanuel Sullivan, "Instrumental Causality and the Production of the Total Effect," (Unpublished master's thesis, Catholic University of America, School of Philosophy, 1957), p. 47.

48. *Cont. Gen.*, III, 70; *S.T.*, III, 19, 2, c.

49. Sullivan, *op. cit.*, p. 49.



to its own proper power as an instrument it also contributes totally to the production of the effect. This gives instrumental causality a dignity which distinguishes it from mere occasionalism and gross servitude. It now becomes our task to apply these metaphysical notions of instrumental causality to the instrumental cause in the teaching-learning situation.

### SUMMARY

Though man is able to come to a knowledge of things on his own, he would be intellectual impoverished were he to depend on this method alone for his knowledge. For a considerable time after his birth man's total intellectual and moral helplessness parallels his physical dependency. He learns more profoundly and extensively by the assistance and contact with others. The necessity of the teacher is seen to be evident in the light of such considerations.

The teacher is a real and true efficient cause of the knowledge produced in the learner. A definite relationship is encountered with God, the First Cause in which lies the sacred character of teaching.

The teacher is no mere condition or occasion for learning. Teaching is an activity which is truly causal. It cooperates with the causality of God and the pupil to produce a definite effect. Specifically, we designate the causality of the teacher as secondary, partial, remote, transient, free, indirect and univocal. In one sense the teacher is also a physical cause and in another sense he is also moral. Though St. Thomas refers to the teacher as a *ministerial* cause he can also be regarded as the principal of those instruments which the pupil uses to actuate his knowledge.

## CHAPTER V

### PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS IN THE TEACHING-LEARNING SITUATION

Thus far in this discussion on the efficient causality of the teacher in the teaching-learning situation we have seen that the teacher is a true cause and not a mere condition nor occasion in the production of the effect, namely, the student's knowledge. We have classified the causality of the teacher as secondary, partial, physical in one sense and moral in another, remote, transient, free, subordinated, indirect, univocal and instrumental. Now we ask the question: What does this type of causality on the part of the teacher mean in the practical order in regard to the teaching-learning situation?

'1. *Teaching is not indoctrination.* In teaching "a man is said to cause knowledge in another through the activity of the learner's own natural reason."<sup>1</sup> In other words, one learns through teaching by applying general self-evident principles to certain definite matters and thus arriving at knowledge of things he did not know. The true teacher leads the pupil to knowledge by a reasoning

1. *De Verit.*, XI, 1, c.

process. On the other hand, indoctrination has been termed "intellectual imposition"<sup>2</sup> by some because the teacher does not relate the matter to self-evident principles. In this case it would be opinion or faith that is the basis for the pupil accepting the particular conclusions of the teacher. St. Thomas explains: "But, if someone proposes to another things which are not included in self-evident principles, or does not make it clear that they are included, he will not cause knowledge but, perhaps, opinion or faith."<sup>3</sup> Thus he enumerates the qualifications of a good teacher as three: "*stability*, that one may never deviate from the truth; *clarity*, that one may not teach with obscurity; *utility*, that one may seek God's honor and glory and not his own."<sup>4</sup>

Does this mean that the authority of the teacher is destroyed? Most certainly not. "At the outset of his teaching, however, he does not explain to his pupil the intelligible principles of the things to be known . . . the teacher proposes some things, the principles of which the pupil does not understand when first taught, but will know later when he has made some progress in the science."<sup>5</sup> This is not indoctrination strictly speaking because the learner can eventually connect these propositions accepted on faith with foreknowledge which he has and thus enjoy the certitude which the teacher had claimed for them.

Often it is alleged that pupils of a Catholic education are prime examples of indoctrination. This is a false accu-

2. Francis C. Wade, "St. Thomas and Teaching," *Some Philosophers on Education* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1956), p. 82.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Thomas Kane, "Noblest Teacher of Teachers," *Dominican* XXXV (1950), p. 14.

5. *De Verit.*, XIV, 10, c.

sation. "For in the teaching of religious knowledge, there is, on the part of the learner, a foreknowledge, possessed by the light of faith, which the human teacher makes explicit."<sup>6</sup> And so St Thomas makes this analogy between faith and teaching: "The articles of faith stand in the same relation to the doctrine of faith as self-evident principles to teaching based on natural reason."<sup>7</sup>

2. *Teaching is a cooperative art.* It has already been pointed out that every babe is born a self-activist, that is, as a student he is able through discovery to come to a knowledge of things since knowledge pre-exists in the learner potentially. But it does not follow from this that the teacher merely exists "to provide an environment that induces educative or developing activities."<sup>8</sup> Nor can one agree that "the function of the teacher must change from that of cicerone and dictator to that of watcher and helper."<sup>9</sup> This attitude toward the teacher has resulted from a gross misconception or complete ignorance of Thomistic teaching. Though he is born a self-activist, the student at first possesses knowledge only in potentiality, so that "the teacher who has the knowledge as a whole explicitly can lead to knowledge more quickly and easily than anyone can be led by himself."<sup>10</sup> It is in this sense that we can apply the dictum "Art imitates nature."<sup>11</sup> The teacher leads the child to the knowledge

6. Vincent E. Smith, *The School Examined* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1960,, p. 20.

7. *S.T.*, II-II, 1, 7, c.

8. John Dewey, *Interest and Effort in Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913), p. 96. (Courtesy of Mrs. John Dewey)

9. John Dewey, *Schools of Tomorrow* (New York: Dutton & Co., 1915), p. 172.

10. *De Verit.*, XL 2, ad 4.

11. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, c.

of things he does not know in the same way that one directs himself through the process of discovery. Therefore, the true teacher cannot be called a "taskmaster who assigns lessons in a prescribed book, who hears the young recite what the book says and who tests and grades his pupils on the basis of their ability to 'hand back' that which they have studied." 12

Teaching is a cooperative art involving God, teacher and pupil. We have seen in some detail how each plays a part in the teaching-learning situation.

3. *The necessity of the teacher.* In our time material progress has produced many inventions which ought to benefit the student greatly. Radio, television, and the motion pictures are the mechanical devices that are being used, along with books, for teaching purposes. The question which arises at once is: Will these man-made inventions replace the human teacher? According to Thomistic doctrine this will never happen. For the student will always be born in potentiality for knowledge, and the teacher, who possesses in act what the student possesses only in potential, will always remain of service to the student. Though times change and methods of teaching improve, human nature does not change. The teacher is a "dynamic factor" ,s as is the learner; two living intellects coming into contact Gilson observes: "in other words, unless he is actually thinking aloud and engaging his own intellectual activity in his lecture, the teacher does not really teach. Incidentally, this is one reason why it is doubtful that any mechanical device will ever replace the actual presence of the real teacher. Only one living intel-

12. John L. Childs, *American Pragmatism and Education* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1956), p. 347.

13. Maritain, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

*lect*, patiently preceding us on the way to truth, can effectively teach us *how to think*.”<sup>14</sup> Thus all the appliances and equipment used in learning are but the means to an end. These things are “but a tributary to learning, to the acquisition of wisdom. Our devotion to the ways of knowing should not blind us to the end-results of knowing.”<sup>15</sup>

4. *The teacher does not merely stimulate the mind.* This is an important point to be noted in light of the teaching of some modern theorists who see the teacher's role as one who “is to furnish the environment which stimulates and directs the learner's course.”<sup>16</sup> In the acquisition of knowledge, in passing from the known to the unknown, the intellect of the learner is not in precisely the same situation with regard to every one of its objects of cognition. Some it grasps intuitively; others it reaches by bringing out to explicit knowledge what is contained implicitly in self-principles. “Just here it needs the teacher, not simply as a guide, but as one who by his words sets the intellectual faculty in motion and to this extent causes its advance in knowledge.”<sup>17</sup> This necessitates the possession by the teacher of a complete and perfect knowledge of what he teaches. For “the actuality of the child's potential depends on the completeness and perfection of the teacher's knowledge.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore

14. Pegis, *The Gilson Reader*, p. 306.

15. James H. O'Hara, *The Limitations of the Educational Theory of John Dewey* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1929), p. 92.

16. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), p. 372.

17. O'Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

18. Mary H. Mayer, *The Philosophy of Teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Bruce, 1929), p. 23.

the teacher is much more than one Who offers mere stimulus to learning if he “possesses a knowledge which the student does not have and that the teacher actually communicates this knowledge to the student whose mind is a ‘tabula rasa,’ as Aristotle put it.”<sup>19</sup>

Thus St. Thomas speaking on the progress made in knowledge remarks that the teacher has this knowledge in a perfect way which he imparts to the learner little by little and according to the pupil's capacity.<sup>20</sup> This also implies a certain amount of response on the part of the pupil who cannot sit passively in a classroom and expect to acquire knowledge. “His mind must be active at all times, attempting to follow the reasoning indicated by the teacher.”<sup>21</sup>

How different this concept of the teacher's role is from that of Dewey when he writes that “no thought, no idea, can possibly be conveyed as an idea from one person to another . . . when the teacher has provided the conditions that stimulate thinking and has taken a sympathetic attitude toward the activities of the learner by entering into a common or conjoint experience, all has been done which a second party can do to instigate learning . . . the teacher is a learner, and the learner, without knowing it, a teacher.”<sup>22</sup> It is true that the teacher communicates his ideas by means of sensible symbols. “From the sensible symbols, which are received into the sense faculty, the intellect takes the essence which it uses in producing

19. Rev. Ban Endslow, “The Educational Theories, of Jacques Maritain,” Unpublished master's thesis. Catholic University, Department of Education, 1951), p. 53.

20. *S.T.*, II-II, 1, 7, ad 2.

21. R. A. Kocurek, “St. Thomas on Study,” *Thomistic Principles in a Catholic School* (St. Louis: Herder, 1943), p. 30.

22. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 188.

knowledge in itself.” ~~23~~ And accordingly it follows that “whosoever learns from man does not receive knowledge immediately from the intelligible species which are in his mind, but through sensible words, which are signs of intellectual concepts.” 24

To some extent it is true that in order to think the student must wrestle with the problem at first hand, seeking and finding his own way out. “. . . and thinking in the sense of reflective thought arises only when we are confronted with a problem.” 25 For it is not sufficient that the teacher furnish the subject matter, no matter how orderly it may be presented. The mind of the student must be active in any acquisition of knowledge. In accordance with the first principles of reason and what he already knows to be true, he accepts or rejects what is proposed to him. “Thus it is by the immanent activity of the student’s mind that he acquires any knowledge.” 28

But if Dewey implies that the student must seek and find, that is, discover for himself, without the aid of a teacher, whatever he knows, the statement is not true. For as we have already indicated St. Thomas points out two ways of acquiring knowledge, without a teacher by discovery and with a teacher through instruction. When he suggests that the student must wrestle with the problem at first hand and that the teacher can best help by entering into a common or conjoint experience it is very misleading. It seems to argue for the necessity of actual experience of whatever is known. If that must be the case, then Dewey himself supplied his own answer when

23. *De Verit.*, XI, 1, ad 4.

24. *S.T.*, III, 12, 3, ad 2.

25. William F. Cunningham, *The Pivotal Problems of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), p. 141.

26. Kocureck, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

he wrote: "One can be insane without knowing he is insane, and one may know insanity without being crazy; indeed absence of the direct experience is said to be an indispensable condition of the student of insanity."<sup>27</sup>

Although Dewey hesitates to reduce the teacher to the status of a mere onlooker,<sup>28</sup> he does something worse by reducing him to state of a learner. This error is also refuted in the writings of St. Thomas when he points out that a man cannot be his own teacher nor be said to teach himself.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, as teacher he cannot also be learner. When one speaks of a man as being "self taught" he is speaking of teaching in an improper sense. For the name of teacher implies the possession of knowledge which is being taught.<sup>30</sup><sup>32</sup>

5. *Teaching is "truth centered."* These days there is much talk about whether teaching should be "child-centered" or "subject-centered." In an analysis of the teaching-learning situation according to the writings of St. Thomas, it is not too difficult to conclude the Saint's view on the matter. From all that has been said so far it becomes evident that all true teaching is actually "truth-centered." "Man can truly be called a true teacher inasmuch as he teaches the truth and enlightens the mind."<sup>31</sup> And in another place he reiterates: "Teaching consists in communicating a truth meditated beforehand."<sup>32</sup>

Thus in the communication of truth lay the vocation

27. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (Chicago: Open Court, 1925), p. 18.

28. "This does not mean that the teacher is to stand off and look . . . *Democracy and Education*, p. 188.

29. *De Verit.*, XI, 2, a

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.*, XI, 1, ad 9.

32. *S.T.*, II-II, 18, S, ad 3.



of the teacher. "No doubt it is to and for the students that truth is taught, and in that sense the knowing student is the end of teaching."<sup>33</sup> Therefore "love of truth—which is the primary tendency of an intellectual nature"<sup>34</sup> is a fundamental disposition which should be fostered in the principal agent and this is the very basis of education. For "teaching causes truth to be in other men so that they can more easily attain their end."<sup>35</sup>

Herein lies the joy of teaching, that is, "the joy of making other minds similar, not indeed to ourselves, but to the truth which is in us."<sup>36</sup> True freedom results from teaching truth because "teaching results in the freeing of the mind through the mastery of reason over the things learned."<sup>37</sup> The truly learned man is a man of truth and the truth makes him free. And the possession of this freedom can never be taken away. It is for this reason that every dictator from the dawn of history has made the educated and learned the primary object of persecution. For their freedom is intangible to fire, sword and chain. Therefore to destroy their freedom he must destroy the man.

The man of truth cannot be without virtue. "Truth visits those who love her, who surrender to her, and this love cannot be without virtue. For this reason, in spite of his possible defects, the man of genius at work is already virtuous; it would suffice for his holiness if he were more completely his true self."<sup>38</sup> Thus truth is not easily ob-

33. Wade, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

34. Maritain, *op. cit.*, p. 36

; 35. Wade, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

36. Pegis, *The Gilson Reader*, p. 309.

37. Maritain, *Ibid.*, p. 49.

38. A. G. Sertillanges, *The Intellectual Life* (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1959), p. 19.

tained but comes only to those who seek it diligently and with effort. "Truth in any line of endeavor is very difficult to obtain; the history of its acquisition is a record of untold effort and patient research." 3940

One can readily see how important a "truth-centered" notion of teaching is. The construction of the curriculum is the result of one's outlook on this question of whether teaching is "child-centered" or "subject-centered" or "truth-centered." In traditional philosophy, truth and falsity were thought of in terms of objective conformity and non-conformity in regard to reality. "Dewey rejects such an outlook, on the one side because it would imply a form of dualism, and on the other side because the existential situation of knowledge excludes all fixity: it is an endless process." «

For Dewey, then, the criterion of truth cannot be a static conformity with an absolute. "Knowing . . . means a certain kind of intelligently conducted doing." 414 Thinking is activity in itself, "performed at specific need, just as at other need we engage in other sort of activity." a Thus any intellectual operation is a kind of "doing" and a tool of action. It is in this quality of activity that truth or falsity can be found.

Its active, dynamic function is the all-important thing about it, and in the quality of activity induced by it lies all its

39. O'Hara, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

40. Joseph DeAndrea, "Philosophy of Man According to Karl Marx and John Dewey: A Comparative Study," (Unpublished master's thesis, Catholic University, Department of Education, 1956), p. 30.

41. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1920), p. 121.

42. John Dewey, *Essays in Experimental Logic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916), p. 76.

*truth and falsity. The hypothesis that works is true one; and truth is an abstract noun applied to the collection of cases, actual, foreseen and desired, that receive confirmation in their works and consequences.*<sup>43</sup>

**With this fluid understanding of the concept of truth one can begin to realize the devastating effect that is brought to bear on the curriculum of the school.**

Since the curriculum is always getting loaded down with purely inherited traditional matter and with subjects which represent mainly the energy of some influential person or group of persons in behalf of something dear to them, it requires constant inspection, criticism, and revision to make sure it is accomplishing its purpose.<sup>44</sup>

The worth of the curriculum is measured to “the extent to which (it is) animated by a social spirit.”<sup>45</sup> For the curriculum should “present situations where problems are relevant to the problems of living together, and where observation and information are calculated to develop social insight and interest.”<sup>46</sup> Thus many modern educational theorists have one remedy which they are always proposing as the solution to all educational ills and that is: change the curriculum by either adding to it or subtracting from it. Nothing is stable; all truth is relative. Thus we have the “comprehensive high school” proposed and urged “for as the curriculum is narrowed, so is the opportunity for a meaningful program.”<sup>47</sup> And this so-

43. John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 156-57.

44. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 283.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 415.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

47. James B. Conant, *The American High School Today* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), p. 77.

called meaningful program involves “the teacher (who) sits on the same level as the student, discussing the truth as it appears to each. The individual adjustment which each makes to the truth is then uppermost, and as the teacher examines, he can also be examined.” 48

One of America’s most distinguished men of letters has summed up very well the damage that has resulted from an objective recognition of truth:

The last generation of students may never *forgive* its teachers who taught contempt and fear for the truth. The distinction they made was one between fact and opinion, not one between opinion and truth . . . To say that truth is better than falsehood is not to speak vaguely. It is more powerful, it is more interesting, and it is less lonely - - - It is the love of truth that makes men free in the common light of day.<sup>49</sup>

Thus it is that we say that teaching is “truth-centered.” The teacher and educator who takes this as his position will build on firm ground instead of shifting sand.

6. *The teacher is a coadjutor of God.* Because it is his task to communicate truth to others the teacher is in a very special way a servant of God. For in doing this work he imitates the Divine life. “To contemplate truth by his intellect and to communicate it out of love, such is the life of the Doctor. It is an exalted human imitation of the very life of God.” 50

As a teacher he cooperates with God in causing knowl-

48. *General Education in a Free Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 246-47.

49. Mark VanDoren, *Liberal Education* (Boston: Beacon Hill Press, 1959), p. 177-78.

50. Pegis, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

sledge in-the learner. "The teacher, then, must share in the Wisdom which is from the beginning and after which all things that are have been made."<sup>51</sup> Because of its affinity with the Divine, teaching is a most noble profession. "If the teacher is a coadjutor of God in the training and development of souls, then all other human work pales into insignificance."<sup>52\*</sup>

Because of the sublime dignity of his calling teachers are obliged to "be imitators of the only Divine Master, Jesus Christ,"<sup>53</sup> as Pope Pius XII has warned. As one author has stated: Christian teachers "should conceive unto themselves Christ, their prototype, the great teacher."<sup>54</sup>

As we have seen St. Thomas points out that God alone teaches interiorly and principally by implanting in the learner the light of reason by which self-evident principles become evident. But "man is said to teach the truth, although he declares it exteriorly, while God teaches interiorly."<sup>55</sup> Thus there is an intimate relationship between God and the human teacher. The God-given intellect of the learner is strengthening the intellect of the learner "inasmuch as he proposes to the disciple the order of principles to conclusions, by reason of his not having sufficient collating power to be able to draw the conclu-

51. Brother S. Edmund, F.S.C., "The Aim and Obligation of the School," *Proceedings of the Western Division of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* (April, 1941), p. 85.

52. Edward F. Fitzpatrick, *Exploring a Theology of Education* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1950), p. 125.

53. Vincent Yzermans (ed.), *Pope Pius Speaks on Education*, p. 167.

54. Richard H. Tierney, *Teacher and Teaching* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1915), p. 11. (Courtesy of David McKay Company)

55. *De Perit.*, XI, 1, ad 7.

sions from the principles.” 56 Herein is evident the dignity and sacral character of the “teaching triangle,” as it were.

Thus to cause knowledge in another is to cause one to become like God. For to become like God is the last end of all things.<sup>57</sup> In the words of Gilson: “Only, because thought is the highest and most noble form of activity in nature, man is the highest and noblest among the known images of God. If to teach is to cause others to think, it is to help them in becoming not only like unto their masters but unto the Master of their masters, God.” 58 And so the true teacher will leave an incorruptible monument behind since he will leave “.... Christ reproduced in another human soul. The teacher’s work is done. Generations will call them blessed.” 59

Father Wade has pointed out in his article<sup>60</sup> that St. Thomas explains how man shares in the divine providence of the world by acting on or with other men. He picks out only two actions of man: the first is teaching, the second is the procreating of offspring.<sup>61</sup> Thus it is that the teacher is a cooperator in the Christian formation of the pupil.

Though he is unable to *cause goodness or grace* physically in his students, the teacher can act as an “impetrator before the throne of God, praying the Giver of all gifts to shower His grace on the souls of these students; he should pray for them because these students represent his own apostolate for the kingdom of God.” 68

56. *S.T.*, I, 117, 1, c.

57. *Cont. Gen.*, III, 20.

58. Pegis, *op. cit.*, p. 309-10.

59. Tierney, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

60. Wade, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

61. *S.T.*, I, pp. 117-119.

62. Kevin O’Brien, *The Proximate Aim of Education* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1958), p. 240.



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this study of the efficient causes of learning we have attempted to delineate the precise role of God, the pupil and the teacher in the teaching-learning situation.

We have seen that God is the First Cause of all being. Through His Divine Providence He not only preserves all beings in existence but He also concurs in the action of every created agent by giving it its power to act, moving it to act and producing the effect which it produces. In the execution of Divine Providence God uses intermediaries thus establishing an order in which certain human beings govern and direct certain other human beings. In education that is the case with parents and teachers who are cooperators in the divine order of things. In the teaching-learning situation God is the Principal Teacher since it is He Who gives the created intellect its intellectual power and impresses on it the intelligible species. Since He concurs in the actions of all created agents we can say that He moves the teacher to teach and He moves the learner to learn without infringing upon the free will of either one.

The pupil, along with the teacher, is a secondary cause under God for whatever is learned through the cooperative activity of teaching and learning. We have seen that



the learner is a proximate, physical, immanent and free cause of his own knowledge. Because he is a free agent he has the power of acting directly and indirectly; positively and negatively. The high point of our discussion on the pupil in the teaching-learning situation is the fact that he is the principal cause. Though he is dependent on God and the teacher he, nevertheless, has within himself the interior principle that enables him to reduce the knowledge he has in potency to the state of actuality.

In our discussion on the efficient causality of the teacher we saw how man's total intellectual and moral helplessness parallels his physical dependency. Because he learns more profoundly and extensively by the assistance and contact with others it is necessary for man to utilize the benefits of many trained minds in intellectual matters. Thus the teacher's role becomes one of necessity rather than choice. ;

We saw that the teaching-learning situation is a co-operative activity in which the three efficient causes—God, the pupil and the teacher—are inter-related. Thus is the sacred character of teaching and learning wherein the teacher and pupil cooperate in carrying out the providential plan of God for man.

More specifically, we saw that the teacher is much more than a mere condition for learning. Nor is the teacher a mere occasion that facilitates the production of knowledge within the student. On the contrary, the teacher is a real and true efficient cause whereby the student comes to know that which he did not know before. We can say that the teacher is a secondary, partial, physical and moral, remote, transient, free, indirect and univocal. We have seen that the teacher is the principal cause of the instruments used by the pupil and in the teaching-learning activity he is an efficient *cause adjuvando et ministrando*. Thus is the rule of the teacher vindicated.

This view of the efficient causes of learning holds many implications and practical conclusions for education. True teaching is not an indoctrination but is a cooperative art involving the efficient causality of God and the learner. From this we can conclude to the necessity of the teacher as an active cause in the classroom and not a mere guide or "stimulus provider." Again, this view of the three efficient causes of learning leads to certain definite conclusions on the curriculum. For teaching is "truth-centered." Finally, we can say that the mission of the teacher is somewhat divine in the sense that he is a coadjutor of God because of the intimate relationship that exists between God and the human teacher.

Cardinal Newman has summed up very well the important role of the teacher when he writes, "when (men) aim at something precise, something refined, something really luminous . . . they avail themselves, in some shape or other, of the ancient method of oral instruction, of present communication between man and man, of teachers instead of teaching, of personal influence of a master, and the humble initiation of a disciple."<sup>12</sup> He goes on to say that we consult the living man and listen to his voice. For "no book can convey the spirit and delicate peculiarities of its subject with that rapidity and certainty which attend on the sympathy of mind with mind. . . . The general principles of any study you may learn from books at home; but the detail, the colour, the tone, the air, the life which makes it live in us, you must catch all these from those in whom it lives already."\* „

1. John Henry Newman. *University Sketches* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1953), p. 8.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 8-9.



## APPENDIX I

### THE NATURE OF THE PUPIL

The importance of a correct concept of the nature of man cannot be overemphasized by one who concerns himself with the education of young people. The erroneous notions about the nature of man that have been put forth by the various philosophies of naturalism, idealism, and materialism have been recognized by our most ardent Christian thinkers. Christopher Dawson has been one who recognizes this situation:

"During the last four hundred years Spiritualism has been declining force, and the materialistic view of man has become the great rival of Catholicism.\*"<sup>1</sup>

It is the task of Christianity to bring forth, once again, the true concept of the nature of man. For the educator to speak of goals and aims he must be first whole-heartedly concerned with this notion. It is impossible for education to accomplish its essential task if it ignores or avoids this

1. Christopher Dawson, *Enquiries Into Religion and Culture* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1933), p. 311.

issue. The world has too long been at the mercy of the lop-sided philosophy of naturalism, utilitarianism, idealism, and socialism. Everyone speaks of the education of the "whole child" but there are few who give evidence of what this actually means. Maritain gives a very succinct definition of the theme of this paper when he writes: "Hence, in point of existence, we may say that man is at once a natural and a supernatural being." 2

We propose to re-examine the nature of man according to the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas and to show how necessary it is to have a correct concept in the field of education.

Before explaining the teaching of St Thomas on the nature of man it would be well for us to take a look at the outstanding errors on this doctrine. One must keep in mind that the effect of these errors are still influencing the philosophy of education today. It is not possible, nor is it our purpose, to give a detailed description of each false teaching. We will merely review some of their basic premises from which they draw the most damaging conclusions. The true and traditional teaching on man was in existence before these false doctrines and as their flaws are exposed more and more it will become evident that the truth will prevail.

*NATURALISM.* Everyone who is in the field of education is well aware of the far reaching effects that this denial of man's dualistic nature has had for the last few centuries. Some have said this is the parent of all the other false educational philosophies."False views of man's nature have their primary origin in the false philosophy

2. Jacques Maritain, *True Humanism* (London\*. Geoffrey Bles, 1954), p. 3.

of naturalism.” s The same authors have summed up very well the most important proponents of naturalism in the following words:

“The forerunner of naturalism in education was Montaigne; the father of it was John Locke; the theorist was Rousseau; the one who brought naturalism into the school was Basedow; among its exponents were Spencer in England, and John Dewey in the United States.” 4

It was this group of men that is responsible for much of what is taught today in our schools and also for the many problems which have arisen in society because of this teaching. One need examine some of the tenets put forth by this false conception of man and his place in the universe to show how a one-sided view can lead to a one-sided way of life.

The fundamental principle, that of naturalism, is described by one author as follows:

“... the doctrine that separates Nature from God, subordinates Spirit to Matter, and sets up unchangeable laws as supreme.” s

The soul is denied and man is looked upon as a product of nature. Man's end becomes the natural happiness be found on this earth. One can easily see how this notion ramified into many other false theories. From this spring-board other men will propose erroneous doctrines on the child in school and consequently what that child should

3. John D. Redden & Francis A. Ryan, *A Catholic Philosophy of Education* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1949), p. 162.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 394.

5. J. Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), p. 186.

be taught. Strange sounding phrases will arise such as "physiological processes" 6 as the explanation to mental functions. This becomes a necessity since any dualism between mind and body are denied. The difference between man and the brute will become a question and the answer will have to be: "There is no difference in kind, only one of degree, between man and the brute," 7 8

This doctrine of naturalism is far from being without influence in the United States today. Though the seeds were planted in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and then nurtured in the eighteenth century by Rousseau it has produced bitter fruit in the American educational system. One need only to examine the leading books in specific areas to see that the authors are well saturated with this false concept of the pupil. Thus Cunningham writes:

"'Naturalism' is the euphemistic label used in the United States today. The implication of this label is that man is one with nature, merely an animal, though the most highly developed animal the evolutionary process has yet brought forth." 8

**EXPERIMENTALISM.** Another false educational theory that cannot be ignored when one considers the nature of the pupil is that which is known as specifically American. It is the basis for the pragmatic methods of *modern* progressive education. It developed as a reaction to the

6. G. O'Connell, *Naturalism in American Education* (New York: Bena'ger Bros., 1938), p. 80.

7. P. Manque, *The Philosophy of Education* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939), p. 47.

8. William F. Cunningham, *The Pivotal Problems of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), p. 31.

traditional European philosophies. The name that is immediately connected with experimentalism is that of John Dewey, although it has many other exponents.

" . . . experimentalism may be traced to the ancient Greek Philosopher, Heraclitus, who centuries ago, taught a philosophy of change. While many theorists have furthered its development, the most significant contributors have been Pierce, James, and Dewey, with John L. Childs its chief interpreter at the present time." 9

The influence of naturalism can readily be seen in this philosophical notion if one examines its main tenets. As we have said above, this is one of the false notions that pushes on and sets forth new erroneous conclusions whose effects are being recognized at the present time as almost disastrous. Some colleges are obliged to offer reading courses for students that are deficient in this area and technical institutes are discussing courses in the humanities when the curriculum is being constructed. One of the factors for this re-evaluation of colleges programs may have been brought about by the implications and results of the following:

"Intelligence is not a substantive thing back of the activity of an organism which makes that activity intellectual; intelligence is behaviour that is guided by anticipated consequences. In other words, we behave intelligently when we participate in the movements of events in such a way as to shape the direction of present happenings so that they terminate in outcomes favorable to growth and expansion." 10

It is this vague and confusing jaigon that has led many to lose faith in the whole system of American education

9. Redden fc Ryan, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

10. John L. Childs, *Education and the Philosophy of Experimentalism* (New York: The Century Co., 1931), p. 75.



and has brought about an avalanche of criticism even outside the field. Dewey is more definite in his conception of the child although still in error. Here is a very specific example of the philosophy of naturalism which influenced his thinking.

. Experience knows no division between human concerns and a purely mechanical physical world. Man's home is nature; his purposes and aims are dependent for execution upon natural conditions. Separated from these conditions they become empty dreams and idle indulgences of fancy . . . This philosophy is vouched for by the doctrine of biological development which shows that man is continuous with nature, not an alien entering her processes from without." u

Since the philosophy of experimentalism holds that man is merely a biological organism which is in continual interaction with its environment one is necessarily led to the conclusion: "There is no superior being,"<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the consequences of this implication on the education of the child would be drastic since it ignores completely a most important part of him. He is not too much different from the brute.

"Moreover, experimentalism asserts that man is a being who differs in degree but not in kind from other animals, and who, living in organized society, possesses all the essentials which make possible 'a refined, humane experience.' " u

This false philosophy is one that is accepted by many

11. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1956), p. 333.

12. Romualdez, Sister Bellarmine, *The Concept of Being in Modern Theories of Education* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1952), p. 63.

13. Redden and Ryan, op. cit., p. 480.

educators in the United States and as a result it guides them in making up the curriculum and in promoting progressive theories that have led to confusion and uncertainty in the aims, methods and products of education.

**SOCIALISM.** Another offshoot of the naturalistic philosophy of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is that known as socialism. This also has had its influence on the educational system.

“Socialism and naturalism are integrally related, in that both attempt to solve the problems of life by means of science: the former, by social science; the latter, by natural science. Both misinterpret man's true nature; Naturalism emphasizes the human animal, as such; socialism stresses the social animal.” 14

Thus we see once again a deformed concept of the nature of man. It is merely a matter of emphasis that determines for socialism what kind of animal man is. It is true that man is a social animal but this false theory excludes any other facet of man's nature. It is a reaction to those who would emphasize the individuality of man excluding any social nature. Both are extreme positions and when man's spiritual side is denied then there is a double error. Bergson seems to find a middle ground in the conflict between socialism and individualism.

“In other word, according to Bergson, Man naturally craves for companionship, and the ‘will to community\* is a fundamental tendency of human nature. ‘As a matter of fact, the individual and society are implied in each other; individuals make up *society* by their grouping together; society shapes an entire side of individuals . . . The individual and society thus

14. *Ibid.*, p. 415.

condition each other!' Here, Bergson seems to take the *via media* between socialism and individualism." 1516

There is, therefore, a place for the individual and for society. When one attempts to exclude the other there is bound to be error and difficulty. But even if this is admitted one must still have a true answer to the question: What is man? Without this all rigid distinctions become futile. Socialism has failed in this point as well as in maintaining an exclusive position. There fundamental philosophy is materialistic and atheistic and has converted man into a means to an end and not an end in himself. The end is society and man is the instrument of society. Thus Fitzpatrick quotes the author of the book, *End of Our Time* who is speaking of socialism and its relationship to the world of capitalism:

"Mr. Berdyaev in the *End of Our Time* has stated the fact thus: 'Socialists take over from bourgeois capitalist society its materialism, its atheism, its cheap prophets, its hostility against spirit and all spiritual life, its restless striving for success and amusement, its personal selfishness, its incapacity for interior recollection.' "16

In this statement we have a concise picture of what the philosophy of socialism is. Besides being a move "in the direction of putting the welfare of the group ahead of the unrestricted rights of the individual" 17 it has also

15. Mother Mary Bernard Bonhomme, *Educational Implication of the Philosophy of Henri Bergson* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1944), p. 137.

16. Quoted by Edward A. Fitzpatrick, *Philosophy of Education* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1953), p. 808.

17. Alonzo F. Myers & Clarence D. Williams, *Education in a Democracy* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1954), p. 182.

taken away from man all that is spiritual and supernatural and has reduced his dignity and superiority over the brute animal "to his superior cerebral equipment and the consequent possibilities of mental development." 18 The socialistic nature of man has also been put in these terms: ". . . Man becomes a man in the full sense of the term through society in that he owes to society all that differentiates him from the brute." 19

**COMMUNISM.** The most extreme form of socialism is that known as "radical socialism" or "bolshevistic or atheistic communism." In a consideration of the nature of man and its implication in education we must allow for a brief examination of communism since it is a growing evil and its effects will be felt for many years to come. Communist influence has spread to the higher institutions of learning in the United States as well as other places of importance. One Catholic author describes the communist conception of man as follows:

"Not rationality but the means of production distinguishes man from lower animals. 'They begin to differentiate themselves from animals,' Marx wrote of men, 'as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence.'" 20

The communists have made no secret of their opposition to religion. The numberless martyrs and persecutions in communist-dominated lands are witnesses to this fact.

18. William C. Bagley, *Education and Emergent Man* (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1934), p. 6.

19. P. Marique, *The Philosophy of Education* (New York: Prentice-Hall 1939), p. 56.

20. Thomas P. Neil, *1859 In Review* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1959), p. 38.

**In the schools there is a definite effort to disparage religion and show it to be an enemy of the people. A government directive which appeared in the official journal of the Soviet Academy of Pedagogical Science opens with this paragraph:**

**“The Soviet school, as an instrument for Communist education of the rising generation, can, as a matter of principle, take up no other attitude towards religion than one of irreconcilable opposition: for Communist education has as its philosophical basis Marxism, and Marxism is irreconcilably hostile to religion. ‘Marxism is materialism,’ says V. I. Lenin; ‘as such, it is as relentlessly hostile to religion as the materialism of the Encyclopaedists of the eighteenth century or the materialism of Feuerbach.’”<sup>21</sup>**

**In such a philosophical system there is no room for the true nature of man. Instead of the concept of the whole man being the basis for the formation of philosophy, philosophy is established first and man is made to fit into it. There is no other interpretation of the nature of man left to the communist than that of a solely materialistic creature whose termination comes with death. “Man's origin and life, his past and present can be interpreted only in the light of a materialistic evolution.”<sup>22</sup> How long this error will continue before it flows into the oblivion of past errors no one can tell; But because it is false we can safely say that it will end just as so many false theories have ended.**

**Mantain has given a very good picture of the philoso-**

21. E. I. Petrovsky, “Atheistic Education in the School,” (trans. Stephen J. Schmidt, S.J.), *Sorvietskaya Pedagogika*, No. 5 (1955), p. 3-19.

22- C.J. McFadden, *The Philosophy of Communism* (New York: Benziger Bros., 1939), p. 175. f

phy of communism and he feels that nothing can be expected from it except human despair. He holds that it is the remnant of the man-centered rationalism of the past.

"On the other hand, if it is true that in the dialectic of culture, Communism is the final state of anthropocentric rationalism, it follows that by virtue of the universality inherent in reason—even in reason gone mad—Communism dreams of an all-embracing emancipation and pretends to substitute for the universalism of the good tidings of Deception and Terror, and of the immolation of man to the blind god of History." 2> |

Having looked at the nature of man as it is conceived by four false philosophies we will now consider man as he really is. We must put back in man what has been taken away from him by Naturalism, Socialism, Experimentalism and Communism. It is only then that we can speak of the education of the "whole child." We will not fall victims to the delusion that the pupil is a material animal that must learn to live with other material animals without being a burden to society. This is the lop-sided view that is currently being propagated by some in the field of education. This consideration of the child as a supernatural as well as a natural being becomes a necessity, not only as an apology for those in the opposite camp but even for some who are engaged in teaching in Catholic schools since one author has found evidence of a utilitarian infiltration in some of our Catholic schools. j  
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"Thousands of Catholic teachers attended State universities and non-sectarian colleges, secured the coveted degrees, and imbibed, in instances, an 'out and out' utilitarian attitude.

23. Jacques Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (New York: Scribners, 1952), p. 192.

It was impossible to escape this in centers where God was ignored and man's origin, nature and destiny were not viewed in the light of supernatural philosophy." 24

Therefore no matter how slight, no matter how indirect the danger may be present in the attitude of some of our Catholic teachers that might underestimate the importance of this problem. Certainly no Catholic, worthy of the name, would advocate the tenets of the false philosophies that we have just examined by exterior promulgation of them yet it is possible they could unconsciously be promoting ideas that are not in keeping with Catholic philosophy and theology.

In our presentation of the nature of man we will attempt to answer the fundamental questions which are the solutions to many of man's present day ills: What is man? What is his purpose on this earth?

In a discussion on the true nature of man much is presupposed. One must have a belief in the existence of God and this God must be the God of Christianity, a loving Father and not a vague, ethereal being produced by the mind of the deist. Secondly, God had a reason for creating man. That reason can be seen more clearly in the light of man's true nature.

"The first cause of all reality, God, is also the Cause of human nature. Like any other doer, therefore, God has an end in view in His creation of a human person. He impresses that end in the very nature He creates. Just as a watchmaker's end can be extracted from the watch by an examination of

24. Sister Mary dePazzi Murphy, "An Analysis of the Utilitarian Concept in Modern Education and Its Infiltration Into the Catholic Educational System," (Unpublished master's thesis, Department of Education, Catholic University of America, 1948), p. 58.

its nature, so also God's end in making man can be extracted by a careful analysis of the nature of man." 25

The nature of man as taught by the Catholic philosophy of education is based on the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. This is the whole child that is subject of education in the true sense. From the philosophical point of view it is the concept of personality that must first be considered in a treatment on the nature of man.

"Nature, properly speaking, does not begin to exist: rather it is the person that begins to exist in some nature ... nature designates that by which something is; whereas person designates something as having subsistent being." 26

Man is not a mere physical, material being. His existence is higher than the brute. He is a spiritual being as well as material. This subsistent being has an intellect and will and this gives man a nobler and much richer existence than other living creatures. "He has a spiritual super-existence through knowledge and love." 26 Man is able to reason to conclusions and solutions. He is able to be himself through love. It is this fact that makes man like unto God his Creator.

"Since man is said to be to the image of God by reason of his intellectual nature, he is most perfectly like God according to that in which he can best imitate God in his intellectual

25. Thomas Dubay, *Philosophy of the State as Educator* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1959), p. 4.

26. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa of Theology*, III, 35, 1, and 3.

27. Jacques Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), p. 8.



nature. Now the intellectual nature imitates God chiefly in this, that God understands and loves Himself." 28

**Thus the first fact we note is that man is made to the image and likeness of God. This likeness is to be found in the intellectual nature of man. This image is in those human beings who do not even possess the use of reason and in those whose souls are steeped in sin.**

"The mind, in order to understand God, can make use of reason, in which sense . . . the image of God abides ever in the soul; whether this image of God be so obsolete, as it were clouded, as almost to amount to nothing, as in those who have not the use of reason; or clear and beautiful, as in the just." 29

**How different is this concept of man from the teaching of the experimentalist and the materialistic evolutionist that conceive man almost on the level of the brute with only an accidental difference. The "whole child" is a union of body and soul, matter and form. It is this composition that is forgotten by many of the educational psychologists when they confuse animal training and psychological habits and then apply their observations to man and conclude that this is education. These experiments are of value but one must keep in mind that man is not a mere animal. ". . . education is not animal training. The education of man is a human awakening . . . And what matters most in the educational enterprise is a perpetual appeal to intelligence and free will in the young."** 50 One can readily see then that the whole aim of education

28. S.T. I, 93, 4, c.

29. S.T. I, 93, 8, ad 3.

30. Maritain, *Education At The Crossroads*, p. 9-10.

depends on the concept of man's nature. To err at this starting point would make everything else false.

Man's fallen nature must also be a point considered in the educational process. The intellect and will of the subject of education has been weakened by original sin. To ignore this fact would likewise lead to erroneous conclusions about the child and the education of that child. "If Adam had not sinned, he would not have begotten children of hell in the sense that they would contract from him sin which is the cause of hell." "The heritage of Adam has been the darkened intellect that man possesses which is less able to attain truth, a will which is less able to attain good and an inclination to evil. Not all educators will recognize this truth. Therefore many have erred in the way in which they have presented the educational process.

"In opposition to this truth is the theory, prevalent especially since the time of Rousseau, of man's natural perfection and perfectibility, which has led to the consequent overemphasis in education of self-discovery and self-expression. Such a theory fails to recognize the absolute need for self-repression and discipline in the life experiences of the individual." & :

We certainly do not want to underestimate the importance of man's body. It, too, is part of man just as his soul. It is the union of the body and the soul that make man. The body is necessary that man might be able to acquire knowledge.

"It is natural for man to acquire knowledge through the senses . . . and for this reason is the soul united to the body,

31. *S.T.* 1, 100, 2, ad 1.

32. Redden & Ryan, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

that it needs it for its proper operation; and this would not be so if the soul were endowed at birth with knowledge not acquired through the sensitive powers.” 3334

Thus the body of man is as important as his soul from the point of acquiring knowledge. In this way the soul is dependent on the body. However, the body needs the soul for its very life. For the soul is the “first principle of life in those things which live.”<sup>54</sup> Here we can see the inter-relationship that exists between the body and soul. This composite is man.

It is not too difficult to see, then, that man is not an angel since angels do not have bodies and man does. But wherein lies the difference between man and the brute? The brute is animate. Therefore, it has united to its body a principle of life.

“Man excels all animals by his reason and intelligence<sup>35</sup> ... The proper operation of man as man is to understand; because thereby he surpasses all other things.” 36<sup>36</sup>

Man is able to attain truth which the brute cannot do. Man is able to have ideas and put them forth in the form of literature, music and art. But the world is yet to witness a concerto written by a dog or a beautiful canvas painted by a cat. Animals can be trained to jump through a hoop but no animal has ever produced a hoop for a man to jump through.

Man has a free will by which he is enabled to choose a particular good or to reject it. “Choice belongs properly

53. *S.T.* I, 101, 1, c.  
34. *S.T.* I, 75, 1, c  
35. *S.T.* I, 3, 1, ad 2.  
36. *S.T.* I, 76, 1, c

to the will, and not to the sensitive appetite which is all the irrational animals have. Wherefore irrational animals are not competent to choose.”<sup>87</sup> Again St. Thomas makes the distinction between the delight we take in those things that we desire naturally and in those things that we desire as a result of reason. “But we do not speak of joy except when delight follows reason; and so we do not ascribe joy to irrational animals, but only delight.”<sup>88</sup> Therefore, we apply the terms gladness, exultation, and cheerfulness to rational creatures.

\*. ‘Dilection implies, in addition to love, a choice made beforehand, as the very word denotes; and therefore dilection is not in the concupiscible power, but only in the will, and only in the rational nature.’ »

Modern psychology has denied or ignored the spiritual soul of man in many schools of thought. It is for this reason that many modern psychologists have found difficulty in coming to a definition of man's most important faculty, his intelligence.

‘To err on the subject of the intellect, St. Thomas tells us, is the most unfortunate of all errors.’<sup>40</sup>

One can see the wisdom of this statement when all the false conclusions of modern psychology are taken into account. Vagueness and confusion seem to reign supreme in regard to the very fundamental of the whole science. Without a true concept of the nature of intelligence no

37. *S.T.* III, 12, 5, c.  
38. *S.T.* III, 31, 3, c.  
39. *S.T.* HI, 26, 8, c.  
40. Jacques Maritain, *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism* (New York: Philosophical Library Inc., 1955), p. 114.

psychologist has any right to put forth any conclusions. It would seem that this would be the first step in the field of psychology since its principal aim is the study of man's mind. Yet the disagreement among the authors is seen in this statement:

"There is no general agreement among the psychologists at present concerning the meaning of intelligence. In fact, considerable confusion exists concerning the meaning of this word." 4)

In conclusion on this treatment of the nature of man we can see how important a true concept is when one attempts to set up aims and goals for education. The needs of the child to be fully recognized depends in large part upon the answer to the question: What is Man? To deny this is to base all of one's conclusions on a false premise. Truth is founded only on truth. Truth can never be bom of that which is false. Therefore we should never feel satisfied with education until it admits the true nature of the child: a creature composed of body and soul.

41. William A. Kelly, *Educational Psychology* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1945), p. 596.

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