

Experience of Reality, Integrity and God

Foreword

I would like to sum up the chief points of an inquiry on the subject of experience of reality and of integrity as the aim of reason. The title of this inquiry may be "Ethics of reason" (that means ethics of a good use of reason). I find inspiration in Aquinas' thought, but my aim is a speculative one.

First of all let us make clear some key-words. *Experience of reality* does not mean in this paper what concerns mere sense perception, but what is implicit, tacit or "athematic", what is the subject of our reflection, particularly of philosophical reflection. In our experience reason and sense perception work together getting in touch with reality. Realism means here that "in experience we are directly acquainted with a world structured thus and so independently of our conception of it"¹. *Integrity* or perfection concerns unity and order. Since these qualities may increase or diminish, integrity has an analogous meaning². Integrity in its wider sense means that something has everything in order to be itself or does not miss anything in order to be itself³. There is integrity in a narrow sense when a whole includes, determines, but does not suppress its parts. Integrity means order and hierarchy of parts among themselves. I hold that integrity is the aim and the pattern of human experience and of human reason. *God* is the God of theism, although sometimes I speak of God as Absolute (in a wider sense). Let us look at some connections among these terms.

1) Human experience

We can distinguish among some important branches of human experience: an ontological experience (experience of being, of reality) that culminates in a metaphysical experience of Absolute, a moral experience (experience of the aim of our life and of the search for that aim) that culminates in a religious experience (experience of salvation, or of demand for salvation) and also an aesthetic experience of beauty and art. As we can easily realize, these

¹John Haldane, *Mind-World Identity Theory and the Anti-Realist Challenge in Reality, Representation, and Projection*, edited by J. Haldane, C. Wright, Oxford University Press, New York-Oxford 1993, p. 32.

² For instance there is integrity of a mechanism, of a single form, of forms among them and integrity of existence (*act of existing*). As I want to stress, integrity in the strong sense is a property of living beings and particularly of intelligent beings (ourselves).

³ See *In Div. nom.* II, 1, 80. See also Angelo Campodonico, *Integritas. Metafisica ed etica in San Tommaso*, Nardini, Florence 1996, particularly pp. 10-11 and 173-175.

different kinds of experience, along with speculative and practical reason, are intertwined⁴. In my opinion our experience is something organic with on top religious experience (in its wide sense)⁵. In fact, in religious experience there is a close tie between the top of the practical use of reason (demand for salvation) and the top of the speculative use of reason (knowledge of the existence of Absolute, of God). If we do not develop experience till the religious level (and this is an ethical problem), the other kinds of experience will become contracted and our reflection on experience will not work properly. Philosophy too, as a reflection on our experience of reality, could not work. Antirealism and scepticism may be a consequence of that attitude. Clearly I don't mean that a man cannot be a good scientist without developing ethical and religious experience, but I mean only that probably he cannot read scientific experience in a correct (and realistic) way if he does not try to completely develop human experience. In trying to completely develop our experience, the integrity pattern plays a very important role.

I would like to stress that an ontological experience of being always lies in the background of these different kinds of experience (moral, religious and aesthetic experience). Even at the starting point of practical reason, whose aim is to do (*agere*) or to make (*facere*) something, we always find the manifestation of being and receptivity of being⁶. We can speak here of *speculative* in the wide sense. In other words: there is always *consent* to our reality

⁴ As Aquinas holds we should not imagine that the practical use of our mind is wholly divorced from its speculative use. Cfr. *ST. I*, 79, 11: "...intellectus practicus et speculativus non sunt diversae potentiae. Cuius ratio est quia, ut supra (q. 77, a. 3) dictum est, id quod accidentaliter se habet ad obiecti rationem quam respicit aliqua potentia, non diversificat potentiam: accidit enim colorato quod sit homo, aut magnum aut parvum; unde omnia huiusmodi eadem visiva potentia apprehenduntur. Accidit autem alicui apprehenso per intellectum, quod ordinetur ad opus, vel non ordinetur. Secundum hoc autem differunt intellectus speculativus et practicus. Nam intellectus speculativus est, qui quod apprehendit, non ordinat ad opus, sed ad solam veritatis considerationem: practicus vero intellectus dicitur, qui hoc quod apprehendit, ordinat ad opus. Et hoc est quod Philosophus dicit in III *De Anima*, quod "speculativus differt a practico, fine". Unde et a fine denominatur uterque: hic quidem speculativus, ille vero practicus, idest operativus".

⁵ Religious experience in the wide sense means human demand for fulfillment and salvation.

⁶ Clearly I am referring to aristotelian and thomistic practical reason and not to kantian concept of practical reason. In the former case there is an ontological basis of ethical experience. In my opinion practical reason always presupposes theoretical knowledge (in the wide sense). But this does not mean that we must be philosophers in order to become moral men or that we must *deduce* moral rules from descriptive propositions. See R. M. Mc Inerny, *Aquinas on Human Action: A Theory of Practice*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington 1992, pp. 191-192 *passim*: "Since the speculative and practical intellects are not two faculties, but rather two ways of exercising the same power, and since being is the first thing the mind grasps, knowledge of being is presupposed by all human knowledge, whether speculative or practical. The theoretical use of the mind is primary presupposed by the practical use...When something is grasped as good, it is grasped as something and as perfective or fulfilling of us in some way. Such a judgement has embedded in it knowledge of the thing itself and of ourselves. Needless to say, this is not a full-blown and generalized knowledge either of things or self, but it is nonetheless theoretical and presupposed by what may be called the practical judgement that this is good for me. Such theoretical knowledge is confused, vague, and susceptible to all but endless refinement and addition, but it is for all that theoretical, it is knowledge of nature, a grasp of facts. The judgement that something is good presupposes and depends upon theoretical knowledge of the thing judged to be good and of the one for whom it is judged to be good".

(ourselves) and to the reality that surrounds us (there is a close connection between both consents)⁷. That implicit or tacit *consent* is the ground of every free *assent* to reality and to reason. Everybody can make an original experience of being, of its truth or intelligibility, of its necessity, of its ontological goodness and of its beauty. Without such experience of reality, we would not wish things to exist, to be real and true (to perceive something and to conceive or imagine something will be the same), we would not look for truth and for necessary explanations of what happens (metaphysics and science), we would not desire goodness (in spite of daily experience of evil), we would not like beauty, trying to put it into effect, we would not worship God (in religious experience, but also when we make an idol of something). Let us make clear this concept of ontological experience.

2) Ontological experience as ground of science, philosophy of nature and metaphysics

Initially there is a transcendental ground of ontological experience⁸. Here we can find, in the first place, a dimension of actuality, of event that does not depend on ourselves and that Thomistic philosophy calls "act of existing": for something to exist or not exist is not the same. As the "act of existing" actuates everything, it means also integrity (perfection), because it is the very cause of every perfection we can find in reality⁹. On the transcendental ground of human experience the main dimension is the act of existing which is the cause of the existence of everything. To perceive being as being makes the whole of being accessible, and that means the Absolute (whole as whole is absolute, because it does not depend on anything).

In the second place reality shows a certain order, a certain harmony that we can call perfection or integrity too. This is the classical level of essence (*essentia*). This order shows itself phenomenologically as an order of reality and not as an order we ourselves create in reality. That means, furthermore, that this order cannot depend basically on our conceptual schemes. In any case, although we may believe that the order of reality is - partially - our own creation, we must recognize that we are parts of a nature which has an inherent order, and that it is impossible to create order where there is no kind of ontological order¹⁰. But my aim here is only to stress that we find an order which, phenomenologically, seems to belong to reality itself. We never perceive a total disorder. Instead, we always make experience of

⁷ See P. Ricoeur, *Philosophie de la volonté I. Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, Aubier, Paris 1950, 1988, p. 456.

⁸ Clearly here I am referring to medieval transcendentals (terms or concepts that apply to all things regardless of the things' ontological kind or category) and not to kantian transcendentals.

⁹ See C. Vigna, *Sulla semantizzazione dell'essere* in *Metafisica e modernità Studi in onore di P. Faggiotto*, a cura di F. Chiereghin e F.L. Marcolungo, Antenore, Padua 1993, pp. 359-380.

¹⁰ See J.J. Sanguinetti, *La filosofia del cosmo in Tommaso d'Aquino*, Ares, Milano 1986, M. Artigas, *La inteligibilidad de la naturaleza*, EUNSA, Pamplona 1992

order. We perceive parts in each whole and parts in reality as a whole: everything is itself, but it is also part of a whole and part of the whole. I stress here the importance of both the principle of contradiction and Aquinas' first principle, according to which a whole is greater than its parts¹¹. If we look at reality in a realistic way, paying attention to our actual experience, I claim that atomistic empiricism as well as holism, conceived in a strong sense (hermeneuticism) are to be banished¹². For instance: if we look at a classroom with some students in it, we can hardly claim that no matter how differently people may interpret this fact, no order of reality can be found on which everyone (coming from America or Africa, living nowadays or in the Middle ages) agrees.

Experience of being means also experience of ontological goodness. And that is true in the first place not because we like some things, but because being shows an order, an harmony (*convenientia*) with itself. Particularly living beings, as ourselves, aim at self-preservation and self-fulfilment. We could also speak of an experience of beauty based on the same order. It is amazing to notice how often we use in our ordinary speech words like "fine", "nice", "ugly" and so on. In Aquinas' thought integrity is a property of beauty. There is a perfect harmony between the three main transcendentals (*unum, verum, bonum*) and the characteristic signs of beauty (*integritas, claritas, consonantia*)¹³.

Since, perceiving reality (speculative in the wider sense), we always make experience of being and its necessity (i. e. if we see a ball coming into a room, we immediately ask: "Who has thrown it?"), we will try to find the same necessity on the higher step of metaphysics and of science (speculative in the narrower sense). Therefore truth and logic are not optional as some contemporary philosophers seem to hold¹⁴. As we always perceive some kind of necessity, our first scientific pattern is integrity: "verum ex integra causa"¹⁵. The meaning of

¹¹ See, for instance, *In Met.* IV, n. 605: "Et quia hoc principium, impossibile est esse et non esse simul, dependet ex intellectu entis, sicut hoc principium, omne totus est maius sua parte, ex intellectu totius et partis: ideo hoc etiam principium est naturaliter primum in secunda operatione intellectus, scilicet componentis et dividitis".

¹² There is a connection between atomistic empiricism and holism (in the strong sense).

¹³ Cfr. *ST.* I, 39, 8. See M. Jordan, *The Grammar of "esse": rereading Thomas on the Transcendentals*, "The Thomist", 44, 1980, pp. 19-20.

¹⁴ See, for instance, R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1989 and S.P. Stich, *The Fragmentation of Reason: Preface to a Pragmatic Theory of Cognitive Evaluation*, The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts 1991.

¹⁵ See *In Eth.* I, 12, 7-32: "...principium maxime oportet bene determinare, principium autem in operativis est ultimus finis. Ad hoc quod diligentior de eo consideratio habeatur, scrutandum est de hoc non solum considerando conclusiones et principia, ex quibus ratiocinativus sermo procedit, sed etiam de his quae dicuntur de ipso, id est de ultimo fine sive de felicitate. et huius rationem assignat, quia omnia consonant vero. Et huius ratio est, quia, ut dicitur in VI huius, verum est bonum intellectus; bonum autem, ut dicitur in II huius, contingit uno modo, scilicet concurrentibus omnibus quae pertinent ad perfectionem rei, malum autem contingit dupliciter, scilicet per cuiuscumque debitaе condicionis defectum; non autem invenitur aliquod malum in quo totaliter sit bonum corruptum, ut dicitur in quarto huius, et ideo omnia concordant bono non solum bona, sed etiam mala, secundum hoc, quod aliquid retinent de bono. Et similiter omnia falsa concordant vero, in quantum aliquid retinent de similitudine veritatis; non enim est possibile quod intellectus opinantis aliquod falsum

this pattern is to explain effects by means of necessary and complete causes¹⁶. But we can reach very seldom the completeness (integrity) and necessity of the real causes of an effect¹⁷. While science and necessity in the narrower sense (*propter quid* - from the causes to their effects) is not possible, we can look for *demonstrationes quia* (from the effects to their causes) making use of contradictory assertions - the contradictory of its contradictory is necessarily true. That is the case of metaphysics, particularly of Aquinas' proofs of God's existence¹⁸, whereas in empirical sciences we can only look for hypothetical causes and explanations, using "quia" as well as "propter quid" demonstrations. I do not mean that scientists always find integrity, but that, as every man, they always look for some kind of integrity¹⁹. Since they share with every man ontological experience of reality, they often have to speak about scientific objects using terms of ordinary language. When this happens, the influence of spontaneous or implicit philosophy may be dangerous to science itself. Therefore explicit and good philosophy is also important for scientists. Lastly, since there is a wide gap between the language of empirical sciences which concerns reality itself, and the language of spontaneous ontological experience and of ontological reflection, we need a good "philosophy of nature" in order to fill in that gap²⁰. The demand for *integrity* in our knowledge of reality is at the very root of philosophy of nature too.

When our knowledge concerns accidental and individual things (and that is the case of human actions and endeavours), hermeneutics is a substitute for science. If we want to grasp the true meaning of something, we have to gather many aspects of that subject, considering them as a whole and possibly from the point of view of the whole. For instance: Aquinas suggests in his ethics that I must look at the aim of my action, at its matter and its circumstances, if I want to know what I must do now: "... malum contingit ex singularibus defectibus, bonum vero ex tota et integra causa"²¹. What I am saying is that in this and similar cases we must ask: Is something missing? Is this the only point of view on that

totaliter privetur cognitione veritatis. Se per verum statim diiudicatur falsum, utpote ab eo deficiens. Et hoc est quod subdit, quod falso dissonat verum, sicut ab obliquo dissonat rectum".

¹⁶ See *ST. I*, 79, 8: "...ratiocinatio humana, secundum viam inquisitionis vel inventionis, procedit a quibusdam simpliciter intellectis, quae sunt prima principia; et rursus, in via iudicii, resolvendo redit ad prima principia, ad quae inventa examinat".

¹⁷ See R. Mc Inerny, *Analogy and Foundationalism in Thomas Aquinas* in Robert Audi and William Wainwright, *Rationality, Religious Belief and Moral Commitment: New Essays in the Philosophy of Religion*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1986, p. 282: "The 'propter quid' demonstration analyzed in the *Posterior Analytics* is realized unequivocally in geometry, less obviously in natural science, and scarcely at all in metaphysics".

¹⁸ T. Irwin stresses the role of strong dialectics in aristotelian *Metaphysics*. See *Aristotle's First Principles*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1988.

¹⁹ Contemporary science seems to find integrity in reality more than mechanistic science.

²⁰ For instance: can we use of concepts like *form* in order to explain scientific matters?

²¹ *ST. I-II*, 19, 7 ad 3.

subject? Can I look at this problem from a wider point of view? This is actually the method of hermeneutics²², that in ethics needs also moral integrity of man (practical truth)²³.

To sum up, science and hermeneutics share a common criterion: they are always based on a perfection or integrity pattern. From this point of view the classical Aristotelian science pattern is the basis of empirical science pattern and of hermeneutics' pattern too. But that pattern is not necessarily a priori: it develops, as I hold, through experience of reality and its order.

3) Experience of human being

On the categorial ground of our experience, we can perceive individual beings with a certain order but with different values. Among these beings the human person occupies the main place. *You* and *I* show the greatest ontological perfection (integrity), because this is the only case in which a single being is intentionally open to the transcendental ("anima quodammodo omnia") . Both *You* and *I* are intentionally infinite. Therefore in our experience, where practical reason is very important, human being is the only being which can really feed and satisfy our human desire. For instance: parental love is fundamental for children's education. But I would like to stress that in that case the reason is first of all ontological and not merely psychological. I agree with such contemporary philosophers as Lévinas in stressing the role of the other person in our experience²⁴. We are fundamentally passive in front of the others as we are passive in front of the actuality of existence (existing as event).

On the categorial ground of our experience we can perceive different degrees of being and different values of them: simple beings, living beings, intellectual beings (persons). For instance: when I am driving, if I see in front of my car a sheet of paper, a cat or a baby, my feelings and reactions will be very different. The different degrees of being culminate in the human being or person who integrates them (*integrity*). Therefore non-human nature is not only outside man, but also inside him. There is a close connection between man and world.

²² I stress that hermeneutics has *integrity* as regulative pattern although some contemporary philosophers like Gadamer seem not to underline this idea.

²³ See *In Eth.* VI, 2 (120-127): "...manifestum est quod rectitudo appetitus per respectum ad finem, est mensura veritatis in ratione practica et secundum hoc determinatur veritas rationis practicae secundum concordiam ad appetitum rectum, ipsa autem veritas rationis practicae est regula rectitudinis appetitus circa ea quae sunt ad finem et ideo secundum hoc dicitur appetitus rectus qui prosequitur quae vera ratio dicitur".

²⁴ See, for instance, E. Lévinas, *Totalité et Infini*, Nijhoff, The Hague 1961; *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence*, Nijhoff, The Hague 1974.

One of the best examples of integrity we can conceive is the soul-form of human being according to Aquinas' philosophy.

What seems to be good, but with different values of goodness in our moral experience of natural law, on the theoretical and metaphysical ground looks actuated in different ways by the act of existing²⁵. Since on the ground of our ethical experience of reality goodness contemplates different degrees of good, the act of existing contemplates different degrees of actualization (*integrity*).

Because of the central role of human person in our ontological experience, it is easy to understand the great importance of other people in moral life and of testimony in our knowledge of reality. Testimony is the source of most certainties, particularly of religious certainties²⁶. We can speak of a "principle of charity" that does not concern only meaning, but truth too (therefore not only in a Davidsonian sense²⁷): we can know new meanings, facts and truths only if we trust other people. And we need the virtue of *phrónesis* in order to learn from the others. *Principle of charity* means also that we can improve our truths only if we discuss with other people, accepting that we may be wrong. On the basis of the *principle of reality* and of the *principle of integrity* we can correct or improve our hypothesis listening to others' objections and *integrating* old views into new views²⁸. Therefore knowledge and epistemic virtues as well as moral virtues have a social character.

4) Experience of reality and knowledge of God

²⁵ See *ST* I-II, 94, 2: "Quia vero bonum habet rationem finis, malum autem rationem contrarii, inde est quod omnia illa ad quae homo habet naturalem inclinationem, ratio naturaliter apprehendit ut bona, et per consequens ut opere prosequenda, et contraria eorum ut mala et vitanda. Secundum igitur ordinem inclinationum naturalium, est ordo praeceptorum legis naturae. Inest enim primo inclinatio homini ad bonum secundum naturam in qua communicat cum omnibus substantiis: prout scilicet quaelibet substantia appetit conservationem sui esse secundum suam naturam. Et secundum hanc inclinationem, pertinent ad legem naturalem ea per quae vita hominis conservatur, et contrarium impeditur. Secundo inest homini inclinatio ad aliqua magis specialia, secundum naturam in qua communicat cum ceteris animalibus. Et secundum hoc, dicuntur ea esse de lege naturali quae natura omnia animalia docuit, ut est coniunctio maris et feminae, et educatio liberorum, et similia. Tertio modo inest homini inclinatio ad bonum secundum naturam rationis, quae est sibi propria: sicut homo habet naturalem inclinationem ad hoc quod veritatem cognoscat de Deo, et ad hoc quod societate vivat. et secundum hoc, ad legem naturalem pertinent ea quae ad huiusmodi inclinationem spectant: utpote quod homo ignorantiam vitet, quod alios non offendat cum quibus debet conversari, et cetera huiusmodi quae ad hoc spectant".

²⁶ Strength of testimony (of God and of men) may explain why assent in matters of faith is distinct from an act of inference. Cfr. J.H. Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, Introduction and Notes by I.T. Ker, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1985, chapter VI.

²⁷ See D. Davidson, *On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme*. In "Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association", 47, p. 5-20.

²⁸ This is the scholastic method of *quaestio*. See A. Mc Intyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry (Encyclopaedia, Genealogy and Tradition)*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana 1990.

I hold that the connection among implicit metaphysical truths in our experience (like order of reality and existence of an Absolute), attempts to show that we can attain the best understanding of this or that area of our experience if we look at it from the standpoint of a theistic metaphysics, certainties on the grounds of testimony (tradition and revelation), direct perception of God (mysticism), indirect perception of God (for instance in perceiving the beauties of nature or in hearing another human being speak) - and also our "will to believe" may be a cause of our assent in religious matters. There are many grounds of religious belief and perhaps an integrity pattern which unifies them²⁹.

In my opinion what Thomists call "natural theology" works as a kind of frame in our religious experience and in human experience at large³⁰. Therefore men with different religious experiences can understand each other (at least partially). Natural theology as a branch of philosophy makes explicit and precise what is implicit in our religious experience, trying to answer to criticism against God's existence.

Let us now go deeper into our experience of being. If the act of existing is the highest perfection on the transcendental ground of experience and the human person is the highest perfection on its categorial ground (as he is "quodammodo omnia"), we can easily understand why our idea of perfection-integrity develops chiefly from the starting point of these main experiences of reality. In particular the act of existing, as it actualizes *every* being and *every* essence or perfection, can make every other perfection infinite (and also that kind of perfection that is human person). From this point of view we can find here the source of the idea of the Absolute of religions and the idea of the God of theism as well. In both cases we use both ideas: act of existing and person³¹. But perhaps monism does not consider these

²⁹ See W. Alston, *Perceiving God. The Epistemology of Religious Experience*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London 1991, p. 306: "Perhaps it is a mistake to look for a foundation of one's faith that stands infallible, indubitable, and incorrigible, in no need of support from any other source. Perhaps no system of belief can be grounded in that way. Perhaps a more reasonable aspiration for the human condition is to have multiple sources of supports such that although each can be questioned and none renders any of one's belief absolutely certain, they lend support to each other as well as to the beliefs they are invoked to support; so that in the way the whole assemblage fits together we have sufficient reasons to take the beliefs to be true". See also p. 300: "Each of the believes prior to their interaction has enough independent support to serve as a source of justification for others beliefs, but not so much that it cannot profit from further strengthening. This is a way of construing reciprocal support that saves us from the paradox of extreme coherentism".

³⁰ I agree with Alston's distinction between being justified and the activity or process of justification. But "even though Alston may be right about the superior epistemological value of being justified over the process of demonstrating justification, there is still of course significant epistemological value in showing that one is justified. And for theologically relevant propositions, this service of demonstrating justification is provided by natural theology" (J. Zeis, *Natural Theology: Reformed?*. In *Rational Faith: Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology*, L. Zagzebski Editor, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana 1993, p. 68). On the ground of the concept of experience which I try to sketch in this paper we can understand that there is a strong connection between being justified (implicit reason) and the process of justification (explicit reason), although we cannot make explicit the whole experience.

³¹ Also pantheistic metaphysicians often speak about a *soul* or a *reason* of the world.

ideas in depth. A certain kind of transcendence is implicit in our conception of the act of existing and above all in our idea of person³². But we could not conceive God's transcendence, if we did not think that experience of multiplicity and of becoming, that we find by perceiving things of experience, could not concern the whole of reality³³. In order to conceive the God of theism we must develop what is implicit in our ontological experience. It's a spontaneous process (everybody can conceive sooner or later the God of theism), but sometimes it might require a certain effort of reflection. I want to underline that the idea of being (act of existing that actualizes essences) and the concept of person, therefore an idea of perfection-integrity, are the very sources of our idea of God.

5) Realism and the ethics of reason

Contemporary philosophy seems to discover again the classical idea of nature, particularly that nature and natural fulfilment belong also to human being and to human reason (this is, for instance, Plantinga's "proper function"³⁴). Knowing means to accept the nature of our reason, trying to make use of it in the best way. As Newman says: "If I do not use myself, I have no other self to use"³⁵. But reason has its own intentionality: the pattern of reason develops in touch with experience of reality through continuous efforts and investigations. Here practical reason plays a main role too. Practical reason has its proper aim - we must do what is good ("bonum est faciendum"³⁶) - as other natural inclinations have their own aim. Therefore, as practical reason puts in order the other human inclinations and approves their aim, it also approves the main aim and the inquiry of speculative reason (reason in fact is the typical human faculty): as human beings we embarked on knowledge of reality.

Practical reason shows that it is good to cultivate man, his experience and his reason, in conformity with the integrity pattern. The integrity pattern concerns reason as a whole, practical reason as well as speculative reason. But we can develop speculative faculty in a complete way only if we develop man as a whole, his complete experience. A correct epistemology needs an integral anthropology (that means for instance harmony between

³² See, for instance, the idea of the transcendence of the other man in Lévinas' philosophy.

³³ Cfr. Aquinas' five *viae*.

³⁴ See A. Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1993, p. 4: "A belief has warrant for you only if your cognitive apparatus is functioning properly, working the way it ought to work, in producing and sustaining it".

³⁵ J.H. Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, Introduction and Notes by I.T. Ker, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1985, p. 224.

³⁶ *ST*. I-II, 94, 2.

sense perception and reason, passion and reason, body and mind) . And a good anthropology needs practical ethical reason and a deep connection of virtues among them³⁷. William Alston, dealing with a realist conception of truth, holds that "if someone were to put a gun to my head and force me to formulate a single fundamental root of opposition to realism about truth, I suppose that I would say "intolerance of vulnerability". In supposing that what we believe and assert is rendered true or false by whether what a belief or assertion is about is as the belief or assertion would have it to be, we are acknowledging a liability to falsity that is, in a fundamental way, out of our control. We can, of course, take such precautions as are open to us to ensure that this condition for truth is satisfied. But in the final analysis whether what we say is true is determined not by anything we do or think, but by the way things are - the things we are talking about. This vulnerability to the outside world, this "subjection" to stubborn, unyielding facts beyond our thought, experience and discourse, seems powerfully repugnant, even intolerable to many"³⁸. Against "intolerance to vulnerability", that means intolerance to reality and truth, we need a good "ethics of reason" (ethics of the good use of reason). In other words: although realism is grounded on theoretical reason (experience of reality) and on epistemic virtues³⁹, to acknowledge reality is an ethical problem too. A strong connection between epistemic and ethical virtues is required⁴⁰. Maritain and Gilson have

³⁷ See *ST. II-II*, 47, 14: "...dicendum quod necesse est virtutes esse connexas, ita ut qui unam habet omnes habeat alias...". See also *ST. I-II*, 65. Cfr. *ST. I-II*, 57, 1: "Ex hoc enim quod aliquis habet habitum scientiae speculativae, non inclinatur ad utendum, sed fit potens speculari verum in his quorum habet scientia; sed quod utatur scientia habita, hoc est movente voluntate. Et ideo virtus quae perficit voluntatem, ut caritas vel iustitia, facit etiam bene uti huiusmodi speculativis habitibus. Et secundum hoc etiam, in actibus horum habituum potest esse meritum, si ex caritate fiant: sicut Gregorius dicit in *IV Moral.*, quod "contemplativa est maioris meriti quam activa". Cfr. *ST. II-II*, 180, 2: "*Dispositive* autem virtutes morales pertinent ad vitam contemplativam. Impeditur enim actus contemplationis, in quo essentialiter consistit vita contemplativa, et per vehementiam passionum, per quam abstrahitur intentio animae ab intelligibilibus ad sensibilia; et per tumultus exteriores. Virtutes autem morales impediunt vehementiam passionum, et sedant exteriorum occupationis tumultus. Et ideo virtutes morales dispositive ad vitam contemplativam pertinent".

³⁸ W. Alston, *A Realist Conception of Truth*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London 1996 , p. 264.

³⁹ See L. Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Religious Knowledge and the Virtues of the Mind* in *Rational Faith. Catholic Responses to Reformed Epistemology*, L. Zagzebski Editor, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame (Indiana) 1993, particularly p. 217: "As a rough approximation, we might say that whereas moral virtues are habitual processes that reliably lead to the good and that are consciously motivated by a love of the good, epistemic virtues are habitual processes that reliably lead to the formation of true beliefs and that are consciously motivated by a love of the truth".

⁴⁰ Cfr. L. Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Virtues of the Mind. An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1996, particularly pp. XIV-XV: "...I will argue that the the relationship between the evaluation of cognitive activity and the evaluation of acts in the overt sense usually reserved to ethics is more than an analogous one. I will argue that the intellectual virtues are so similar to the moral virtues in Aristotle's sense of the latter that they ought non to be treated as two different kinds of virtues. Intellectual virtues are, in fact, forms of moral virtue. It follows that intellectual virtue is properly the object of study of moral philosophy. This claim is intended, not to reduce epistemic concepts to moral concepts in the way that has sometimes been attempted, but to extend the range of moral concepts to include the normative dimension of cognitive activity".

written some important essays on philosophical realism as an ethical problem⁴¹. That means that we must assent to our reason and its natural laws, that we must reflect on our actual experience of reality (and that it is not always easy - we need a keen insight into our experience) and "last but not least" that we must develop our human experience in an integral way (till ethical and religious experience). Implicit or tacit *consent* to reason and reality must become a conscious and free *assent*. In fact implicit reason of common man or of scientists is always realist; only explicit reason or philosophical reflection, deeply connected with free will, ethical choices and metaphysical views, may be anti-realist.

From this point of view I hold that integrity as pattern and aim of man and his reason (Putnam and others contemporary philosophers use to speak of "flourishment"⁴²) does not develop a priori in a Platonic or in a Kantian way. On the contrary it develops in an Aristotelian or Thomistic way, continuously in touch with experience of reality and its order as well as of human person, which plays a role of focus inside the horizon of being. Without such experience of reality the speculative use of reason (in the narrower sense) as well as the practical use of reason could not develop. If it is true, as I tried to explain, that without ontological experience of integrity there would be no idea of epistemic, ethical and aesthetic integrity, it is also true that our experience of human and moral integrity makes possible, on the philosophical level of reflection, to acknowledge and also to complete our pattern of epistemic metaphysical and scientific integrity. This is not surprising because man is a part of reality, the most important part of the reality we can perceive. We can acknowledge here a special kind of hermeneutic circle that nevertheless safeguards the classical distinction between speculative and practical reason.

A main ethical consequence of this view is the following: since being and logical principles are always implicit in our experience and apprehension of reality, metaphysics and science are right and beautiful⁴³. They do not necessarily produce violence as certain continental philosophers like Heidegger used to hold.

To sum up I dealt with three principles concerning our use of reason, our experience of reality and our idea of God: a principle of reality, a principle of integrity and a principle of charity. There is a close tie among these principles, because they develop from the very ground of our experience of reality (of being and of human being).

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⁴¹ See, for instance, E. Gilson, *L'etre et l'essence*, Vrin, Paris 1948 and *Vade-mecum du debutant realiste*, "Revue de philosophie", 5, 1935, p. 294, J. Maritain, *Pour une epistemologie existentielle (I). Reflexions sur la nature blessée*. In "Approches sans entraves". *Ouvrage publié par le Cercle d'études Jacques et Raissa Maritain*, Fayard, Paris 1973. In *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. XIII, pp. 767-822.

⁴² See, for instance, H. Putnam, *Il pragmatismo. Una questione aperta*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1992, p. 51.

⁴³ See *In I Sent.* III, 2, 1: "Pulchritudo consistit in duobus, scilicet in splendore, et in partium proportione. Veritas autem habet splendoris rationem et aequalitas tenet locum proportionis".

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